

PETER HALL  
SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL  
POLICY



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## FOREWORD

The Peter Hall School Educational Policy is designed to provide information about our school to parents, school personnel and the general public. It outlines the principles and aims of the school and describes its organization and services. It also presents the new Peter Hall School Educational Program, which features an innovative approach to educating students with special needs.

The policy is divided into two sections. The first section contains the mission statement, along with the philosophy and values that are endorsed by the School. A portrait of the School is presented with a description of the student population, personnel, school facilities and special services. There is detailed information concerning curriculum delivery and the pedagogical methodologies and teaching strategies that are promoted by our School.

The second section of the policy is comprised of the Peter Hall School Educational Program, which reflects the philosophy and values of the School. There is a comprehensive explanation of the program structure and content that focuses on two essential documents: the *Educational Profile* and the *Individualized Educational Plan*. These documents reflect the latest research, views and practices in the field of special education. They are fundamental for all aspects of student

programming as they represent the student's educational program

The Peter Hall School Policy has a companion manual, the *Peter Hall School Educational Program: Guidelines and Procedures*. The primary aim of this manual is to guide teachers through the yearly planning process for developing a student's educational program. The other purpose is to provide clear and concise instructions that will assist teachers in completing the required documentation.

These two documents as well as the Peter Hall School Educational Program are the result of extensive research and documentation that has been carried out over a period of several years.

In view of their commitment towards the completion of these projects, we would like to extend our thanks to the following individuals:

Danièle Leclerc, Pedagogical Resource Services  
Anne Weinstock, Pedagogical Resource Services  
Luisa Rodrigues, Director of Educational Services

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## INTRODUCTION

Peter Hall School is a private school that is recognized and subsidized in the public interest by the Ministère de L'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport. It was established in 1935 by a group of parents of intellectually disabled children. To date, the School accepts students from four to twenty-one years of age with intellectual disabilities, pervasive developmental disorders and psychopathological disorders. These students may or may not have associated disabilities.

The School offers services in both French and English. Students are placed in small groups to allow for more intensive individual instruction. They are grouped according to age, language of instruction and functioning level. Each group is headed by a teacher, who is the main educational facilitator. The classroom teacher works in collaboration with other members of the multidisciplinary team, and is assisted by an attendant to handicapped students.

The students who attend Peter Hall School come from the Island of Montreal and the off island municipalities. School transportation is provided between the student's residence and the School.

Peter Hall School follows a regular school calendar, respecting the same number of hours and school days, in accordance with the amended *Education Act*<sup>1</sup> of Quebec Schools.

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1. *Education Act*, R.S.Q.,c. 1-13.3.

# PETER HALL SCHOOL

## Mission Statement

- To strive for the integration of the individual at the highest possible level in the educational, community and vocational settings.
- To offer a supportive and stimulating learning environment that enables the individual to develop at their own pace, and to achieve their personal best.
- To contribute towards research, training and pedagogical development in the field of special education.

The mission of Peter Hall School is in accordance with the amended *Education Act*<sup>2</sup> and *Quebec Schools on Course: Educational Policy Statement*.<sup>3</sup>

1. To impart knowledge to students
2. To foster social development
3. To provide qualifications

### **Peter Hall School is committed to:**

- Provide specialized educational services to students with intellectual disabilities, pervasive developmental disorders and psychopathological disorders.
- Meet individual needs through innovative and diverse educational programs and learning opportunities.

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2. *Education Act*, R.S.Q., c. 1-13.3.

3. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation. *Quebec Schools on Course: Educational Policy Statement* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 1997), 40 pages.

- Create a student-centered educational program that addresses the strengths, abilities and learning needs of the individual.
- Inspire and support all individuals to reach their full learning potential.
- Create a safe, supportive and stimulating learning environment, adapted to the needs of the students in order to nourish their personal and social development.
- Provide on-going professional development for Peter Hall School personnel in the field of special education in order to maintain the highest quality of services.
- Promote a collaborative team approach to develop realistic and appropriate educational programming for our students.
- Establish a positive, respectful and supportive partnership with parents to involve them in their child's education.
- Provide training opportunities and internships for students at the college and university levels.
- Contribute to research projects for the development of pedagogical expertise.
- Share information and expertise with other schools and service providers that are involved with individuals with special needs.
- Promote the social integration and active participation of the student in the community.

## PHILOSOPHY AND VALUES

### **Respect for the Uniqueness of the Individual**

Our School values the uniqueness of each individual and respects all learning styles. We develop individualized educational programs for all our students based on the premise that not everyone learns in the same way, and not everyone has the same learning needs.

