CHAPTER 3:
PLANNING FOR THE STUDENT WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

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The purpose of Chapter 3 is to outline how appropriate educational programming is developed for the student with ASD. The student profile provides the foundation for planning for the individual student. The student profile is based on an understanding of the characteristics of ASD (Chapter 1) as well as an understanding of the specific student with ASD (Chapter 2). When a student with ASD has learning needs that cannot be met through the provincial curricula, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be developed. Most students with ASD will have learning needs that the provincial curricula cannot meet.

The priority learning needs identified in the student profile are the starting point for determining the direction of appropriate educational programming. The planning process addresses a student's priority learning needs by identifying outcomes to be achieved, how resources will be used, and how progress will be evaluated.

Determining the Direction of Programming

The primary goal of the team is to work together to develop appropriate educational programming that allows the student with ASD to participate as fully as possible in the life of the school, family, and community.

What Are Possible Programming Options?

The full range of the Autism spectrum is wide. The profiles of students with the disorder will be similar in some ways (because they share characteristic features) and quite different in others. A student's individual profile should direct the team in determining the most appropriate programming options(s). In Manitoba, programming options include

• Provincial Curricula incorporating Differentiated Instruction

• Adaptations

• Curricular Modifications

• Individualized Programming

Table 3.1 provides a summary of each programming option.

Table 3.1: A Summary of Programming Options

Support
Provincial Curricula Provincial curricula are provided to educators by Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. Reference: *Provincial Curriculum Documents** **Differentiated Instruction** Instruction that responds to the diverse learning needs of all students is called differentiated instruction. It includes a wide range of instructional strategies a teacher may use to support students in groups or as individuals. A teacher will often use differentiated instruction when planning lessons, teaching, and assessing and evaluating progress. *Differentiated instruction is appropriate for all students. Its flexibility offers opportunities to engage students with ASD by using instructional strategies, materials, and assessment processes that complement their particular interests and strengths.* Reference: Manitoba Education and Training. *Success for All Learners: A Handbook on Differentiating Instruction*, 1996.*
Adaptations Adaptation is the act of making changes in the teaching process, assessment process, instructional materials, or student products. These include changes to • physical environment   • social environment   • presentations   • tests and assessments • assignments and projects   • organizational supports   • time required to achieve provincial outcomes *Adaptations are used when students with ASD are able to meet the same learning outcomes as their peers but need one or more of the adaptations listed above. Like differentiated instruction, adaptations offer the flexibility to adjust learning processes to the student's individual interests and strengths. Adaptations are specific to individual students and should be documented.* Reference: Manitoba Education, Training and Youth. *Supporting Inclusive Schools: A Handbook for Student Services,* 2001.**
Curricular Modification Modification means that the number, essence, or content of provincial learning outcomes are changed or simplified to fit the student's current level of cognitive/adaptive development. *Curricular modification is used with students with ASD who may benefit from participation in the provincial curricula. While the process for Senior Years students is outlined in the document referenced below, modification may be used with younger students with significant cognitive/adaptive disabilities.* A final note on adaptation and modification: While these terms are often used interchangeably, they represent very different practices and policies in Manitoba. Adaptations are changes made to the process of instruction or the product of learning (i.e., how the student demonstrates skill or knowledge); modifications are changes made to what the student is taught. Reference: Manitoba Education and Training. *Towards Inclusion: A Handbook for Modified Course Designation, Senior 1-4*, 1995.**
Individualized Programming Individualized programming consists of educational experiences that are functionally appropriate and highly individualized to take into account the unique learning requirements of the student with ASD. The Individual Education Plan (IEP)/Individual Transition Plan (ITP) serve as the basis for an individual curriculum for the student. *Individualized programming is provided for students with severe cognitive and adaptive disabilities that do not allow them to benefit from provincial curricula. While the process for Senior Years students is outlined in the document referenced below, individualized programming may be used with younger students with severe cognitive/adaptive disabilities.* Reference: Manitoba Education and Training. *Towards Inclusion: A Handbook for Individualized Programming Designation, Senior Years*, 1995.**

*   *A copy of these documents may be obtained from the Manitoba Text Book Bureau (1-866-771-6822) or <www.mtbb.mb.ca>.*

** *A copy of these documents may be downloaded from <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/specedu/documents.html>.*

How Is the Direction of Programming Determined?

