

VIOLENCE PREVENTION in the WORKPLACE

Best Practices

for

Safety in Special Education

Ontario School Boards
recognize the safety challenges
to maintain a safe workplace for
teachers, educational assistants and other
dedicated special education staff
as they support our
students with exceptional learning needs

Accordingly, ESAO presents . . .

the best in the provision of staff training,
selection of personal protective equipment,
and the implementation of special education
policies and procedures as they relate to
workplace safety in our schools

Background

All students have a right to attend school.

In Ontario, students who have behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities, may have educational needs that cannot be met through regular instructional and assessment practices. These needs may be met through accommodations, and/or an educational program that is modified above or below the age-appropriate grade level expectations for a particular subject or course. Such students may be formally identified as exceptional pupils.

In the 2004/05 school year (the most recent figures available) more than 190,000 students were identified as exceptional pupils. A further 99,000 students who were not formally identified were provided with special education programs and services.

All employees have a right to a safe workplace.

With the provincial Ministry of Labour's "Safe-At-Work-Ontario" initiative, ESAO continues to assist school boards to further their reduction of the staff injuries related to the potential of violence by the exceptional student against their dedicated educators.

Ontario's teachers, educational assistants and other dedicated special education staff continue to support our students with exceptional learning challenges. Our school boards are recognizing the safety challenges of the "harder-to-place" student and accordingly, are providing staff training, selecting specific personal protective equipment and implementing special education policies and procedures to meet these challenges thereby improving worker safety.

Observation Note

It became evidently clear, while attempting to collect the best practices from our client school boards, that internal communications between the incumbent health & safety professional and the program services or special education academic departments of our school boards varied greatly across the province. Inherent in special education is a code of confidentiality to protect, and rightfully so, the student with exceptional learning needs. However, when that student's actions and/or behaviours cause injury to the very staff that is to support the student, those in the health and safety arena must become involved. Congratulations to those school boards that break down the silos of the school system and work together as prevention teams, no matter what stripe you wear. Workplace violence prevention can only be achieved through teamwork.

ESAO Purpose

Our goal is to facilitate a collection of "Best Practices" submitted by our client school boards, during 2008-09, that address injury reduction for special education staff.

This collection is displayed beginning at 1:30pm Tuesday May 26th, during the 2009 ESAO 9th Annual Health & Safety Conference, as a "Poster Session", making it available to all conference attendees.

It may even be possible for some submitters to be present during this event to address key points and answer questions about their submission.

Categories of Best Practice Submissions Received and Displayed

Best in the selection of personal protective equipment

PPE specific for Special Education Staff

(Tim Lauzon - Greater Essex County DSB)

Safety Promotion – development of specific Safety in Special Education Posters

(Tim Lauzon - Greater Essex County DSB)

New "Unremarkable" Personal Protective Equipment

(Mary Jane Smith, Sandy Gougeon – Kawartha pine Ridge DSB)

Best in the provision of staff training

Temporary and Occasional Special Education Support Staff Training

(Tim Lauzon - Greater Essex County DSB)

Resource Guide – Worker Safety Plan

(Mary Jane Smith, Sandy Gougeon – Kawartha pine Ridge DSB)

Writing Effective Safety and Behaviour Plans

(Jeanette Johnston – Thames Valley DSB)

Staff Training – Safe Intervention Plan for Special Education

(Corey Boyle – Hamilton Wentworth DSB)

Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Training

(Jeanette Johnston – Thames Valley DSB)

Bus Operator Training –

Successful Bus Rides for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

(Gloria Morris – Bluewater DSB)

Ergonomic Hazards & Prevention for Special Education

(Tim Lauzon - Greater Essex County DSB)

Behaviour Management Systems – BMS

(Paul Addie, Brian Shaver – Ontario Education Services)

Live Safe! Work Smart! – Resources for Teachers of Students with Special Learning needs and Resources for Cooperative Education and Other Forms of Experiential Learning

(Susan Boychuk – Ontario Ministry of Labour)

Best in the implementation of special education policies and procedures as they related to workplace safety

Student Transition Safety Checklist for Special Education

(Emmanuale Novelletto, Tim Lauzon - Greater Essex County DSB)

Classroom /School Safety Audit for Special Education

(Corey Boyle – Hamilton Wentworth DSB)

START Team – Short Term Accommodation Response Team

(Jeanette Johnston – Thames Valley DSB)

Itinerant Teachers

(Jeanette Johnston – Thames Valley DSB)

Safety Plans – Management in Safe and Supportive ways

(Lynn Schaule – Dufferin-Peel Catholic DSB)

Notification to Employees – Risk of Injury from Student

(Chris Broadbent, Anne Sheppard – Toronto DSB)

Resource Guide for Working Safely – Positive Behavioural Support Plan

(Mary Jane Smith, Sandy Gougeon – Kawartha pine Ridge DSB)

BIOGRAPHY – ED HAGER

Ed Hager is a member of the Field Consultant Team from the Education Safety Association of Ontario, drawing from over 28 years of health & safety experience.

Ed was principle author for the 2003 ESAO resource book, “Safety in Special Education” and most recently principle reviewer for ESAO’s Workplace Violence Prevention Program, Dealing With a Difficult or Angry Person and Working Alone resource books.

In the early nineties, as the health & safety manager of a large teaching hospital, Ed initiated and implemented its first Code White program and violence prevention response team, using the Crisis Prevention Institute model.

Ed has volunteered in the field of special education representing developmentally challenged persons for over fifteen years. He is past-president of the London Down Syndrome Association which also included an eight year seat as a Special Education Advisory Committee member for the Thames Valley District School Board. Ed is proud of his son, Art, a successful student enrolled in a developmental program in high school.

Presently, Ed is certified as an active coach for Ontario Special Olympics, in both technical and practical aspects.

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