

E.6 Physically Dependent

Definition

A student with dependent needs is completely dependent on others for meeting all major daily living needs. They will require assistance at all times for feeding, dressing, toileting, mobility and personal hygiene. Without such assistance and personal care support, attendance at school would not be possible. The estimated prevalence in British Columbia of school-age students requiring this very intense level of service is .07% of the student population.

Some students are born with conditions or disabilities that make them dependent, while others acquire conditions or disabilities. For some students, increasing independence as they learn and grow is a reasonable expectation. For other students, decreasing independence may occur due to degenerative conditions or terminal illness.

To be eligible for supplemental funding in this category the following conditions must be met:

- The student meets the above eligibility criteria; and
- A current IEP is in place that includes:
 - individualized goals,
 - adaptations and/or modifications where appropriate,
 - the strategies to meet these goals, and
 - measures for tracking student achievement in relation to the goals.
- Ongoing inclusive education service(s) must be provided.
- The services being provided are beyond those offered to the general student population and are proportionate to level of need.
- The inclusive education services are outlined in the IEP and these directly relate to the student's identified disabilities or diverse abilities.
- Reduction in class size is not by itself a sufficient service to meet the definition.

Identification and Assessment

Assessments should integrate current, relevant information related to their intellectual, social/emotional, sensory, physical and communicative abilities, as well as their ability to perform activities of daily living at school. There must be an Individual Education Plan that recognizes the broad range of intellectual abilities of the student, and that addresses the specific educational, health and personal care needs as well as the strategies to address those needs. Developing an appropriate plan for a student with multiple needs frequently requires input from a number of specialists who are not typically part of a school-based team.

Careful documentation and clear procedures are required to address the health needs of these students while in school. Therefore, the following should be incorporated into the planning: available medical assessments; health care plans; and special emergency procedures (see Appendix H.9 Inter-Ministerial Protocols - Provision of Support Services).

Planning and Implementation

In providing services to a student with dependent needs, unique issues around seating, lifting, positioning, movement, feeding, medication, hygiene and safety will have to be addressed by the school-based team. Many of these can be carried out in a classroom environment, but others, for reasons of privacy and dignity, require a more secluded space. The student will also require adaptations to the learning environment to participate in aspects of school life and to maximize independence. The student should have access to as many parts of the school as possible, to increase opportunities for participation. Equipment accessibility in these areas will also have to be addressed. Adaptations to facilities or equipment to allow access to school areas and programs should be made as quickly as possible where physical barriers exist. The Provincial Outreach Program: Inclusion Outreach can provide information and strategies to maximize participation by students with multiple disabilities.

Recent and ongoing technological advances in adaptive devices related to computer access, environmental controls and augmented communication have greatly enhanced learning opportunities for students with dependent needs. It is expected that specialist staff will stay informed about current developments and introduce new technology as appropriate. The services of the SET-BC program may be appropriate for some of these students (see Appendix H.2.3 SET-BC).

A student with a degenerative and/or terminal condition who is or becomes dependent should have normal routines maintained as long as possible. Health care plans will need regular updating and will need to include emergency procedures to meet individual needs and circumstances.

Evaluation and Reporting

It is expected that districts and schools will include students with dependent needs in regular evaluation and reporting. Many students with dependent needs are of average or above average intellectual ability and can meet the Learning Standards of the BC curriculum when appropriate adaptations are made to instruction and assessment methods. As outlined in the Inclusive Education section of the [K-12 Student Reporting Policy](#), regular reporting procedures are used to communicate student learning for students who use adaptations to access and show their learning.

There will be rare occasions where students require extensive modifications and are assessed and evaluated only on individualized learning goals as outlined in their Individual Education Plan (IEP), and not the Learning Standards of the curriculum for the course or grade they are enrolled. In these instances:

- Written Learning Updates and the Summary of Learning do not need to include a scale indicator or letter grade and percentage
- Written feedback is required that clearly explains the student's progress made towards their individualized learning goals and areas for further growth
- If a scale indicator or a letter grade and percentage are used on Written Learning Updates and the Summary of Learning, it must be noted that the student is being evaluated in relation to their individualized learning goals as outlined in their IEP and not the Learning Standards of the curriculum for the course or grade for which they are enrolled.

For more information, see the K-12 Student Reporting Policy Information for Educators and School Leaders at <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/reporting/information-for-educators-and-school-leaders>, and the K-12 Student Reporting Policy Communicating Student Learning Guidelines at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/k-12-student-reporting-policy-communicating-student-learning-guidelines.pdf>

Reports to parents should be provided on the same schedule used for all students. Progress should be reported with respect to all components of the program and with reference to progress in relation to the IEP goals. Reports should indicate the adaptations and modifications made to the student's educational program. All personnel directly involved in the ongoing educational program (e.g., classroom teacher, specialist teacher, speech- language pathologist) should report on student progress.

Student progress should be evaluated using a range of assessment techniques. These may include criterion-based measures, curriculum-based assessments, teacher observations, samples of student work, and the extent to which IEP goals have been achieved.

Personnel

Teachers and other professionals

The Ministry of Education and Child Care expects that with sufficient training and experience, classroom teachers will be competent in including students with dependent needs, provided that support is available. In-service training opportunities and a collaborative team approach are recommended to support and encourage the development of the skills required.

Specialist teachers with responsibilities for supporting students with dependent needs should fulfill the qualifications described for learning assistance (see Section D1: Learning Assistance Services). In addition, they should have advanced coursework in:

- the characteristics and needs of students with dependent needs;
- specialized instructional methodologies and technologies; and
- adaptation and modification of programs for students with dependent needs. There may also be a need for a qualified health professional to monitor the quality of health services on a regular basis.

Districts should ensure that personnel who serve students with chronic and complex health needs are trained and qualified to perform the functions required.

Education assistants

Education assistants who work in classrooms with students with dependent needs should have sufficient skills and training for the duties they are assigned, including:

- an understanding of the social, emotional, and educational implications of dependent needs;
- functional life skills and career development; and
- technological support.

It should be noted that education assistants work under the direction of a teacher and the general supervision of a teacher or school principal. In-service training should include opportunities to further develop expertise in these and related areas.

Resources

Provincial Resource Program: Inclusion Outreach is an outreach service mandated to assist schools throughout British Columbia in meeting the educational needs of students with multiple/severe disabilities. This program is available to provide information, in-service and teaching strategies to support the classroom teacher and support team to meet the educational needs of the student with multiple/severe disabilities.

For more information, see Inclusion Outreach at <https://www.inclusionoutreach.ca/>