Programming should be determined by the student's profile. The team should review the student's current level of performance (including cognitive) and priority learning needs and select the programming option(s) that match the student profile.

Programming should be developed with attention to all relevant domains, especially social and communication development. This is particularly important with students who are able to achieve some or all of the prescribed learning outcomes in the provincial curricula. These students may be comparable to their peers in academic achievement, but they may experience great difficulty with the subtle social and communication demands of school and community life.

The team should also consider that:

- Cognitive disabilities may be present in addition to the ASD. While the number of students with mental retardation on the full Autism spectrum is not currently known, historical estimates of cognitive disability in classically Autistic students were as high as 75 percent. The presence of a cognitive disability will have implications on how a student learns and uses what he has learned.
- No two students with ASD will be the same. The symptoms of ASD may range from relatively mild to profoundly disabling because it is a spectrum disorder.
- Almost all students with ASD will have needs beyond the scope of the provincial curricula.
- Individual students with ASD typically experience gaps across areas of development. A student with average intelligence, for example, may have significantly delayed social skills. Hypothetical profiles illustrating this developmental "scatter" were shown in Chapter 1.
- Scatter may also exist within a single developmental domain. For example, students may be able to read aloud but comprehend little of what they are reading.
- The narrow range of interests and activities that students with ASD typically demonstrate often results in significant motivational challenges. Capable but unmotivated students may not achieve to their full potential.
- The generalization of skills from one setting or situation to another is difficult for a student with ASD. The team should be alert for potential difficulties and develop programming that encourages generalization.
- The student requires other resources and supports, such as the support of an educational assistant, clinician support, and special materials.

Planning

After determining the direction of programming, the team uses the information in the student profile to develop an individualized plan for the student.

Planning occurs throughout the student's time in school, from school entry to community transition upon graduation. The planning process results in an individual plan that addresses the student's priority learning needs identified in the profile. This plan contains

- a description of the student's current level of development and needs
- outcomes (based on the identified needs) to be achieved by the student in a specified period of time
- a description of how the outcomes will be achieved, including how resources and supports will be used and where the student will be educated
- roles and responsibilities of the people involved
- details of how progress will be evaluated

Planning processes used by school teams and outside agencies are summarized in Table 3.2. These transition planning processes were developed in partnership with other government departments and agencies to support timely and appropriate transitions for children and youth.

Table 3.2: A Summary of Planning Tools

Stage	*Planning Tool*	*Participants*
Transition to School (Preschool to Early Years)	Transition Action Plan (TAP) Reference: Manitoba Education and Training, and Children and Youth Secretariat. *Guidelines for Early Childhood Transition to School For Children with Special Needs*, 2002.	• parents • preschool/daycare/nursery staff • representatives from outside agencies • representatives from receiving school division and school
School	Individual Education Plan (IEP) Reference: Manitoba Education and Training. *Individual Education Planning: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing IEPs, Early to Senior Years*, 1998.	• in-school team, including parents and student • support team • representatives from outside agencies
Transition to Adult Life (Senior Years to community)	Individual Education Plan (IEP) Individual Transition Plan (ITP) Reference: Manitoba Education and Training, and Children and Youth Secretariat. *Manitoba Transition Planning Process Support Guidelines for Students with Special Needs Reaching Age 16 (from School to Services for Adults)*, 1998.	• in-school team, include parents and student • support team • representatives from outside agencies

A copy of these documents may be downloaded from <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/specedu/documents.html>.

Transition to School: Transition Action Plan (TAP)

Beginning school is an important event in the life of a young child. A carefully planned transition facilitates a student's entry into the school system. Those who know the student well, including the family, preschool service providers, and support agency personnel should work with school personnel to ensure a successful transition.

