



Focus on Families

Education Issue - - - - Winter 2006

What the Children of Jowonio Know

The Children of Jowonio know — not because they have been told but because they have lived it.

✓ That there is always room for everyone — in the circle and at snack time and on the playground — and even if they have to wiggle a little to get another body in and even if they have to find a new way to do it, they can figure it out — and so it might be reasonable to assume that there's enough room for everyone in the world.

The Children of Jowonio know— not because they have been told but because they have lived it.

✓ That children come in a dazzling assortment of sizes, colours and shapes, big and little and all shades of brown, beige and pink, and some walk and some use wheelchairs but everyone gets around and that 'same' is boring

and so it might be reasonable to assume that everyone in the world could be accepted for who they are.

The Children of Jowonio know — not because they have been told but because they have lived it.

✓ That there are people who talk with their mouths and people who talk with their hands and people who talk by pointing and people who tell us all we need to know with their bodies if we only listen well and so it might be reasonable to assume that all people of the world could learn to talk to and listen to each other.



The Children of Jowonio know — not because they have been told but because they have lived it.

✓ That we don't send people away because they are different or even because they are difficult, and that all people need support and that if people are hurting, we take time to notice, and that words can be bridges and hugs can heal the wounds and make a world fit for us all.

Excerpt from *We Can Change the World: A Practical Guide to Building Co-operative, Inclusive Classroom Communities* by Mara Sapon-Shevin (1999) Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon (page 6)

Note: Mara Shapon-Shevin is a professor of Special Education at Syracuse University. She wrote this for the opening of Jowonio School, an inclusive school in Syracuse, N.Y.

Philosophy of Inclusion

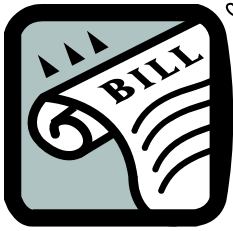
Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth is committed to fostering inclusion for all people. Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that allows every individual to feel accepted, valued and safe. An inclusive community consciously evolves to meet the changing needs of its members. Through recognition 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.

Positive relationships are formed when families and schools work together. Everyone has valuable information to share. Parents know their children better than anyone. Educators are professionals with extensive training and experience. Everyone's contribution is valuable.

Source: Manitoba Education, Citizenship & Youth pamphlet — *Working Together: A Guide to Positive Problem Solving for Schools, Families, and Communities*

Let not our needs determine our dreams . . . but let our dreams determine our needs.

Source: Pike, K. and Steinbach, A, (2002) "Achieving Inclusion Education in New Brunswick," Fredericton: New Brunswick Association for Community Living



Snapshot

Bill 13 Appropriate Education Legislation

1. General Obligation

- Appropriate educational programming
- Attendance in a regular class of peers
- School-related activities should reasonably accommodate the needs of all students

2. Assessment

- A Principal must ensure that a pupil is assessed as soon as reasonably practicable
- Specialized assessments should be used if regular assessment protocols by school staff are not

able to assist the pupil in meeting curricular outcomes

- Parents must provide informed consent when referral for specialized assessment is deemed necessary by the school.
- Specialized assessments must be conducted by qualified personnel

3. The IEP

- All students who cannot meet expected learning outcomes shall have an IEP (Individualized Education Program)
- An IEP is a team effort with the pupil's teacher, in-school personnel, parents and any other support service persons participating
- IEPs shall be updated annually or sooner if required by a change in pupil's needs
- The principal must ensure that the pupil's parents are meaning-

fully involved in the development and updating of the IEP

- Parents may be accompanied and assisted by a person of their choosing during the IEP development and updating process.

