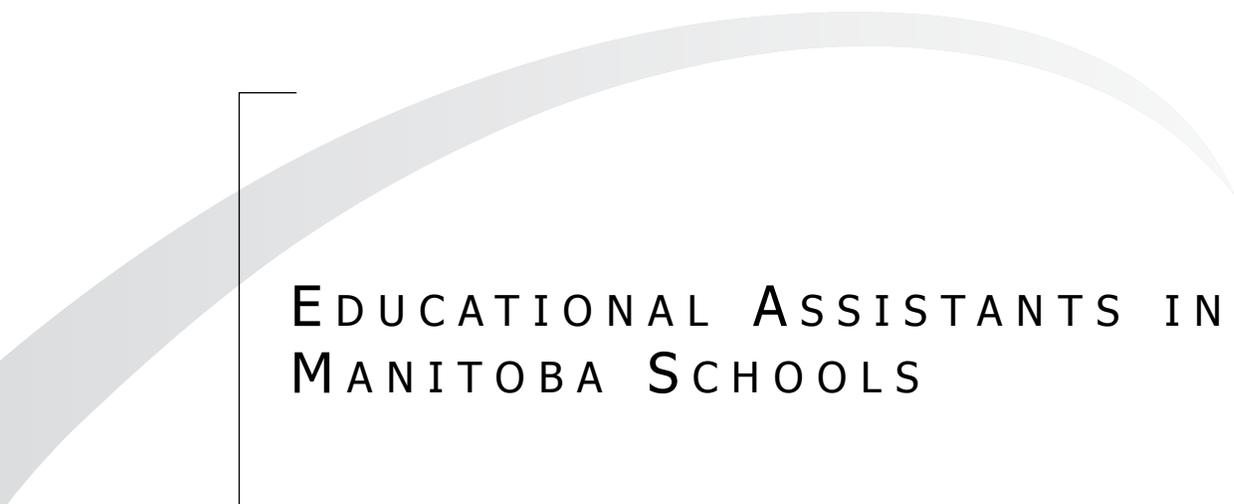


Educational Assistants in Manitoba Schools



EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS IN
MANITOBA SCHOOLS

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Any websites referenced in this document are subject to change. Educators are advised to preview and evaluate websites and online resources before recommending them for student use.

This resource is available on the Manitoba Education website at
<www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/support/ed_assistants/index.html>.

Ce document est disponible en français.

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Document

The purpose of *Educational Assistants in Manitoba Schools* is to provide educators, school administrators, and school division administrators with a resource to support the work of educational assistants in Manitoba schools.

This is not a policy document. Decisions made under the local authority of school divisions are outside this document's scope. These include decisions regarding

- hiring practices
- orientation and training requirements
- provision of training opportunities
- financial allocations to support educational assistant training
- allocation of educational assistant time
- supervision and evaluation of educational assistants by professional staff

Target Audience

This document is intended for educators and school/school division administrators.

PHILOSOPHY OF INCLUSION

Manitoba Education 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.

Providing an appropriate education to all Manitoba students is a goal expressed in Manitoba Education's philosophy of inclusion. The *Public Schools Amendment Act (Appropriate Educational Programming)*, S.M. 2004, c. 9*, proclaimed on October 28, 2005, reflects this commitment to providing all students with appropriate educational programming that supports their participation in the academic and social life of their school.

* *The Public Schools Amendment Act (Appropriate Educational Programming)*, S.M. 2004, c. 9, is available online at <<http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/2004/c00904e.php>>.