Transition planning should begin well before school entry. Often this planning process begins with a meeting between the family, the school team, and preschool and/or sending agency personnel. This might involve, for example, agencies or professionals such as The ABA Preschool Program, the Health Sciences Centre Autism Services, Society for Manitobans with Disabilities, private practitioners, and so on. The meeting provides an opportunity for participants to begin developing a Transition Action Plan (TAP), in which what is known about the child, what needs to be known, and procedures for gathering further information are identified. A TAP will help the school division plan resources for the next school year, and will facilitate continuity of established programming and appropriate supports.

School: Individual Education Plan (IEP)

Individual education planning is the process by which teams plan for students who require a range of supports. The IEP that results from this process describes how the student's educational programming will be provided.

The purpose of an IEP is to help students attain the skills and knowledge that are the next logical steps beyond their current level of performance. In considering these next steps, it is also important to consider how the student's situation may change over time. Anticipating changes allows the team to prepare the student for future environments and opportunities.

Students with carefully developed and implemented IEPs are more likely to reach their potential as learners. Because a wide range of students with very different profiles can be served through IEPs, each IEP is individual to the student for whom it was designed. Using the information in the student profile developed in Chapter 2, IEP development involves

- developing and writing the IEP by describing the student's current level of performance, identifying student-specific outcomes and performance objectives
- outlining teaching strategies
- implementing and reviewing the IEP by establishing an implementation plan and reviewing student progress, with adjustments made as required

An IEP
- contains high priority outcomes; it is not intended to represent everything a student might learn
- contains essential components, but its format may vary according to the student's profile and the direction of programming
- should be a living document and be reflected in the student's daily programming. Daily programming for students who are participating in the provincial curricula should include time allocations for outcomes identified in domains other than academic (such as communication, social skills, etc.). The team will need to balance the student's time table accordingly.

Transition to Adult Life: Individual Transition Plan (ITP) and Individual Education Plan (IEP)

As students reach adulthood, supports shift from education and children's services to the adult service system. A formal transition plan will assist a student with ASD in making a meaningful adjustment to community life. Most students with ASD will need an Individual Transition Plan, particularly if they require long-term supports from adult service agencies.

The identification of community-based outcomes drives transition planning. In turn, these outcomes set the direction of IEP planning during the student's remaining time in school and determine the daily programming that will prepare the student for community life.

Transition planning is a responsibility shared by the family and the school. It should involve anyone who is or will be a key participant in the student's personal plan. This includes the student (whenever possible), the parents, educators, clinicians, appropriate social and adult service personnel, and specialized service providers familiar with the student.

The Student Services Administrator or designate from each school division is responsible for initiating transition planning meetings, which should occur at least once per year for the student beginning at age 15 or 16 and continue until the student leaves school.

Please note: An ITP is a multi-system plan, involving the family, school, and other agencies. The student's IEP is the school portion of the ITP.

Table 3.3: Transition Planning

Considerations	Results
The team should consider • graduation or school exit date • employment options • post-secondary training/education options • income support opportunities • residential options • transportation needs • medical needs • community recreation and leisure options • maintenance of family/friend relationships • advocacy/guardianship	Transition planning should result in a plan that addresses • desired outcomes for adult life • specific current needs • how those needs will be met • the agencies/persons responsible • timelines

School personnel can help the student prepare for community life by providing opportunities to develop skills for work and independent living during their school years. Depending on the student's needs, interests, and abilities, this might include

- helping the student determine vocational preferences by providing a variety of work experiences

- encouraging participation in extracurricular activities and social events

- encouraging volunteer work

- helping with the development of a résumé and/or portfolio

- training in social skills for the workplace

- teaching appropriate dress and hygiene

- providing on-the-job preparation, once preferences have been established

- teaching the student to use public transportation

- training in self-management

- teaching functional academics appropriate to the ability level of the student

Determining Placement Options

Choosing an appropriate placement or learning environment(s) for a student with ASD should be done on an individual basis. Most students with ASD attend their neighbourhood or local schools, and are provided with programming, supports, and services identified in their IEP. Educating students with ASD in regular classrooms in local schools is the first placement option considered by a school division, in consultation with parents, school staff, and students (when possible).

