

# Children with special educational needs in early childhood <sup>[1]</sup>

Concept Paper prepared for the Atkinson Centre Early Years Task Force

**Author:** Underwood, Kathryn & Langford, Rachel

**Source:** Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development

**Publication Date:** 11 Jun 2011

## AVAILABILITY

Paper in pdf <sup>[2]</sup>

Excerpts from the paper:

All children need supports to achieve their optimal development. All young children need parenting, peer interaction, and educational opportunities in order to develop social skills, language, physical and cognitive competence. For many children with disabilities, this also includes early intervention strategies that might come from medical and clinical intervention, therapeutic interventions and/or family supports that increase resilience where there are risk factors for children and their families. Because of the importance of these programs, the United Nations has identified early intervention as a right in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In addition, the Ontario Human Rights Code identifies the duty to accommodate in all service delivery, including in education.

Existing early years programs such as child care, preschool, and kindergarten are sometimes poorly integrated with early intervention services and supports. The result is that families struggle with barriers to accessing child care and early learning if their children have special educational needs. In order to get intensive early intervention supports, many families keep their children out of kindergarten programs. Additionally, the shortage of childcare spaces and inconsistent quality in child care across Ontario has resulted in limited options for families. These options are even more limited for children with disabilities, because getting a child care space is often contingent on the attitudes of educators and child care supervisors and the capacity of centres to keep ratios low, to program for a diverse range of needs and to work with other professionals who may be providing supports to these children. Despite the fact that many child care centres have adopted inclusion policies, and that schools have been moving toward inclusive practice since the 1980's, this does not guarantee that these policies are being implemented.

**Region:** Canada <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** quality <sup>[4]</sup>

special needs <sup>[5]</sup>

---

**Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/11/06/children-special-educational-needs-early-childhood>

## Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/11/06/children-special-educational-needs-early-childhood> [2]

[http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson/UserFiles/File/Policy Commentaries/AC\\_PolicyCommentary6\\_SpecialEducationalNeeds.pdf](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson/UserFiles/File/Policy%20Commentaries/AC_PolicyCommentary6_SpecialEducationalNeeds.pdf) [3]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/quality> [5]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/special-needs>