Definition of the target group(s)

Non-school institutions taking in early childhood

The Childcare Quality Code ([arrêté du 17 décembre 2003][1]) stipulates that the childcare facility should help ensure the harmonious integration of children with specific needs.

Pre-secondary and secondary education

All pupils with special needs who are recognised as such by a Centre for Psychological, Medical and Social Services ([CPMS][2]) or another approved centre, are eligible for integration support, including in secondary dual vocational education and training ([3]).

The legislation uses the term ‘special needs pupils’ to refer to pupils attending the various types of specialised education: children and adolescents with slight mental retardation (not including pupils who are behind educationally, with moderate or severe mental retardation, with behavioural problems (structural and/or functional disturbances relating to relationships and emotional development), with physical disabilities (requiring regular medical and paramedical care), in a state of serious illness or convalescence, with visual or hearing impairments, or with learning disabilities (complex disturbances with multiple origins).

An integration proposal may be submitted by one of the following actors:

- the class council of a specialised educational institution;
- the organisation that provides guidance for pupils in the specialised education institution;
- the organisation that provides guidance for pupils in the ordinary education institution;
- the parents or guardian or the pupil him-/herself if he/she has reached the age of majority;
- or the educational team in an ordinary educational institution, on the basis of a favourable opinion from the participation council, each member of which has given its consent.

The integration procedure consists of four steps:

1. An integration proposal: the request is submitted to the head of the specialised school concerned, who consults each of the parties involved (the two schools concerned, the two CPMSs, the parents and the pupil) and, if appropriate, draws up a favourable opinion which is signed by all.
2. Definition of an integration plan: this must be adapted to the pupil’s needs by the two educational teams, assisted by the centre which oversees the pupil. As a minimum, the plan includes the pupil’s file, the targeted objectives, the identification of specific equipment, the pupil’s transport needs, possible exemptions from the ordinary curriculum, and the arrangements for liaison between schools.
3. Compilation of an agreement: this includes the integration plan, consultation arrangements, arrangements for internal evaluation and the agreement of all the partners.

4. Communication to the Administration of Specialised Education of the list of pupils concerned.

The school plan must contain elements to help ensure the feasibility of the integration under consideration. The concept of ‘reasonable arrangements’ is defined in the decree of 12 December 2008 [1]: it refers to appropriate measures, taken in light of the needs in a concrete situation, to enable a disabled person to participate and make progress, unless such measures impose a disproportionate workload on the person adopting them. The workload is not considered disproportionate if it is adequately compensated for by schemes available within public policy on disability.

**Specific support measures**

Integration may be undertaken using four possible approaches (defined in the decree of 5 February 2009 [1]):

1. total permanent integration: the pupil attends all classes in ordinary education throughout the year;
2. partial permanent integration: the pupil attends some classes in an ordinary school throughout the year, and others in a specialised school;
3. total temporary integration: the pupil attends all classes in ordinary education for one or more limited periods;
4. partial temporary integration: the pupil attends some classes in ordinary education for one or more limited periods.

The integration of a pupil into ordinary education requires coordination of the educational teams. Support from specialised educational personnel may be provided. The qualifications of such personnel depend on the pupil’s specific needs. Allowances, operational subsidies, and more favourable staffing norms are shared between the ordinary school and the specialised school, according to the type of integration and the disability. If specific equipment is needed for the integrated pupil, it must be made available to the ordinary school concerned. The pupil in total permanent integration benefits from free transport. The one in temporary integration, being registered in special needs education, only benefits from the transport to specialised education until he/she passes into total permanent integration.

Certain agreements (set out in the decrees of 30 April 2009 [1]) were made between the French Community and the Regions (Walloon Region, Brussels-Capital Region) to formalise and support assistance for disabled pupils. The Agency for a Quality Life (AviQ [4] : Agence pour une Vie de Qualité) for the Walloon Region, and the Brussels Fund for the Social and Professional Integration of Disabled People, also known as PHARE [5] (Personne Handicapée Autonomie Recherchée – Disabled Person Autonomy Sought) for the Brussels-Capital Region may contribute to certain costs associated with integration (the purchase of special equipment, the adaptation of a building, etc.). These bodies also offer support with the integration process (assistance with communication, psycho-educational support, etc.).

Thus, Early Aid Services [6] can provide advice and information to schools in collaboration with the psycho-medico-social centers [2], and with the parents’ consent. These services are present to help the child and his family up to the age of eight, in educational, social and psychological terms.

The Integration Support Services [7] (SAI), subsidised by AViQ, can, at the parents’ request, support pupils between the ages of 6 and 20 with their schooling. They thus take over from the Early Aid
Services for young children. Amongst other tasks, the staff in the SAI can:

- give residual specialised support to the work of the school with the young person whose schooling is made difficult by his/her disability;
- respond to one-off needs and/or help with the gradual attainment of full-time schooling for young people with disabilities who have either dropped out of school or are not receiving schooling.

On the other hand, schooling continuity services [8] (SAS) can help pupils undergoing a crisis by taking them in temporarily (decree of 15 December 2006).

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