Students may receive programming in

- their neighbourhood school in a classroom with their peers for the majority of the day
- their neighbourhood school in a classroom with their peers, and a special learning environment for a part of the day
- their neighbourhood school in a special learning environment for a the majority of the day
- a special learning environment that may not be in their neighbourhood school

Student-Specific Outcomes for Students with ASD

Student-Specific Outcomes and Performance Objectives

A student-specific outcome (SSO) is a concise description of what an individual student will know and be able to do by the end of the school year. Writing SSOs and Performance Objectives (POs) is a critical part of developing an appropriate plan for the student. They provide a focus for instruction and a way to measure the student's progress during the school year.

SSOs should be written with the student's current level of development in mind. The scope and degree of specificity of the SSO is determined by the needs of the individual student. An SSO that is appropriate for one student may be too broad or too narrow for another.

Writing appropriate SSOs is vital to the success of the planning and implementation of the IEP. Effective SSOs are SMART:

- **S**pecific: written in clear, unambiguous language
- **M**easurable: allow student achievement to be described, assessed, and evaluated
- **A**chievable: realistic for the student
- **R**elevant: meaningful for the student
- **T**ime-related: can be accomplished within a specified time period, typically one school year

The SSO needs to be broken down into smaller, more manageable sections to enable the student to learn the skills identified in the outcome. These smaller components or steps are the performance objectives (POs).

The SMART format should be used to write POs as well. They should be attainable within a reasonable period of time for the student. POs should be reviewed regularly and revised when necessary. If the student is not attaining a PO, it is often advisable to review and change the PO, or review instructional strategies, rather than extending the time to achieve it.

For suggestions on writing student-specific outcomes, please refer to Tool Box G: Writing Student-Specific Outcomes and Performance Objectives (pages 4.11 - 4.19) in *Individual Education Planning: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing IEPs, Early to Senior Years* (1988). Tool Box G is available online at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/specedu/iep/pdf/a.pdf>.

If the student shows exceptional progress or encounters unanticipated difficulties, SSOs (or POs) may need to be revised when the IEP is reviewed.
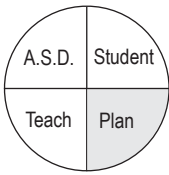
When Are Student-Specific Outcomes Required?

IEPs should contain student-specific outcomes that reflect the priority learning needs identified in the student profile, and not everything a student might learn or experience in school. An IEP with a meaningful balance among student-specific outcomes offers a means to address a range of student needs.

It is necessary to develop student-specific outcomes when

- provincial curricula are modified
- individualized programming is provided
- the student is working to achieve the learning objectives of the provincial curricula but has needs in other domains, such as social, communication, etc.

Many students with milder symptoms of ASD will be able to achieve some or all of the provincial curricular outcomes. Because they have ASD, however, they will also have needs outside of the provincial curriculum. It is expected that most students with ASD will require student-specific outcomes to address priority learning needs related to the primary characteristics and associated features of ASD. When SSOs and POs have been developed, the team will determine the strategies and materials for teaching the student, and record those in the plan.

At this stage, the team is familiar with the process to

❑ determine the student's direction of programming

❑ select an appropriate planning process

❑ develop student-specific outcomes and performance objectives

❑ determine the most appropriate educational setting(s)

Vignette: Ricky

Student-Specific Outcomes

Domain: Social

Student-Specific Outcome

By June _____, Ricky will take 4 turns with 1 peer during a structured adult-facilitated activity in 8 out of 10 opportunities over 10 consecutive days.