### **Belief in Individual Potential**

Our School believes that individuals with special needs have the potential to learn, and are entitled to a quality education. It is for this reason that we focus on the individual, and not their disabilities. We believe in capitalizing on a person's interests, strengths and abilities in order to maximize their true learning potential.

### **Foster Individual Autonomy**

Our School believes that dependency often restricts an individual's control over their environment and impedes their development. For this reason, we foster the self-determination of our students by designing structured and visually explicit environments that will help build their independence and decrease their reliance on others.

### **Respect for Individual Choices**

Our School respects the choices that an individual makes and encourages their choice-making. We believe that individuals with special needs have the right to make decisions in their lives, no matter how challenging their disabilities may be. Therefore, we empower our students by creating opportunities for them to exercise the right to choose, which we believe builds self-confidence and leads to a better quality of life.



### **Belief in Lifelong Learning**

Our School believes that learning is an ongoing process; it does not stop once individuals reach a particular age. We believe in our students' capacity to learn new skills at any age, whether they are four years old or whether they are twenty-one years old.

### **Supportive Learning Environment**

Our School believes that it is very important to cultivate a positive, motivating and supportive learning environment. Our goal is to provide our students with stimulating and motivating activities in an educational setting where they can feel safe and secure. It is our belief that when we provide students with positive school experiences, we are helping them to become more competent learners.

### **Positive Parent-School Partnership**

Our School promotes a positive parent-teacher partnership that is based upon mutual respect, support and collaboration. We recognize the central role that parents play in their child's learning. For this reason, we provide meaningful opportunities for parents to get involved and actively participate in their child's education.

### **Holistic Educational Approach**

Our School adopts a holistic approach for helping students learn. We believe in developing a student's intellectual, emotional, social, physical and creative potentials. By considering the "whole child", we create a balanced individualized program with the optimal conditions to help students achieve success.

### **"Learning for Life" Philosophy**

Our School endorses a "learning for life" philosophy. We recognize that students with special needs are faced with enormous challenges when they try to integrate into today's society. To help students become successful in their lives, we ensure that what is taught has purpose and meaning for life beyond the classroom.

### **Diverse Teaching Methods and Programs**

Our School uses a wide variety of teaching methods and programs to address the diverse educational needs of our students. We believe in being open-minded and flexible in terms of endorsing and adapting teaching methodologies and interventions to meet the individual needs of our students.

### **Collaborative Team Approach**

Our School regards every member of the school team as an important player in the education of a student. We believe in encouraging our personnel to share their opinions and expertise in a supportive atmosphere that is based upon mutual respect. It is for this reason that our School provides the time and opportunity for everyone to meet, plan, and collaborate with each other.

### **Promote Professional Development**

Our School recognizes and strongly endorses the importance of providing professional development opportunities for our personnel. We believe that our personnel need to be informed of the latest educational research and practices, and to be equipped with the appropriate pedagogical tools. In this way, they are prepared to meet the diverse and unique learning challenges of our students.

### **Respect for Different Cultures, Nationalities and Religions**

Our School is firmly committed to recognizing and honoring the diversity of all individuals. We are proud of our School's social diversity, and we celebrate the fact that our students and personnel are from different religious and cultural backgrounds. Our School's belief is that "we all belong", and thus we treat others with mutual respect, tolerance and acceptance of individual differences.

## CURRICULUM DELIVERY

### Meaningful Learning Experiences

A priority of Peter Hall School is to ensure that there is meaning and purpose to all learning. We teach skills that have relevance in the daily life of the student. We also focus on delivering skill instruction in the actual situations in which the skills are needed. For example, our students are taught self-help skills within the natural routines of the school day, such as arrival, departure, snack and lunch. Moreover when the opportunity allows, our teachers use the real life setting of the community as a meaningful context for teaching critical life skills.

### Diverse Pedagogical Methodologies

Peter Hall School endorses a variety of pedagogical methodologies and teaching strategies. We believe in being flexible and open-minded in order to address the diverse needs of our learners. We also take a proactive approach toward adapting methodologies to foster a student's learning success.

Our instructional program follows "best practice" teaching methods and strategies including but not limited to, Structured Teaching (adapted from the TEACCH Model), differentiated instruction, multi-sensory approach, behavioral principles, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), Picture Exchange Communication

System (PECS), sensory integration techniques, sensory diets, sensory motor strategies, the Oelwein Method of Literacy, the Jolly Phonics Reading Program and the ABC Boum Writing Program.