Document Content and Organization

This document is organized into the following sections:

- **Introduction:** This section identifies the purpose of this document for the intended audience within the context of Manitoba’s philosophy of inclusion. It also gives a brief overview of the document content and organization.
- **Educational Assistants in Manitoba Schools:** This section discusses the purpose, roles, and responsibilities of educational assistants. In addition, it addresses the hiring, orientation, and training of educational assistants.
- **Appendices:** The following appendices provide additional information and resources related to educational assistants:
 - **Appendix A: Roles and Responsibilities** identifies separate and joint roles and responsibilities of teachers and educational assistants.
 - **Appendix B: Student-Specific Competencies** gives examples of student-specific competencies, which are intended to provide suggestions for areas of training for educational assistants.
 - **Appendix C: Manitoba Education Resources** suggests resources to support appropriate educational programming, which are found on the Department’s Student Services website.
 - **Appendix D: Web Links** suggests links to the websites of service and training agencies that provide additional information pertaining to educational assistants.
- **References:** The resources referred to within this document are cited as references.

Who Are Educational Assistants?

An educational assistant is a person hired to support the work of professional staff, such as teachers and clinicians. Educational assistants are valued members of the school community. They make a significant contribution to the work of the school and toward the education of all students.

Educational assistants work within school and school division policies and practices. Their roles are determined by the needs of the school division. Their day-to-day activities are directed by the principal, teacher, or other professionals under whose supervision they work, and can be as varied as the teachers and students they support.

THE EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION ACT

*Persons Having Care and Charge of Pupils Regulation, M.R. 23/2000**

Persons who may have care and charge of pupils

- 1(1) The following persons may have care and charge of pupils:
- (a) a school clinician;
 - (b) a paraprofessional employed by the school board to work with teachers and pupils as part of the teaching-learning process;
 - (c) a student teacher;
 - (d) a volunteer;
 - (e) a person who has been authorized by the school board or its delegate.

Duties of paraprofessionals

- 4 A paraprofessional shall perform the duties assigned by the principal. Those duties may not include any of the following:
- (a) organizing or managing the classroom;
 - (b) planning teaching strategies;
 - (c) directing the learning experiences of pupils, including assessing individual needs, selecting materials to meet those needs and evaluating progress.

* *Persons Having Care and Charge of Pupils Regulation, M.R. 23/2000*, a regulation made under *The Education Administration Act, C.C.S.M. c. E10*, is available online at <<http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/regs/pdf/e010-023.00.pdf>>.

What Do Educational Assistants Do?

Educational assistants assist in keeping students engaged in the range of activities that take place in the learning environment. These activities, for example, may be academic, social, or related to specific student needs. They can take place in a variety of situations and settings, ranging from group work to individual pursuits, and from reading and writing to painting, drawing, and working with objects.

Classroom activities and lessons require a teacher's planning, organization, scheduling, and coordination. Educational assistants may be asked to assist the supervising teacher with this preparatory work. This "extra pair of eyes and hands" can be invaluable to the smooth functioning of the classroom.

The classroom can be an active, fast-paced work environment. Educational assistants respond to the needs of the students as well as the teacher and/or school team in a timely and appropriate way. By keeping the lines of communication open with members of the school staff, sharing information, and giving and receiving feedback, the educational assistants support teachers in the high volume of activity and change that takes place in a typical workday.

The day-to-day tasks of educational assistants often involve several responsibilities. They may be expected to operate and maintain specialized devices, equipment, and technologies. They may be required to assemble, organize, and construct support materials as directed by the teacher while attending to one or more students. This requires organization and the ability to multi-task.

Sometimes students require practice, time, or support to feel that they can perform a task. Educational assistants assist students by explaining, demonstrating, and modelling the skills and attitudes necessary to encourage and support learning as facilitated by the teacher. Educational assistants should be familiar with students' specific learning needs and preferences. This can help build positive relationships with students, which increases the effectiveness of student learning support.

Educational assistants help classroom teachers with the supervision of students, which involves following supervision timetables and plans based on school guidelines and procedures. It also involves contributing to student safety, reinforcing a positive, welcoming environment, and resolving situations that may pose a risk to students or compromise their educational opportunities. Educational assistants also identify safety issues and take preventive measures, by following established safety policies and procedures.

The supervision of students also involves providing support in everyday activities and encouraging positive student interaction. Some students, for example, may not be fully aware of the dangers their actions might pose. Educational assistants watch for potential problem situations and prevent escalation of conflict whenever possible. A basic understanding of appropriate student behaviour and the factors that affect behaviour can help to manage and direct students more effectively.