Performance Objectives	Instructional Strategies	Materials/Resources

By October, Ricky will be able to:
a. do a floor or table-top parallel play activity with familiar materials for 10 minutes twice a day for 5 days, with no additional prompts or adult structure
  – with a familiar adult
  – with a familiar peer
 	
b. take 2 turns and remain engaged with a known and preferred activity twice a day for 5 days
  – with a familiar adult
  – with a familiar peer
 	
By December, Ricky will be able to:
a. choose a preferred turn-taking activity when given 2 choices
b. use a 3-word scripted phrase, with prompting, to invite a peer to participate in the chosen activity
 	
By March, Ricky will be able to:
a. choose a preferred turn-taking activity when given 3 choices
b. use a 3-word scripted phrase, with prompting, to invite a peer to participate in the chosen activity
c. take 4, then 5 turns and remain engaged with a known and preferred activity twice a day for 5 days
  – with a familiar adult
  – with a familiar peer
	Develop list of preferred activities that can be used as turn-taking activities.
	
	Include parallel play and turn-taking activity on daily schedule.
	
	To develop parallel play, observe child using favourite activity, approach as close as comfortable for child and do same or similar activity with no interaction, staying for 5 minutes, then for longer periods.
	
	Initially have no interaction. Gradually begin simple interactions by imitating one of student's actions, waiting to see if he will imitate you, or by reacting to something he does, etc.
	
	Once he tolerates adult parallel play, add one child with adult. Gradually withdraw adult presence.
	
	To teach turn-taking: use direct instruction and modeling. Begin in a quiet, non-distracting setting using scripted language ("My turn"; "Your turn").
	
	Use a social story describing turn-taking with a peer.
	
	Teach peer partners appropriate turn-taking behaviours and language.
	
	Provide direct adult support, cueing and modeling during peer interactions to ensure success.
	
	Alternate turn-taking sessions with less structured preferred activities.
		Toys that move and/or spin
		Sand-table toys
		Water-table toys
		– store in secure yet accessible area
		
		Daily schedule
		
		Toys that move and/or spin
		Sand-table toys
		Water-table toys
		
		Social story

Roles/ Responsibilities	Date Started	Date Completed	Evaluation and Review
Teacher and/or Educational Assistant			Maintain record of turn-taking sessions including: date, activity selected, level of prompt required to initiate invitation to peer, level of prompt required to take turn, number of turns taken.
Teacher			Establish baseline based on first 10 sessions.
Teacher and/or Educational Assistant			Summarize daily records after every 10 sessions; tally level of prompts required and numbers of turns taken to determine effectiveness of instructional strategies.
Speech-Language Pathologist Teacher and/or Educational Assistant			
Teacher and/or Educational Assistant Peer partner(s)			
Teacher and/or Educational Assistant			
Teacher and/or Educational Assistant			
Teacher and/or Educational Assistant			

(continued)

Domain: Self-Management

Student-Specific Outcome

By June _____, Ricky will have "quiet hands" (hands in lap, not grabbing for materials) for 15 minutes during one seatwork activity each day for 10 consecutive days, with prompting.

Performance Objectives	Instructional Strategies	Materials/Resources
By October, Ricky will put hands in lap within 10 seconds when shown "Look" and "Quiet hands" graphics and given verbal/gestural cues. By December, Ricky will watch an activity demonstration with "quiet hands" before taking materials, with graphic and adult gestural prompts to "look" and "have quiet hands" for • 30 seconds • 60 seconds By March, Ricky will be able to watch an activity demonstration for 2 minutes with quiet hands before taking materials in a • familiar non-distracting setting • novel non-distracting setting • classroom with peers	Collect high-interest materials from profile (for example, spinning toys, puzzles, playdough). Begin in non-distracting setting. Show Ricky materials, give him a minute to feel and manipulate, then put them on a coloured mat to help him learn that they can't be touched when they're on the mat. Use verbal and gestures to show him "Look" and "Quiet hands. "If he doesn't imitate "Quiet hands' within 10 seconds, repeat cues and gently guide his hands to his lap. Demonstrate the task briefly (5-10 seconds). Praise for looking and "Quiet hands" and give him the materials. Repeat sessions 4 times daily, gradually lengthening time which he must watch. Use social story with graphics to describe desired behaviour and read before each session, then before some sessions. Use verbal and physical prompts ("Quiet hands"; gently guiding hands to lap) during seatwork activities, as required. Post visual "Quiet hands" cue on work table; draw attention to cue at beginning of each seatwork activity. Record baseline amount of time for which seatwork activities can be tolerated without distress; gradually increase amount of time participation is required.	Visual prompt Social story Visual prompts