### Fostering Personal Autonomy

Peter Hall School values the importance of fostering personal autonomy. Often, students with special needs can develop a "learned helplessness" and prompt reliance, which impedes their independent functioning. For this reason, many of our teachers apply strategies from the Structured Teaching Approach. They establish consistent daily routines, and design structured and visually explicit learning environments. These practices foster a student's growth and autonomy, while providing a sense of predictability and security.

### Multi-Sensory Approach

It is well known that many students with special needs are not successful when traditional teaching methods are used. Often, they have multiple cognitive deficits and their ability to learn is very concrete based. At our School, teachers adopt a multi-sensory approach to facilitate learning. They incorporate a variety of multi-sensory activities into their instruction to help students develop a better understanding of their world.

Peter Hall School also has a sensory playroom that offers students a variety

of sensory activities and materials for manipulation and exploration. Its unique and stimulating environment is designed to facilitate skill acquisition by promoting curiosity and active participation in learning. In addition, the School has a Snoezelen Room which is a specialized environment that uses sight, sound and touch for stimulation or relaxation.

### Sensory Strategies

At Peter Hall School, many students have specific sensory needs and challenges. We use a sensory approach to help prepare them for learning and to support them as they learn. Sensory integrative techniques, sensory diets, and sensory motor strategies are some of the methods that we use to minimize challenging behaviors and help students learn more effectively. Teachers and occupational therapists collaborate in choosing the appropriate sensory activities and materials as the teaching strategies for a student's program.

### Functional Communication

Peter Hall School strongly emphasizes the importance of helping students develop spontaneous, functional communication. Teachers provide many opportunities for students to learn and practice their communication skills within natural occurring situations. Routines such as school arrival, departure and lunchtime present opportune times to encourage students to use spontaneous communication.

Our School uses visual supports as a means to develop the language comprehension and expressive communication skills of our students. We also promote the use of augmentative and alternative communication to support students who

are non-verbal or who have expressive communication difficulties. Some of the communication tools that we use to help our students become active and functional communicators include The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), sign language, and electronic devices.

### Functional Academics

Peter Hall School offers students a functional academic curriculum that will help prepare them for their future life experiences. Skill selection is based upon a student's immediate and future needs, with a focus on delivering academic instruction within a meaningful and realistic learning environment.

Basic literacy skills are considered an integral part of our functional academic program. These skills can enhance an individual's ability to engage more independently with the world around them. At Peter Hall School, we integrate reading and writing instruction into school activities such as cooking, shopping and leisure. Our students learn to read recipes, write messages, and create shopping lists. They also learn to read functional print on food packaging, clothing labels and community signs.

Our math program includes functional skills that pertain to number recognition, counting, and the use of money, measurement and time management. These skills are integrated into school activities such as cooking, laundry, art and pre-vocational training. They are practiced whenever students visit the stores and restaurants in their community.

## Pro-Social Skills

Peter Hall School believes that it is essential to equip our students with a repertoire of pro-social skills. We focus on developing the social and interpersonal skills, most important for success in school, home and vocational environments. Our aim is to equip students with as many social skills as possible to increase the likelihood of successful integration into society. Since many of our students have difficulty with incidental learning, we use direct instruction to teach these skills.

We also ensure that skill instruction is delivered within a variety of natural environments to develop the social competencies of our students. We emphasize experiential learning, especially within the community so that students have the opportunity to practice important social skills. Our students regularly participate in community outings to shopping centers, restaurants and parks. They also visit special interest places such as the Biodome and the IMAX Theater.

## Play and Leisure

Peter Hall School recognizes the value of teaching play and leisure skills to students with special needs. Our aim is to broaden the interests of our students so that they can lead more fulfilling lives, at home, at school and in the community setting.

Our teachers plan learning opportunities for students to develop play and leisure skills throughout the school day. These skills are taught in a direct, sequential and systematic manner to facilitate skill acquisition. Moreover, teachers motivate student interest, by providing a variety of activity choices and satisfying play and leisure experiences. Students are

encouraged to develop interests and hobbies that include photography, music, painting, ceramics and scrapbooking.

## Art, Music and Movement

At Peter Hall School, art, music and movement play an essential role in our students' social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. For this reason, we value regular physical activity and exposure to art and music. Our students have access to a music room, gym, exercise equipment room, therapeutic pool and arts and crafts room (depending on the campus). Other recreational activities may be offered such as yoga, dance instruction, horseback riding and so forth.