Under the direction of teachers and other professional staff, educational assistants assist students who require ongoing, long-term support through plans developed specifically for them by an in-school team. Educational assistants may be called upon to work together with members of an individual student's in-school team. While the composition of this team will vary according to the individual student's needs, it typically consists of those people who are involved with the student on a daily basis at school.

Students with specific plans work toward outcomes that are specific to their learning needs. Examples of these specific plans include

- IEPs (individual education plans)
- BIPs (behaviour intervention plans)
- ERPs (emergency response plans)
- IHCPs (individual health care plans)

Being familiar with the purpose and the terminology of these plans will help clarify educational assistants' responsibilities. It will also support more effective communication with the students, teachers, and supervisors with whom they work.

For a comparison of teacher and educational assistant roles and joint responsibilities, please see Appendix A: Roles and Responsibilities.

Resources

For more information, please refer to the following resources:

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. *Appropriate Educational Programming: Standards for Student Services*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2006.

———. *Student-Specific Planning: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing IEPs*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, revised version in development.

These and other documents are available on the Department's Student Services website at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/documents.html>.

Hiring Educational Assistants

Based on local requirements, school divisions determine the general qualifications and/or specific requirements of the educational assistants they hire. Depending on the position, typical factors for consideration include formal education, experience, and demonstrated abilities. A child abuse registry check and a criminal record check are part of the hiring process.

School division administration typically oversees the hiring of educational assistants and the allocation of educational assistant time in schools. Consultation with school principals and teaching staff identifies skills required for educational assistants' work assignment(s).

Practical skills of educational assistants include the ability to

- engage students in activities that promote learning
- motivate and encourage student participation
- support students to prepare for and successfully complete transitions throughout the school day
- assist students with gathering and organizing information and materials, meeting deadlines and assignment requirements, reviewing materials, and preparing for tests, as assigned
- support student learning by providing explanations and skill demonstrations, and by modelling appropriate classroom behaviour to reinforce lessons taught by the teacher
- assist students in resolving interpersonal conflicts
- establish positive and respectful relationships with students and foster an effective learning environment
- facilitate student independence by reinforcing strategies to help students develop and use a process for problem solving
- apply strategies to build student self-confidence and promote student independence
- reinforce an atmosphere of safety and respect
- communicate effectively and respectfully with students, using language and tone appropriate to the student and situation
- interact with staff in a manner that contributes to positive relationships
- work collaboratively and cooperatively to support student programming
- organize and coordinate daily work activities to complete specific tasks
- identify work requirements and timelines from written and verbal instructions, asking for clarification as required
- approach the teacher to access information and resources in order to carry out work assignment(s)

- assemble, organize, collate, and construct materials according to teacher direction
- assist with supervision in school and community settings
- observe and record student performance/behaviour objectively and report it to the teacher
- operate, maintain, and supervise student use of specialized devices, equipment, and technologies, following safety requirements
- use equipment to the proficiency level required for current work assignment(s)

Orienting Educational Assistants

School/school division administrators provide educational assistants with orientation information before they begin work. Orientation topics include

- responsibilities of professional and non-professional staff
- school/school division policy and practices as they apply to current work assignment(s)
- conduct appropriate to a school environment
- safety requirements for equipment use
- first-aid administration
- medication administration
- sick day/storm day procedures
- confidentiality requirements concerning student information
- appropriate communication with teachers, other professional staff, and family and community members
- responsibilities as a member of the school team for student(s) with exceptional needs
- indicators of and requirements/protocols for reporting child abuse

Ongoing, regular communication with educational assistants ensures they are informed of work expectations and any changes in these expectations.