Roles/ Responsibilities	Date Started	Date Completed	Evaluation and Review
Teacher and/or Educational Assistant			Collect high-interest materials from profile (for example, spinning toys, puzzles, playdough).
Teacher			Begin in non-distracting setting. Show Ricky materials, give him a minute to feel and manipulate, then put them on a coloured mat to help him learn that they can't be touched when they're on the mat.
Speech-Language Pathologist Teacher and/or Educational Assistant			Use verbal and gestures to show him "Look" and "Quiet hands." If he doesn't imitate "Quiet hands' within 10 seconds, repeat cues and gently guide his hands to his lap. Demonstrate the task briefly (5-10 seconds). Praise for looking and "Quiet hands" and give him the materials. Repeat sessions 4 times daily, gradually lengthening time which he must watch.
Speech-Language Pathologist Teacher and/or Educational Assistant			
Teacher and/or Educational Assistant			Use social story with graphics to describe desired behaviour and read before each session, then before some sessions.

(continued)

Domain: Self-Management

Student-Specific Outcome

By June _____, Ricky will follow his daily timetable with adult prompting.

Performance Objectives	Instructional Strategies	Materials/Resources
By October, Ricky will be able to transition to 1 preferred activity using a tangible object as a cue. By February, Ricky will be able to follow a morning or afternoon schedule involving 4 transitions with adult verbal and physical prompts.	Provide teacher-made tangible schedule system for morning and afternoon schedules. Begin by modeling for student that each object represents an activity and model how to use the system. Provide verbal and physical cues to prepare student for an upcoming transition. Initially build in a preferred activity every second activity. Teach transfer by using different adults and different settings.	Teacher-made schedule. A variety of small objects will be required, such as a small ball to represent gym class, a spoon to represent snack time.

Domain: Communication

Student-Specific Outcome

By June _____, Ricky will appropriately use 10 new vocabulary items from classroom themes and/or topics independently.

Performance Objectives	Instructional Strategies	Materials/Resources
By October, Ricky will be able to: a. point to 5 items upon request b label 3-5 items when modeled and prompted By February, Ricky will be able to: c. point to 10 items upon request d. label 5-8 items when modeled or prompted e. independently label 1-3 items	Provide multiple opportunities for the teacher to identify/label the target objects or people throughout the day. Provide multiple opportunities for Ricky to practise pointing to the target objects, and label for him. Encourage Ricky to point to the object as you label them. Use the target words in a variety of settings throughout the day. Provide opportunity to practise using the objects in a game whenever possible. Use photos of the objects and people to facilitate story building and "talking." Teach transfer by using different adults and different settings.	10 objects or people that are important to Ricky and the classroom teacher Photos of the objects or people Tracking sheet to determine which words are being used with prompts, and which are being used independently

Roles/ Responsibilities	Date Started	Date Completed	Evaluation and Review
Teacher to: – supply tangible objects, model for student and educational assistant the proper method of using the schedule system – provide student with feedback – develop assessment rubric and instruct the educational assistant on its use			Take data every two weeks and review weekly to determine effectiveness of tangible object. Review data on prompts to determine when to reduce the frequency of prompts and when to move from physical to gestural to verbal prompts.

Roles/ Responsibilities	Date Started	Date Completed	Evaluation and Review
The teacher will provide the student with feedback after each attempt. The teacher will record the student's attempts on a weekly basis on the form provided by speech-language pathologist. The teacher will provide a verbal prompt when necessary.			Teacher-made test to determine mastery of each level, a) to e).