## New Information and Communication Technology

Our School promotes the use of New Information and Communication Technology. We recognize the significant educational benefits of teaching computer skills to students with special needs. Our students have access to computers both in the classroom and in the school's computer labs. They develop competencies in areas such as language development, functional academics, leisure, and social communicative interactions.

The School also provides students with specialized computer software and adapted equipment. These include adapted keyboards, mouse, switches, and touch screens. Moreover, Peter Hall School has a Computer User Committee that researches and informs school personnel about the latest advances in educational hardware and software programs.

## Social Integration and Employment

Our secondary level program focuses on preparing students for the opportunities, experiences and responsibilities of adult life. Teachers carefully plan an educational path for each student, by teaching a repertoire of skills to increase the chances of successful social integration.

Throughout the school years, our students are taught work related skills within the context of the school curriculum. They develop competencies such as being organized, completing task assignments, following directions, and interacting with others. In our pre-vocational workshop, they learn a variety of job skills such as sorting,

assembling and packaging. Moreover, we also expose students to work related experiences which may include housekeeping, food services, indoor and outdoor maintenance and clerical work. In this way, we can help students develop responsible work habits and social skills to prepare them for future employment possibilities.

## Responsibilities and Citizenship

At our secondary level campus, students learn about the meaning and responsibilities of good citizenship. Every year, our students are involved in electing members of a student council which has a voice in making suggestions for planning and organizing school events and activities.

## MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM

Peter Hall School has a multidisciplinary team that plays a key role in supporting a student's learning and development. This team approach brings together individuals who contribute their knowledge and expertise, share in decision making and provide recommendations on how to best meet the needs of the student. The value of a team or collaborative approach for a student with special needs is that it offers a reservoir of observations, data and interpretations from a variety of sources.

- The **School Director** has the responsibility of establishing the student's educational program (Educational Profile and Individualized Educational Plan) in collaboration with the parents and the school team.
- The **Classroom Teacher** is responsible for planning, developing, and implementing the educational program for each student.
- The **Attendants to Handicapped Students** assist the classroom teacher. They perform a variety of functions which may include assisting students in personal care, and in carrying out school routines and activities.
- The **Resource Teachers** provide consultative support to the classroom teachers. They help teachers adapt instructional practices, programs and materials.
- The **Complementary Services** is comprised of a group of professionals who provide consultative support to the classroom teachers, and are responsible for student assessments in their area of expertise.
  - The group is comprised of the following professionals:
    - Occupational Therapist
    - Speech Therapist
    - Physiotherapist
    - Psychologist
- The **Support Staff** provides health-related services or behavioral intervention and/or additional support for the well-being of the student.
  - The support staff consists of the following:
    - Nurse
    - Auxiliary Nurse
    - Special Education Technician

## SCHOOL FACILITIES AND SPECIAL SERVICES

Peter Hall School offers a physical environment that is equipped to meet the unique and challenging needs of students with special needs. Our facilities are designed for physical accessibility, and provide a safe and secure environment for students to learn. The physical structure of our School facilitates the development of personal autonomy and promotes the active participation of our students.

Peter Hall School offers a wide range of services and resources that include:

- Technician for Adapted Materials
- Specialized Materials and Equipment
- Assessment/Therapy Room
- Pedagogical Resource Center

### **Student Activity Rooms:**

- Snoezelen Room
- Therapeutic Pool
- Psychomotor Room
- Mini Gymnasium
- Physical Conditioning Room
- Gymnasium
- Computer Lab
- Sensory Playroom
- Symbolic Playroom
- Arts and Crafts Room
- Pre-Vocational Workshop
- Auditorium
- Kitchen
- Laundry Room
- Library

### **On-site Specialty Clinics:**

- Positioning/Wheelchair Clinic
- Brace Clinic
- Orthopedic Clinic

Specialty clinics are organized by our physiotherapists and occupational therapists in conjunction with various rehabilitation centers and hospitals.





# EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Section Two

## OVERVIEW

Peter Hall School is dedicated to developing a student-centered educational program that is functional and relevant for the needs of the student. Two important documents have been created for this purpose - the *Educational Profile* and the *Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)*. These two documents are valuable pedagogical tools that ensure the continuity of educational planning and services for our students.

The Educational Profile is developed for students who are new admissions, and for returning students who meet the specific age criteria of 6, 9, 12, 15 or 18 years old (as of September 30<sup>th</sup> of the current school year). This document presents a global portrait of the student that includes his or her strengths, abilities, interests, learning style and areas of need. It is to be used as a reference over a 3-year period to develop the student's IEP.

The IEP is developed every year for all students. This document contains the annual objectives and teaching interventions of the student's educational program. The IEP reflects the long term goals and the program orientation of the student's Educational Profile.