4. Transitioning

- Pupil files must follow children to new schools within two weeks
- School boards must not deny educational programming for more than 14 days after the pupil seeks to be enrolled in a school regardless of whether the pupil's file has been received

5. Dispute Resolution

- Provision of both informal and formal methods for resolving disputes.
- Appointment of a Review Co-ordinator by Manitoba

How Parents Can Support Teachers

1. **Articulate needs and expectations.** Ex: "Ian has difficulty copying from the board. He needs someone to scribe for him."
2. **Work in partnership.** Ex: "I have a meeting next week with Anne's Occupational Therapist. Are there any concerns about Anne's performance in class that I can bring to his/her attention?"
3. **Advocate for both child and teacher supports.**
4. **Share information.** Reports from other professionals may contain information that can help your child's teacher to work more effectively towards your child's educational goals.
5. **Provide complementary community activities for child.** Swimming, team sports, music lessons, etc, all help your child to learn skills (concentration, motor coordination, turn taking, etc) that can play important roles in their education.

Principals need to know how to create the school wide conditions that support effective special education. Special education does not exist in a vacuum within a school. It has never been more important for principals to integrate special education into all aspects of the school and to ensure that efforts to improve schools fully include special education.

Source: *What Every Principal Needs to Know about Special Education* McLaughlin, M.J. & Nicolet, V. (2004)

When You Have a Problem...

What do I do first?

The most important thing to do when you or your child is having a problem at school is to talk with the person who is most directly involved and most likely to be able to resolve it with you.

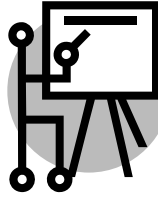
Who should I call?

- 1st: Speak to the teacher.
- 2nd: If the problem hasn't been resolved, speak with the Principal.
- 3rd: If a resolution to the problem still has not been reached, find out if there is anyone else you can contact in your school division.
- 4th: If the issue is still unresolved then speak with the superintendent.
- 5th: Contact the Board of Trustees. Your elected school trustee can assist you with this process.
- 6th: Contact the Department of Education, Citizenship & Youth Review Co-ordinator for assistance.

Source: *Working Together: A Guide to Positive Problem Solving for School, Families, and Communities*, Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth.

Possible Sources of Information

- School and school board office (information about policies and procedures)
- Your local parents advisory council
- Manitoba Association of Parent Councils Advocacy Project
- Manitoba Association of Parent Councils Office
- Office of the Ombudsman
- Local child & youth service agencies
- Community and school-based counselling services
- Mental Health Agencies



What resources might help you prepare for a meeting?

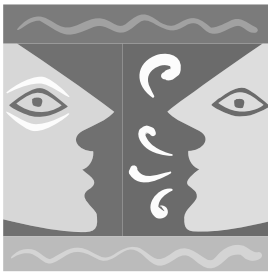
—Materials and tip sheets from Manitoba

Association of Parent Councils Advocacy Project (MAPCAP) accessed via email mapcap@mapc.ca, website www.mapc.mb.ca, or by phone at 945-6977 or 1-877-290-4702.

—*Speaking Up! A Parent Guide to Advocating for Students in Public Schools* from British Columbia

Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC). They can be found on the web at www.bccpac.bc.ca, 202-1545 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6J 1T5, phone 604-687-4433.

- School Division/District policies
- School policies
- *Fair Schools Report*, Office of the Ombudsman
- *Parents' Guide to Individual Education Planning*
- Bill 13 Appropriate Education Legislation



There are three possible broad approaches to the conduct of interpersonal relations. The first is to consider one's self only and ride roughshod over others. The second is always to put others before oneself. The third approach is the golden mean. The individual places himself first, but takes others into account.

—Joseph Wolpe

Knowing Your Communication Style

Assertive Behaviour Style—

Assertive individuals deliver their message in a manner that not only preserves the dignity of the other person, but also demonstrates consideration for that person's feelings and opinions.

Verbal Cues—

- I choose to...
- I think....
- I feel....
- This was my mistake and here is what I will do now...
- What do you think?
- What are the *real* issues here?
- What are our options?

Basic Beliefs—

- I have rights and so do others.
- I may not always win, but I can always manage the situation.
- I have the right to change my mind.
- I deserve courtesy and respect.

