

STUDENT SERVICES

Program Description

Medicine Hat Catholic
Separate Regional Division #20



LEARNING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM II

Program Description

The Learning Assistance Program II (LAP), located at St. Michael's (Medicine Hat) is designed for children who have a moderate to severe intellectual disability, and a language/communication disability. By the nature of the students' needs, intensive support in physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech/language therapy and other areas is needed. The LAP is a language and communication focus program with a balanced emphasis on academic skills (where appropriate), life skills and community living. The children are encouraged to use all available means of communication (oral language, sign language, communication boards, and augmentative communication devices). Staff are trained and monitored by Therapists to provide therapy based programming. Where integration is the most appropriate placement, students are integrated into regular classrooms with support from a Teacher Assistant. The students participate in school activities and are an important part of the school community. The classroom also has a Snoezelen space. The multi-sensory activities, during this time, serves to stimulate the senses and relax the body enabling many of the children to relax tight muscles due to spasticity. It also encourages the students to explore their environment more utilizing their senses and learn more about cause and effect by attaching the devices to switches.

Eligibility Criteria and Referral Process

Students may be referred for the LAP II by Teachers, Parents or community agencies to the Director of Special Education. Consideration will be given to determining the most appropriate placement and space available within the program.

"In Catholic Education, we are committed to this search for the mystery of God that can be found revealed in all the world of God's creation."¹

¹ Canadian Catholic School Trustees' Association, *Build Bethlehem Everywhere/A Statement on Catholic Education*. (Ontario, 2002)., p.6