Both the Educational Profile and the IEP are based on student observations, assessments, and the educational

decisions of the school team. These documents also reflect parental concerns and priorities regarding the needs of their child. When appropriate, students may contribute to the decision-making of their educational program by expressing their choices and hopes for the future.

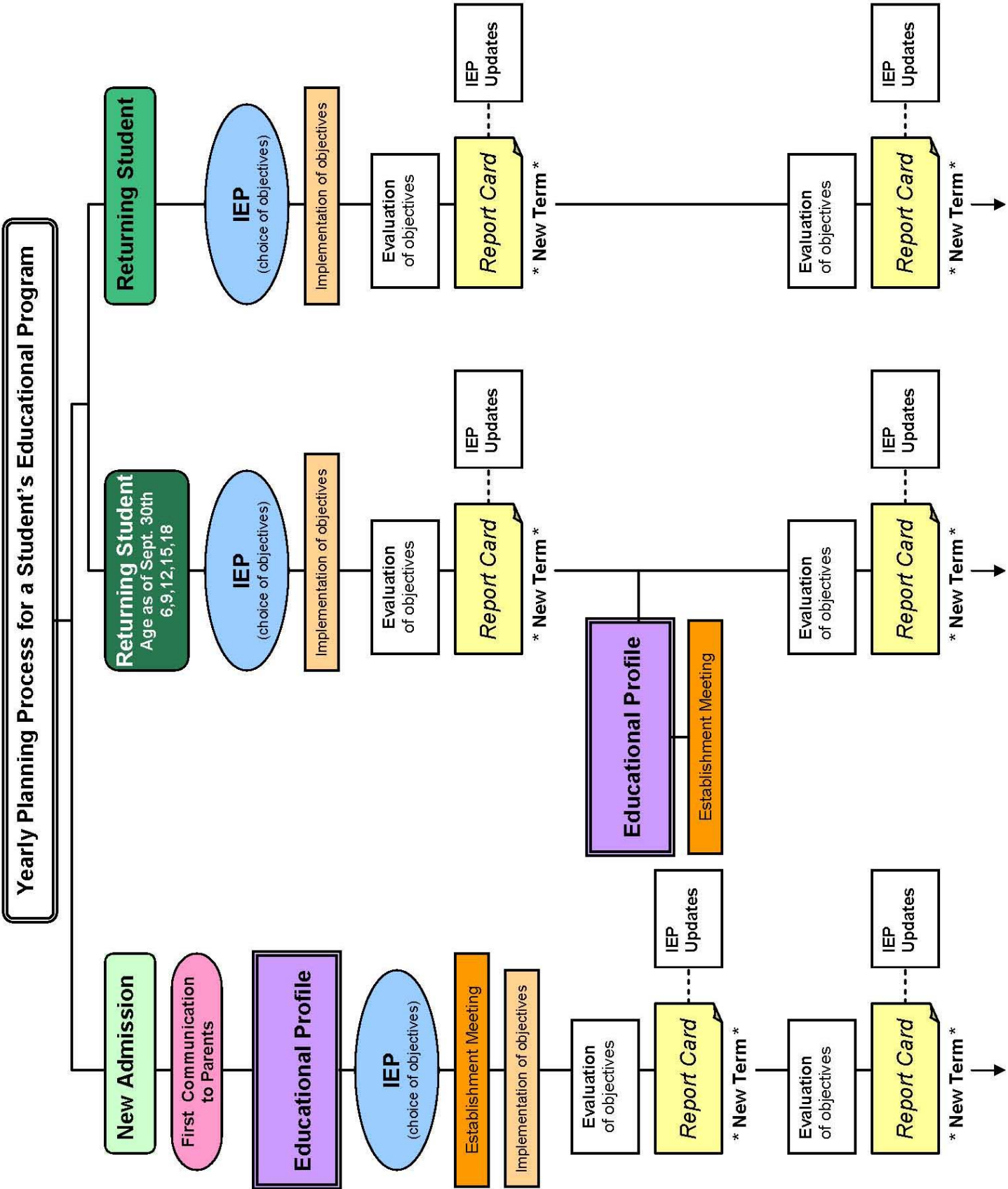
Peter Hall School has created a broad, balanced and functional school curriculum. This curriculum follows a "learning for life" philosophy. It provides teachers with the means to develop an educational program that will have practical implications in the daily life of the student. Since communication has an impact on all learning domains, it is essential to ensure that our students develop functional communication skills as soon as they begin school.

The Peter Hall School curriculum is comprised of seven learning domains. These domains target core areas such as communication, self-help, personal and social development and life skills. Each domain is divided into sub-domains that cover a wide range of skills to address the diverse learning needs of our students.

Peter Hall School has also created a Bank of Objectives as a reference for selecting IEP objectives for a student's program. This bank offers a comprehensive list of objectives for each learning domain.

## PETER HALL SCHOOL LEARNING DOMAINS

Domains	Sub-Domains
Personal Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eating and Drinking</li> <li>• Hygiene</li> <li>• Dressing</li> </ul>
Motor Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gross Motor-Level I</li> <li>• Gross Motor-Level II</li> <li>• Fine Motor</li> </ul>
Academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing</li> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Mathematics</li> <li>• Sciences</li> <li>• Social Studies</li> <li>• Arts</li> <li>• Technology</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receptive</li> <li>• Expressive</li> <li>• Conversation Skills</li> </ul>
Personal and Social Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self Awareness</li> <li>• Social Relations</li> <li>• Play and Leisure</li> </ul>
Independent Living Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Routines</li> <li>• Community Living Skills</li> <li>• Domestic Tasks</li> <li>• Meal Planning and Preparation</li> <li>• Safety</li> </ul>
Initiation to Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work Skills</li> <li>• Pre-vocational Skills</li> </ul>



## EDUCATIONAL PROFILE

The Educational Profile is the blueprint or master plan for developing a student's IEP. It is essential for the educational process as it presents a global portrait of the student. This portrait provides a clear description of the student's strengths, abilities, interests, learning style, and areas of need. It is the result of a synthesis of information gathered from various sources such as student files, assessments, observations, parental input, and team meetings.

The Educational Profile also contains the long term goals and program orientation. This makes it a valuable tool for any short or long term pedagogical planning such as the selection of IEP objectives and teaching interventions for a student's IEP.

### The Consultation Meeting

One of the most important steps in the process for developing a student's Educational Profile is the Consultation Meeting. This meeting serves two purposes. Firstly, it is an opportunity for the school team to pool information from a variety of sources to acquire a fuller understanding of the student's needs. At this meeting, the student's strengths, areas of need, and present level of performance are discussed in some depth. Secondly, it permits members

of the school team to share their thoughts and expertise in a collaborative effort that will result in a consensus concerning the student's long term goals and program orientation.

The members of the school team who may participate in the Consultation Meeting include:

School Director  
Classroom Teacher  
Resource Teacher  
Psychologist  
Occupational Therapist  
Speech Therapist  
Physiotherapist

### Collaboration with Parents

The Educational Profile is the result of a collaborative effort between the parents and members of the school team. Parents are provided with opportunities to get involved in the process for developing their child's Educational Profile. The parents of new admissions can voice their concerns and opinions during the admission interview, and parents can provide their input during the parent-teacher meetings that are scheduled throughout the year.

At the **Establishment Meeting**, the Educational Profile is presented and discussed with the parents. Parents sign the document once they approve it.

## Long Term Goals

Long term goals are a critical component of a student's educational program. They establish priorities for a student's educational needs in each of the learning domains of the school curriculum. These goals are to be implemented within the 3-year period that corresponds to the Educational Profile.

Several factors need to be considered when developing a student's long term goals. These goals must be meaningful and relevant in the daily life of the student, and have both immediate and future utility. Long term goals should also reflect the student's present level of performance; address areas of need; and consider the student's age, strengths, interests, family priorities and cultural values.

Moreover, long term goals should have positive outcomes for a student, in terms of:

- Emotional well-being
- Physical well-being
- Sense of self-worth
- Social relationships
- Quality of home and family life
- Vocational possibilities

## Program Orientation

The program orientation plays a key role in the educational process. It establishes the focus of a student's program by highlighting the learning domains that contain the most significant long term goals. It guides the teacher when planning and developing a student's IEP.

## ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Three assessment tools have been developed by Peter Hall School in order to collect the necessary data for developing a student's *Educational Profile*.

The assessment tools consist of the following:

- Sensory Screening
- Social-Emotional Behavior Screening
- Functional Assessment

### Sensory Screening

The Sensory Screening is a non-standardized assessment tool which provides the teacher with a sensory portrait of the student. It offers the teacher a better understanding of the student's sensory needs and challenges, while providing a valuable tool for developing the appropriate teaching interventions to support a student's educational program. If necessary, the teacher consults with the occupational therapist in developing a *Complementary Service Recommendation* to address the sensory needs of the student.

