



**Supporting  
Inclusive Schools:  
A Handbook for  
Developing and  
Implementing  
Programming for  
Students with  
Autism Spectrum  
Disorder**

***SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE  
SCHOOLS: A HANDBOOK FOR  
DEVELOPING AND  
IMPLEMENTING  
PROGRAMMING FOR STUDENTS  
WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM  
DISORDER***

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## **PHILOSOPHY OF INCLUSION**

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Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth is committed to fostering inclusion for all people.

Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that allows every individual to feel accepted, valued, and safe. An inclusive community consciously evolves to meet the changing needs of its members. Through recognition and support, an inclusive community provides meaningful involvement and equal access to the benefits of citizenship.

In Manitoba, we embrace inclusion as a means of enhancing the well-being of every member of the community. By working together, we strengthen our capacity to provide the foundation for a richer future for all of us.



# PREFACE

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## Background

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)\* is a complex neurological disorder that affects the function of the brain. The symptoms of ASD include impairments in communication and social interaction and restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviours, interests, and activities.

ASD is referred to as a spectrum disorder because symptoms can be present in a variety of combinations and range in severity from mildly to profoundly disabling. The cause is not known and males are approximately four to five times more likely to have ASD than females.

In Manitoba schools, programming for students with ASD is done by a team, including the parents,\*\* using an individual planning process.

*Supporting Inclusive Schools: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Programming for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder* recognizes the need of educators for a resource to support appropriate educational programming for students with ASD.

## Purpose

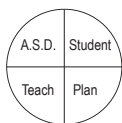
*Supporting Inclusive Schools: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Programming for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder* is intended to be a planning and programming resource for school teams who support students with ASD.

\* ASD is increasingly used in reference to Pervasive Developmental Disorders, including Autism. In recognition of current usage, the use of ASD in this document includes Autism and the other Pervasive Developmental Disorders.

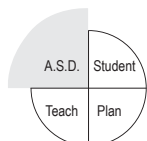
\*\* In this document, the term “parents” refers to both parents and guardians and is used with the recognition that in some cases only one parent may be involved in a student’s education.

## How to Use the Handbook

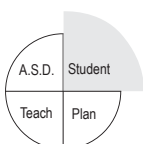
The handbook is organized into five chapters that coincide with the steps involved in the planning, development, and implementation of appropriate educational programming for a student with ASD.



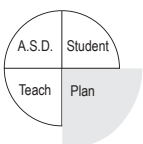
Each chapter begins and ends with this graphic. The four segments of the circle represent the four stages of planning. The highlighted segment of the circle delineates the phase of planning described in the chapter.



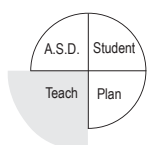
The first stage of planning involves understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Chapter 1: Autism Spectrum Disorder* contains a description of the primary characteristics and associated features of ASD.



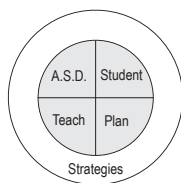
*Chapter 2: The Student with Autism Spectrum Disorder* describes the process of developing an individual student profile. A student profile summarizes what the team knows about the student and his ( \* ) priority learning needs.



The student profile described in Chapter 2 is then used as the basis for developing an Individual Education Plan (IEP), which is described in *Chapter 3: Planning for the Student with Autism Spectrum Disorder*.



*Chapter 4: Teaching the Student with Autism Spectrum Disorder* describes how students with ASD learn and provides a range of general instructional strategies for students across the Autism spectrum. The chapter concludes with a process for teaching a new activity or skill.



*Chapter 5: Instructional Strategies for the Student with Autism Spectrum Disorder* concludes the planning process by providing an overview of instructional strategies for students with ASD. The selection and implementation of strategies is guided by knowledge of ASD and the student, the plan, and how the student learns.

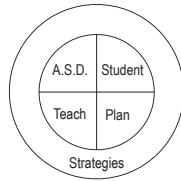
Not all teams will begin in the same place. The entry point in the process depends on the team's familiarity with ASD, the student, planning (and planning that has been done for the student in the past), and instructional strategies. A team that is receiving a new student will need to spend more time creating the student profile and developing the IEP than a team that has gone through the process with the student before. In this case, the team may begin with a review of the profile to ensure the information is current, and then proceed to update and revise the IEP.

The handbook also contains additional information in the form of appendices.

\* *Masculine pronouns are used throughout the document. Females may also have ASD.*

## Graphics

Throughout the handbook, graphics are used to guide the reader's attention to specific items.



This graphic represents different stages in the planning cycle for students with ASD.



This graphic is used to highlight examples or case studies.



This graphic references other documents produced by Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth and its partners.



This graphic references Internet websites that provide additional information about the topics covered in this handbook.



This graphic references book or journal articles cited in the text.



This graphic references suggested readings or resources. The *Suggested Readings* section of the handbook contains complete references for items suggested in the text of the handbook. Words in parentheses refer to the section of the *Suggested Readings* where the reference may be found.





# INTRODUCTION

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## Introduction

All students are unique. As learners, students have individual areas of strength and weakness, as well as individual interests and preferences. In Manitoba all students, including those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), have a right to appropriate educational programming. Because ASD is a *spectrum* disorder, its symptoms and their severity range from mildly to severely disabling. As a result, programming for students with ASD may range from the provincial curricula to highly individualized programming. This handbook explores a process for developing appropriate educational programming for all students with ASD.

There are specific characteristics all students with ASD share. These include impaired social interaction, impaired communication, and restricted patterns of behaviour, interests, and activities. However, no two students with ASD will display these characteristics in the same way. In fact, one of the characteristics of students with ASD is an uneven (or “scattered”) developmental profile, which means that a student may be at a higher level of development in one domain—cognitive, for example—than another domain—communication, for example. As a result, each student with ASD has unique strengths and learning needs. Effective strategies for education, therefore, depend on an understanding of ASD as well as a thorough understanding of the student.

Developing an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for a student with ASD is not done by one person alone. It requires the collaboration and co-operation of a team of people which includes parents and educators (the in-school team) and other professionals (the support team) such as doctors, psychologists, speech-language pathologists, and so on.

Parents, with their knowledge of the student and ongoing involvement with his educational outcomes at home and in the community, are invaluable members of the team. The student should be a part of the team and participate in the process as much as possible.

Team members have specific roles and responsibilities which include gathering and sharing information, determining what is known about the student and what needs to be known, identifying priority learning needs, and developing and implementing programming for the student. Following the steps involved in the planning process in this handbook enables the team to develop appropriate educational programming for the student. The planning process includes

- understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder (Chapter 1)
- creating a student profile (Chapter 2)
- developing and implementing an IEP (Chapter 3)

- preparing to teach the student with ASD (Chapter 4)
- selecting instructional strategies (Chapter 5)

The school team determines the direction of programming that fits the student's profile, keeping in mind that

- no two students with ASD are 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 that go beyond the scope of the provincial curricula

For a student with ASD, appropriate educational programming should occur throughout his school experience, from transition into school, throughout the school years, and finally through transition from school to life in the community. With careful planning, knowledge of ASD as well as the student, and an understanding of instructional strategies best suited to the student's profile, appropriate educational programming can be achieved.