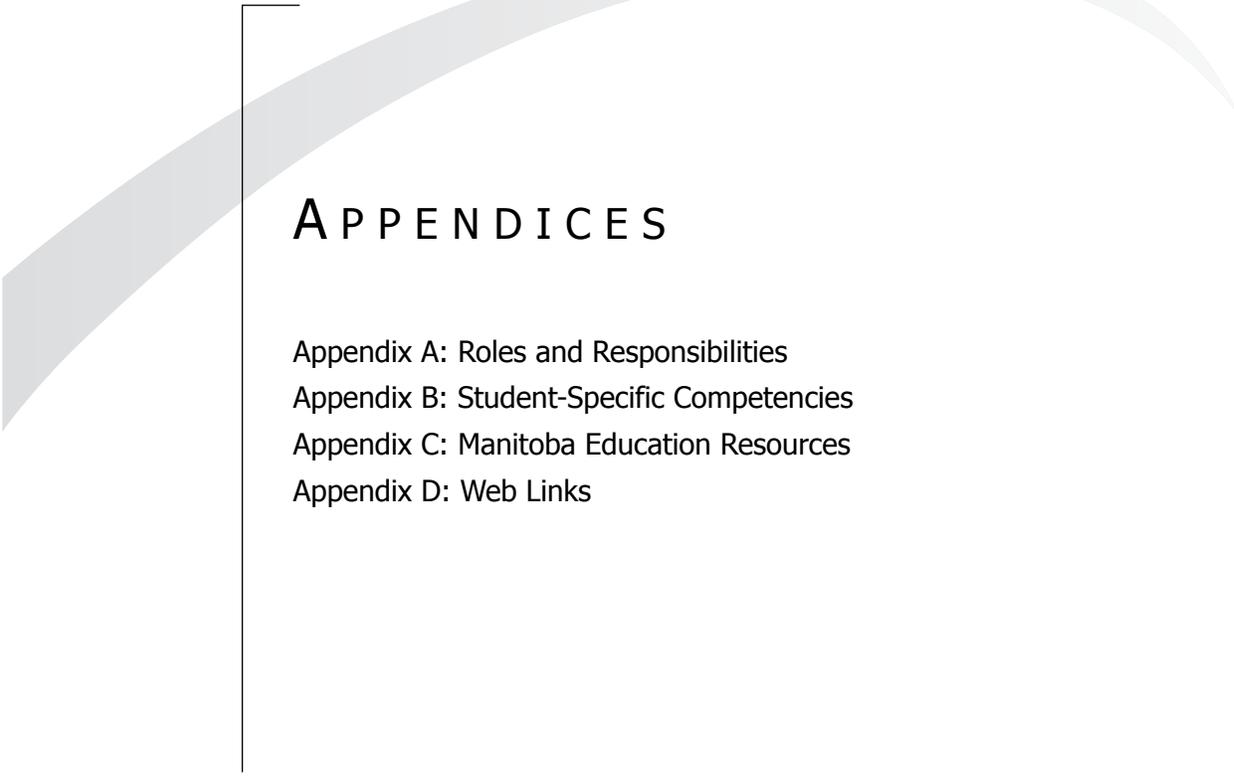
Training Educational Assistants

Depending on work assignment(s), educational assistants may be asked to engage in specific training or study activities. This training is arranged by the school or school division, as required.

Some students require occasional support, while others may require ongoing, long-term support designed specifically for them. Professional members of the school team, in consultation with the student's family, create the student-specific programming described on page 5.

A student with physical needs may need a wheelchair, for example. A visually impaired student may need the ongoing support of Braille translation. Other needs may not be as constant. A student with mental health needs may require the administration of medication for a period of time. Some students will have multiple needs.

Skills related to programming for students with exceptional learning needs are called *student-specific competencies*. A *competency* is the ability to perform a specific skill or set of skills related to a work assignment under the direction of a teacher or other professional. Examples of student-specific competencies are contained in Appendix B. The samples in this appendix are intended to provide suggestions for areas of educational assistant training. They are not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive, nor are they the only source of training topics.



APPENDICES

Appendix A: Roles and Responsibilities

Appendix B: Student-Specific Competencies

Appendix C: Manitoba Education Resources

Appendix D: Web Links

APPENDIX A: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following table identifies separate and joint roles and responsibilities of teachers and educational assistants.