### Social-Emotional Behavior Screening

The Social-Emotional Behavior Screening is a non-standardized assessment tool which provides the teacher with a general overview of the student's social-emotional behavior. This screening can help the teacher pinpoint specific areas of difficulty, prioritize the behaviors to be addressed, and develop appropriate teaching interventions (strategies, programs and materials) to improve behavior and learning. If necessary, the teacher consults with the school psychologist to develop a *Behavioral Intervention Plan*.

### Functional Assessment

The Functional Assessment is a non-standardized tool that assesses the student's level of competency in each of the seven learning domains. It provides the teacher with a general overview, resulting in a realistic understanding of the student's abilities and learning needs. It identifies the acquired skills; the emerging skills (skills not performed independently /spontaneously); and the priority skills (skills to be acquired).

## INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PLAN

The IEP document is a prescription for developing and implementing the student's educational objectives. These objectives are the stepping stones to achieving the long term goals described in the student's Educational Profile. The choice of these IEP objectives reflects the student's program orientation.

The IEP document contains the IEP objectives and the teaching interventions (strategies, programs and materials). If required, the IEP includes a *Behavioral Intervention Plan*, and/or a *Complementary Service Recommendation*. Both the Behavioral Intervention Plan and Complementary Service Recommendation are written by a member of the complementary services. They are designed to provide specific recommendations and interventions for a student's program.

The IEP does not contain all the skills that a student is learning. This

document focuses on the skills that have been targeted as priorities for the current school year. Therefore, during the course of a school day, the student will work on skills that have not been selected as IEP objectives.

The student's IEP is considered to be a living document, and therefore it is continuously reviewed and updated. At the end of each school term, adjustments are made to the IEP objectives and teaching interventions to correspond to the learning needs of the student.

The IEP document is presented to the parents of a returning student at the first parent-teacher meeting of the school year. When a student is a new admission, the IEP is presented to the parents during the Establishment Meeting. The parents sign the document once they approve it.



## IMPLEMENTATION OF IEP OBJECTIVES

The teacher creates learning opportunities that incorporate the instruction of IEP objectives into the scheduled routines and activities of the student's school day. By using direct instruction for teaching these objectives, the teacher ensures that the student is exposed to the appropriate conditions for learning.

To increase the likelihood of skill acquisition and generalization, students are taught new skills in a meaningful context. School routines such as arrival, departure, lunch and recess present opportune times to learn and practice new skills within naturally occurring situations. The natural setting of the community is also used to teach skills such as pedestrian safety and the use of time and money management.

Furthermore, the instruction of IEP objectives is presented in a variety of

formats to provide a wide range of learning opportunities that will facilitate skill generalization. Instructional practices that expose students to a variety of materials, activities, people, and settings, ensure that new skills can be functionally applied under different conditions. This is very important for increasing the level of student competency for managing different situations in life.

Moreover, to support the implementation of IEP objectives, appropriate teaching interventions are carefully planned and developed. These teaching interventions capitalize on student strengths, abilities and interests to facilitate skill acquisition. There is also a strong focus on designing effective strategies that address the sensory and social-emotional behavioral challenges of a student.

## EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation of a student's learning and progress is a continuous, systematic and ongoing process. Throughout each of the four school terms, the teacher observes and collects data on student performance of the IEP objectives. At the end of each term, the teacher examines and interprets the relevant data. Then the teacher uses his or her knowledge, and experience to make a final judgment on a student's performance.

For the purpose of evaluation, Peter Hall School has developed a specific **Evaluation Scale** that measures the level of student performance. The scores reflect the degree of student competency in the acquisition of knowledge and skills, task performance and the functional application of skills

across different environments. As part of the evaluation process, the school has also developed an **Appreciation Scale** that measures the student's level of cooperation and active participation during the instruction of IEP objectives.

The principle means of collecting data for evaluating the IEP objectives is through direct student observation. The teacher observes the student in a variety of situations and settings, and during either structured or unstructured activities. These may include daily living routines and school activities such as functional academics, leisure, social skills and pre-vocational training. Other means of collecting data for purposes of evaluation include samples of student work and class projects.

## PARENT-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Peter Hall School recognizes that parents are the best source of information about their child and therefore play an integral role in the educational decision making process. For this reason, the School encourages teachers to establish an ongoing and respectful working partnership with parents from the very beginning. During the school year, there are many meaningful opportunities for parents to meet with school personnel to exchange information concerning the educational needs and welfare of their child.

### **Admission Interview**

The admission interview provides an opportunity for the parents of a **new admission** to meet with the school director in order to ask questions, voice their concerns and share valuable information about their child. The information from this interview is recorded in a document, called *Interview with the Parent(s)*.

### **Establishment Meeting**

Peter Hall School invites parents to participate in an Establishment Meeting to discuss their child's educational program. The school director and the

classroom teacher are present at this meeting. However, other members of the school team may attend if their expertise is required. Parents are also welcome to invite outside service providers and other people who are significantly involved in their child's life.

During the Establishment Meeting, the classroom teacher presents the parents with their child's **Educational Profile**. Parents are encouraged to discuss this document with the school team, and share their views concerning their child's learning needs and educational goals. In the case of a student who is a **new admission**, the Establishment Meeting follows a different protocol. The parents are presented with their child's **IEP** along with the **Educational Profile**. At the end of the Establishment Meeting, the parents sign the documents once they approve them.

### **Parent-Teacher Meetings**

Three parent-teacher meetings are held during the school year. Parents have the opportunity to meet with the teacher, the school director and any member of the complementary services.

During the first meeting, the teacher presents the **IEP** to the parents of a **returning student**. The student's IEP objectives and teaching interventions are discussed with the parents. The

teacher may also describe any of the activities and materials that he or she plans to use. At the end of the meeting, the parents sign the IEP once they approve it.

When a student is a **new admission**, the parents meet with the teacher to discuss the student's adaptation and integration to Peter Hall School. The teacher may share his or her opinion regarding some of the educational priorities that might be chosen for the student's program. Parents of a new admission are also encouraged to meet with the school director or members of the complementary services to voice their concerns or obtain additional information regarding their child's needs.

Other parent-teacher meetings throughout the year provide opportunities to discuss the student's learning progress as well as his or her educational needs. Our School encourages parents and teachers to work in partnership to support the student's learning and development.

Parent-teacher meetings are also occasions for parents to be informed of special school projects and other activities in which their child is involved. Parents also have the opportunity to observe samples of their child's schoolwork as well as view some of the learning materials and equipment that are used for their child's educational programming.

## Report Cards

Peter Hall School issues **four report cards** per school year. These report cards correspond to each of the four school terms. The report cards are issued in December, February, April and June. They contain the results of the evaluation of the selected IEP objectives. The teacher may include additional comments concerning the student's learning progress and behavior.

## First Communication to Parents

*First Communication to Parents* is a document issued at the beginning of the school year for students who are **new admissions** to Peter Hall School.

This document serves three purposes:

- To inform parents about their child's adaptation and integration to Peter Hall School.
- To notify parents that their child will undergo a complete pedagogical assessment for planning an educational program.
- To identify the possible learning domains that might be selected as the focus of their child's educational program.

The *First Communication to Parents* document is completed and sent home six weeks following the start of the school year.

## **Other Means of Home-School Communication**

The establishment of mutually agreed patterns of communication with the family throughout the school year is crucial. An exchange of information between home and school can take

various forms, such as phone calls, e-mails, meetings and the school agenda. The School also publishes a newsletter that informs parents about activities, events, conferences, parent support groups, and available services in the community.

## CONCLUSION

The field of special education has experienced dramatic waves of innovation over the past twenty years. We have witnessed significant changes in pedagogical beliefs and practices. These transformations can be attributed to an explosion of new research and a strong public advocacy toward improving educational services for students with special needs.

In Quebec, special education has evolved in accordance with these pedagogical developments. This was reflected in the document “*Adapting Our Schools to the Needs of all Students, Policy on Special Education*”<sup>4</sup>. This policy adopts many of the current educational views and practices, and espouses the philosophy of “**success for all**”. This philosophy is translated through the delivery of quality educational services and programs for all students with special needs.

To be better aligned with the important changes in special education, Peter Hall School decided to re-examine and revise its own educational policy. This

resulted with the creation of the new Peter Hall School Educational Program in the fall of 2006, followed by the publication of the new *Peter Hall School - Educational Policy* two years later. At the same time, the companion manual - *Peter Hall School Educational Program: Guidelines and Procedures* was created.

The impact of these pedagogical revisions has resulted in renewed confidence in Peter Hall School’s continuous efforts to provide quality educational services for students with special needs. Our School offers an educational program that is designed to maximize the potential of each individual, and develop the competencies required for successful integration into the community.

Ultimately, what we hope for is, that despite the many challenges that face students with special needs, they will have the opportunity to be successful in terms of achieving a fulfilling and happy life.

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4. Québec, Ministère de l’Éducation. *Adapting our Schools to the Needs of all Students, Policy on Special Education* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 1999), 35 pages.

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