- Sacrificing my rights often results in training others to mistreat me.
- I take responsibility for my behaviour, thoughts and feelings.
- I can say "no" without feeling guilty.
- I can evaluate each situation and choose whether to assert my views.

The DESC Model for Communicating Assertively—

Describe the issue, situation or behaviour clearly and objectively to the individual, using specific, behaviourally based examples.

Express your thoughts and feelings calmly. Let others know how their behaviour impacts you, directing your comments to the behaviour itself, not to the person.

Specify what you want to see happen: Ask explicitly for the behaviour change you are looking for. Be

specific so that there is little room for misinterpretation or misunderstanding. Also specify what behaviour changes *you* are willing to make as part of this process.

Consequences . . . Let the other person know what you expect to see as a result of this change process. Inform the individual of the outcome for positive change as well as for non-cooperation.

Source: *Sharon Bower, Sanford University's Institute for Behavioural Counselling, Reference: Jean Baer, How to Be An Assertive (Not Aggressive) Woman, (New York: Rawson Associates Publishers Inc., 1976)*

The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn't said.

—Peter F. Drucker

Anyone can become angry, that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, and in the right way, that is not easy.

— Aristotle



Questions to Ask Yourself

How do I know when I have an issue?

First, determine **what** is it that is bothering you. Then consider **why** it is bothering you. For instance . . .

- Does it compromise my/our value system?
- How does it make me/my child feel?
- When did it start and how long has it been going on?
- Who is involved?
- What's my role in it? (Always a tough question because it requires inner reflection.)
- Do I have time to pursue a solution to it?
- What will happen if I don't solve this problem?

What about self-advocacy?

Do I have the time?

This could involve making a phone call, writing a letter, or arranging a meeting to get the process started.

What are my strengths and weaknesses?

Am I too emotional? Do I need help staying on track? Do I feel intimidated by meeting with authority figures? Am I good at keeping notes? Do I understand how the process works?

Do I have a solution in mind?

Resolution is an achievable goal based on the principle of fairness. Does my solution keep my child's welfare as top priority? Begin with the end in mind.

Do I have a support system?

Spouse, friend, professional supports, case workers, community workers, to assist me.

Do I want resolution, yet act by retribution?

Thinking or saying, "I want that

teacher fired!" is expressing resolution by retribution, which may not be achievable and may be an unrealistic expectation based on your impulse for retaliation. Remember that your priority is your child's welfare, and to resolve your issue. Instead of having the teacher fired, you may have your child transferred to a different classroom or have an educational assistant work directly with your child to help them reach their curricular goals. A good resolution addresses balance and creates a win/win solution.

Do I know the process?

To whom do I talk first in the chain of command? Teacher, Principal, Superintendent, Board of Trustees etc. Remember that it is easier to solve a problem at the local level than to take it into a formal dispute resolution process. Developing good working relationships helps.

Can I document and prepare?

Keeping a "paper trail" is necessary so that you have a record of conversations and meetings that have taken place.

Do I plan to communicate by phone

or by letter? Am I comfortable with making the phone call or writing the letter? How much "prep time" do I need to do it well? What if phone calls and letters aren't enough or are discouraged, what's my "Plan B" and who can help me?

Is follow-up important?

Thinking about whether you will need to stay involved as your child moves on through the education system is important. Staying the course of the vision and goals you have for your child will help things progress with clarity.

What if no resolution is found?

There are more formal dispute resolution processes in place. You may have to contact the office of Manitoba Education Citizenship & Youth to follow-up with your concern if no

Take another look at whether you need assistance to pursue resolution. This could be a parent, another support person, or more formal assistance through the Manitoba Association of Parent Councils (MAPC) Advocacy Project

Do you know the difference between education and experience?



Education is when you read the fine print; experience is what you get when you don't.

— Pete Seeger

Human Rights Considerations

Prior to November 2005, Section 41 of the Public Schools Act contravened International, Canadian, and Provincial Human Rights. The following are examples that address people with disabilities and their right to not be discriminated against simply because they have a disability. Access to services that include an education can therefore not be denied.