Duties of Teachers and Educational Assistants: A Summary*			
	Duties of Teachers	Joint Activities (Teachers and Educational Assistants)	Duties of Educational Assistants
Assessing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess learning needs, based on class and individual student profiles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss student abilities, strengths, and weaknesses. Attend program-planning meetings at the teacher's request. 	
Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop programming based on required curriculum and individual student needs, choosing from available alternatives. Prepare individual education plans (IEPs). Maintain current student profiles and IEPs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss desired outcomes for the student. Discuss educational, behavioural, and emotional goals. 	
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan lesson activities and choose resources. Choose appropriate adaptations/modifications to meet IEP specifications. Establish priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the preparation of materials and adaptations/modifications to the curriculum based on student needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist in collecting, collating, and organizing materials, creating displays, and undertaking other supportive activities.
Supervising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a clearly understood classroom management structure, classroom rules, and expectations for students. Work within school management structures, school rules, and expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet regularly to discuss student progress. Discuss and clarify expectations for student behaviour and classroom rules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work within established school structures, including classroom management structures, behavioural rules, and student expectations. Document and report to the teacher, as appropriate.

continued

* **Source:** The Alberta Teachers' Association. *Teachers and Teachers' Assistants: Roles and Responsibilities*. Rev. ed. Edmonton, AB: The Alberta Teachers' Association, 2007. 5, 6, and 9. Available online at <www.teachers.ab.ca/Quick%20Links/Publications/Other%20Publications/Teachers%20and%20Teachers%20%20Assistants%20%20Roles%20and%20Responsibilities/Pages/Index.aspx>. Adapted with permission.

Reference: The Manitoba Teachers' Society. *Teachers and Educational Assistants: Roles and Responsibilities*. Winnipeg, MB: The Manitoba Teachers' Society, 2004. 11–12. Available online at <www.mbteach.org/library/Archives/Handbooks/HB-EAmanual.pdf>.

Duties of Teachers and Educational Assistants: A Summary (continued)

	Duties of Teachers	Joint Activities (Teachers and Educational Assistants)	Duties of Educational Assistants
Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Implement lesson plans and direct teaching related to those lesson plans. ■ Supervise and facilitate student learning. ■ Model techniques and appropriate language. ■ Provide resources for educational assistants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Clarify and share outcomes and experiences. ■ Discuss specific strategies, activities, and outcomes. ■ Discuss workplace location. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Clarify elements of the lesson for students. ■ Supervise reinforcement activities. ■ Reinforce specific techniques, strategies, and language as directed by the teacher. ■ Document, monitor, and report objective information to the teacher.
Evaluating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Monitor and evaluate student progress and programming. ■ Monitor the implementation of the IEP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Discuss observations. ■ Exchange information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Observe student behaviour and provide information to teachers. ■ Collect and record data for use in student evaluation. ■ Mark objective tests and assignments for teachers to review.
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Report to parents/legal guardians and the school team, both formally and informally, as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Discuss student information, as appropriate. ■ Maintain confidentiality within policies and practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Report to teachers on students' strengths, achievements, and needs. ■ Report to teachers on observed student behaviour and outcomes.
Staying Current	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keep up to date on school, school division, and provincial policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Follow policies and guidelines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keep up to date on school, school division, and provincial policies.

APPENDIX B: STUDENT-SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES

Skills related to programming for students with exceptional learning needs are called *student-specific competencies*. The following examples of student-specific competencies are intended to provide suggestions for areas of educational assistant training. This list is not exhaustive and is not intended to reflect mandatory work descriptors for educational assistants.

All work assignments are carried out under the supervision of appropriate school/school division professional staff.

Communication

The educational assistant is able to

- accurately record correct/incorrect student speech-sound productions in an appropriate format
- accurately record correct/incorrect student language productions in an appropriate format
- adjust spoken language to accommodate student ability and need
- use strategies and techniques to develop and strengthen student production and comprehension of language
- use basic language-facilitation strategies and techniques
- accurately record fluent/non-fluent productions by students receiving stuttering therapy in an appropriate format
- use fluency-enhancing strategies appropriately with students receiving stuttering therapy
- accurately record correct/incorrect student vocal productions in an appropriate format
- use voice-improvement strategies appropriately with students receiving voice therapy
- facilitate and support student use of augmentative/alternative communication devices (low-tech and high-tech)
- program and perform basic troubleshooting on augmentative/alternative communication devices
- assemble/organize/construct communication materials (e.g., articulation books, tactile schedules, social stories)
- provide appropriate cues and prompts

Health/Medical Needs

The educational assistant is able to

- perform health-care-related duties as outlined in a student's emergency response plan (ERP) and/or individual health care plan (IHCP)
- identify signs of medical distress and respond according to a student's ERP/IHCP
- communicate to appropriate staff any concerns regarding a student's health-care status using the appropriate health-care terminology
- document the required care given, duties performed, and observations made specific to a student, using appropriate health-care terminology
- ensure the security of all documentation according to *The Personal Health Information Act*

continued

Student-Specific Competencies (continued)

Mental Health Needs

The educational assistant is able to

- observe students and monitor and document verbal and non-verbal cues and behaviours for signs of change in mental status
- respond appropriately to changes in mental status using predetermined student-specific strategies to prevent further deterioration, encourage appropriate behaviour, and facilitate safe transitions between changing states
- administer medication and complete all documentation using appropriate format and terminology, as directed by a health professional and as agreed upon in the student-specific plan*
- implement specific strategies to encourage and reinforce appropriate behaviour and develop and maintain a positive working relationship with students who exhibit emotional outbursts and/or challenging behaviours
- understand the common characteristics and behaviours associated with a student's specific condition or diagnosis
- understand how a student's ability to function in school is affected by stressors/triggers in his or her environment

* A school division *may* assign to an educational assistant the responsibility of administering medication.

Cognitive/Neurological Needs

The educational assistant is able to

- implement strategies as described in a student's individual education plan (IEP)
- encourage student independence
- motivate students to maintain focus and attention when learning new skills
- use student strengths to compensate for learning deficits/weaknesses
- use strategies to generalize learning (e.g., help students use existing skills in new situations and settings)
- recognize signs of potential challenging behaviour and respond accordingly
- demonstrate new skills clearly and accurately
- provide appropriate cues and prompts
- reinforce target behaviours and new skills effectively

continued

Student-Specific Competencies (continued)

Physical Assistance/Self-Help/Personal Care (or Adaptive Skills)*

The educational assistant is able to

- position and secure students in equipment safely and appropriately
- operate a mechanical lift to move a student from a wheelchair or standing frame to a toilet, commode, or change table equipment safely and appropriately
- transfer or lift students in and out of equipment using safe and appropriate techniques
- demonstrate to students how to use special equipment (e.g., a walker, standing frame, braces, bicycle, stroller, adapted/motorized wheelchair, adapted class chair) safely and appropriately
- assist students in the safe and appropriate use of equipment (e.g., a wheelchair, standing frame, or other special equipment such as a walker, braces, adapted bicycle, stroller, adapted class chair)
- support student use of computer or other special learning devices
- position and assist students (as required) with toileting, feeding, or dressing routines using appropriate safety guidelines
- change diapers (or other personal hygiene products) using safe and appropriate positioning/relaxation techniques
- use appropriate techniques for students with chronic lung conditions, such as cystic fibrosis, or students with potential for pneumonia due to immobility (e.g., posturizing and pummelling or other forms of chest physiotherapy)
- use strategies and techniques to facilitate independent movement/walking
- implement strengthening/balance-development programming
- use strategies and techniques for specific muscle stretches, strengthening activities, and programming to enhance physical development
- use appropriate strategies and techniques to assist/train students to sit on the floor at a desk

* The educational assistant must be physically able to safely perform activities that require lifting and transferring students.

Social/Emotional/Behavioural Needs

The educational assistant is able to

- follow a student-specific behaviour-management/support program
- use effective strategies and techniques for working with students with social/emotional/behavioural needs
- use strategies to facilitate smooth transitions for students during the day
- implement crisis response and de-escalation strategies and techniques following school/school division policies and procedures
- communicate to students clear limits and expectations for behaviour and reinforce positive behaviours using appropriate strategies and techniques

continued

Student-Specific Competencies (continued)

Sensory—General

The educational assistant is able to

- use appropriate strategies and techniques to calm and/or increase alertness of a student
- use strategies to improve student concentration (e.g., alternative seating that allows for movement, use of environmental modifications)
- anticipate and respond to situations when students need movement and/or other accommodations to maintain and extend participation time in activities requiring focus
- monitor/assist students in using a variety of sensory activities (e.g., sensory room with visual, auditory, and tactile activities)
- use brushing and joint-compression techniques
- use appropriate strategies and techniques to support development of visual skills

Sensory—Vision

The educational assistant is able to

- transcribe materials into Braille and interpret environmental information into the appropriate format for students
- use strategies to support student orientation and mobility
- use effective strategies and practices for working with students who are blind or visually impaired
- use the Braille code (literacy and mathematics)
- facilitate student use of devices (e.g., Braille, computerized Braille note taker, Braille printer, Braille software, white cane, talking calculator, closed-circuit television [CCTV])
- assemble, organize, and construct special materials (e.g., Braille/audio/large-print books, tactile graphics)
- support concept development for blind and visually impaired students

continued

Student-Specific Competencies (continued)

Sensory—Hearing

The educational assistant is able to

- use effective strategies and practices for working with students who are Deaf/hard of hearing (D/HH)/Deaf culture
 - use American Sign Language (ASL) and/or speak English/French fluently while interpreting an ongoing message from one language to another
 - follow the code of ethics that governs the ASL interpreter/tutor
 - assist in the implementation of auditory skills programming
 - assist in the implementation of specialized literacy programming
 - reinforce auditory skills and speech targets at appropriate times during the school day
 - maintain amplification equipment (e.g., hearing aids, FM systems), troubleshooting minor equipment difficulties when necessary
 - use a Graphic Interpreter and assist students in taking computerized notes
 - expand and model language structures
 - contribute to appropriate auditory and visual environments that support communication and learning
 - follow the direction of academic lessons and maintain students' participation and understanding of key points
 - monitor student understanding of lessons and clarify as required
 - prepare students for upcoming lesson(s) by reviewing key content ahead of time
-

APPENDIX C: MANITOBA EDUCATION RESOURCES

Manitoba Education provides a range of resources to support appropriate educational programming on the Student Services website:

Appropriate Educational Programming (Bill 13):

<www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/aep/index.html>

Clinician/Counselling Services:

<www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/services.html>

Documents:

<www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/documents.html>

Planning Processes:

<www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/planning.html>

APPENDIX D: WEB LINKS

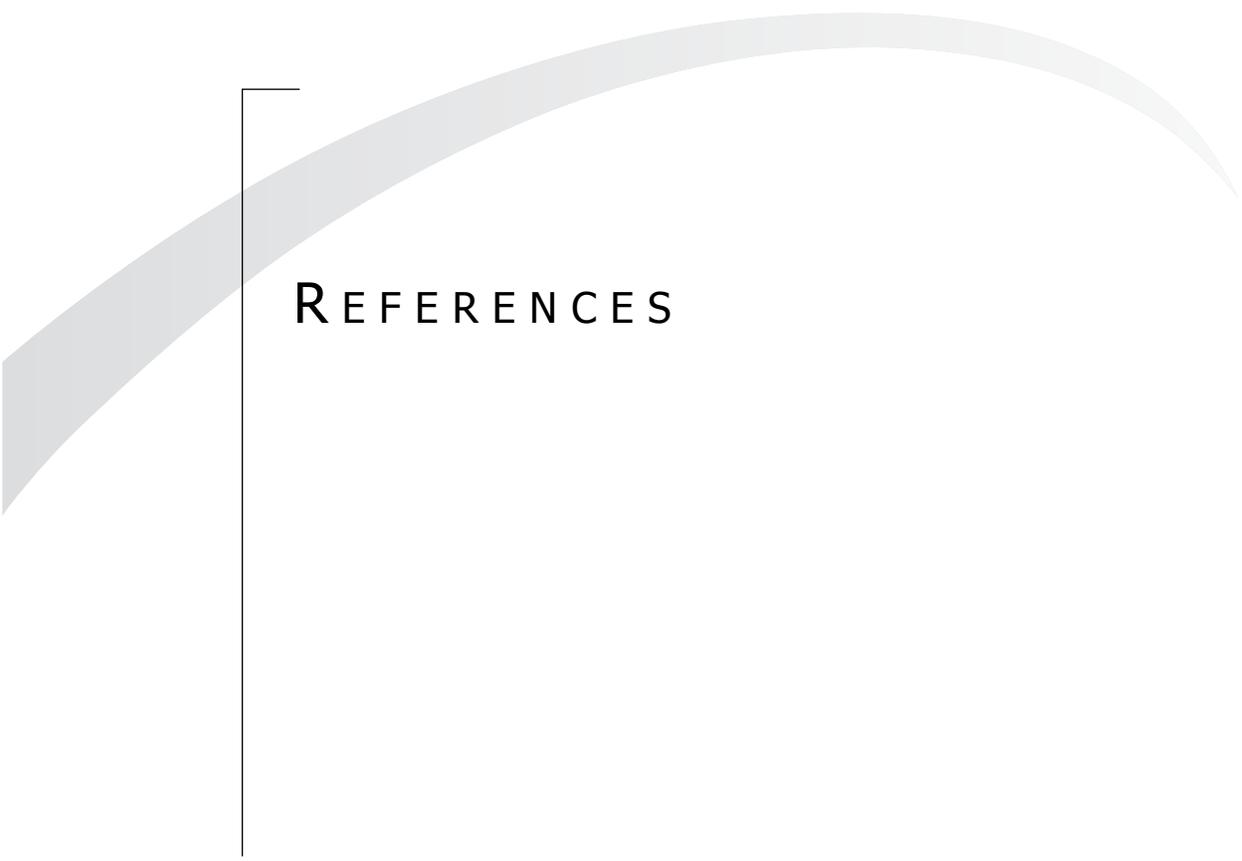
Additional information pertaining to educational assistants may be found at the following websites.

Associations

- Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE): <www.cupe.mb.ca/>
- Educational Assistants of Manitoba (EAMB): <www.eamb.ca/>
- Manitoba Association of Non-Teaching Employees (MANTE): <<http://mante.ca/>>
- Manitoba Association of Parent Councils (MAPC): <www.mapc.mb.ca/>
- Manitoba Association of Resource Teachers (MART): <www.mbmart.ca/>
- Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (MASS): <www.mass.mb.ca/>
- Manitoba School Boards Association (MSBA): <www.mbschoolboards.ca/>
- The Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS): <www.mbteach.org/>
- Student Services Administrators' Association of Manitoba (SSAAM): <www.ssaam.mb.ca/>
- Winnipeg Association of Non-Teaching Employees (WANTE): <www.wante.org/>

Training

- Assiniboine Community College:
<<http://public.assiniboine.net/>>
- Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC). Para Educator Program:
<www.mfnerc.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=51&Itemid=107>
- Red River College. Para Educator:
<<http://me.rrc.mb.ca/Catalogue/ProgramInfo.aspx?ProgCode=PAREF-CT&RegionCode=WPG>>
- University College of the North:
<<https://www.ucn.ca/ics/>>
- The University of Winnipeg Division of Continuing Education. Educational Assistant Diploma Program: <www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/dce-eap-pt>



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