- **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**
- **Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms**
- **Manitoba Human Rights Code**
- **Manitoba Public Education Act (with the proclamation of Bill-13)**

Education legislation is one of many that have been impacted because of human rights laws and codes.

Section 41 of The Public Schools Act

How change occurred . . .

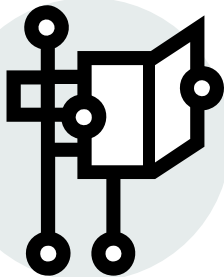
and why it's important!

Over the past 50 years children with developmental disabilities have moved from being denied access to public education to being included in the classroom. The journey into the classroom began well over a decade ago when Community Living Manitoba along with other advocates of inclusive education began to press the Manitoba government to change the way students in special education received services.

The Manitoba Department of Education, Citizenship & Youth met with and heard from parents on a regular basis about the issues they and their children faced in receiving adequate, standardized, appropriate, and respectful education. There were numerous jurisdictional differences. Many discussions with all stakeholders resulted in the creation of Bill-13, which deals with the responsibilities of the school board.

Bill 13, an amendment to Section 41 of The Public Schools Act, must have supporting regulations that provide direction to school boards to assist them in aligning school board policies with the changes in regulations.

Bill-13 was given "Royal Assent" in 2004 and the supporting regulations proclaimed in early November 2005. It is hoped that changes to Section 14 of the Manitoba Public Schools Act will end discrimination and facilitate a climate where all children can participate as they desire (with supports if necessary) in order to reach their full potential.



This newsletter is a compilation of information presented at the "Advocacy 101" Parent Retreat held in October 2005 in Pinawa, MB

Extremely well received by participants who attended, we hope that some of the collected facts contained herein will be of

assistance to those who were unable to be present. As always, we welcome your questions, requests for more information, suggestions, and feedback!

This newsletter is produced for families by

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Community Living - Manitoba Inc. is dedicated to the full inclusion in the community of persons of all ages who live with an intellectual disability.

BILL 13

WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?

Manitoba Council for Exceptional Children invites you to attend:
A Forum on the Regulations and What They Mean To You

Date: February 15, 2006

Place: Fairmont Hotel
2 Lombard Place
Winnipeg Manitoba

Time: 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Cost: Free

A human rights lawyer will provide a legal perspective on Bill 13 and the Regulations. What do they mean? Do the regulations match the intent of Bill 13?

Yvonne Peters
Lawyer

Ms. Peters practices as a lawyer in Winnipeg specializing in equality rights and human rights law. Her practice offers a blend of legal advice and social policy development.

In addition to her work as a lawyer, public speaker, educator, law reform consultant and board member, Yvonne Peters is a prolific volunteer. She has worked with numerous organizations, including the Canadian Disability Rights Council, Women's Health Clinic and the National Association of Women and the law.

Jason Drysdale
School Principal

Jason is a principal in the River East Transcona School Division. He has administrative and teaching experience from Kindergarten to Senior 4. Jason has worked on various school and divisional level committees in various areas including the areas of curriculum planning and implementation, differentiation, and school planning.

During the presentation, Jason will share his experiences on helping school staff as they begin to work with the requirements of the Appropriate Education Act.

Annette Lyss
Manitoba Association of
Parent Councils

A parent, in the Seine River School Division, will provide a parent's perspective on what the regulations mean or don't mean in providing an appropriate education for their children.

Ms. Lyss has served on the Board of the Manitoba Association of Parent Councils (MAPC) for the past six years and is currently the Co-President. She has served as a MAPC representative on the Department of Education's Special Education Inclusion Committee for the past few years.

Ms. Lyss has always had an interest in the topic of Inclusive Education, having attended school with exceptional children in junior and senior high, and currently as a parent, and as support worker of exceptional children.

For information contact, Jim Hoddinott at 222-9577 or by email: jhoddinott@retsd.ca.

REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED

