

John Dolan School

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Saskatoon
Public
School
Division

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JOHN DOLAN SCHOOL

Where quality programming
and caring relationships
make the difference

MISSION

To enhance each student's quality of life through educational experiences and caring relationships that foster independence and self-esteem.

PROGRAMS

John Dolan School is a school for students, ages 3-21, who have multiple special needs. The school is comprised of five programs based on students' skills, abilities, and interests.

The **Active Learning Program** is designed to meet the needs of our students who benefit from regular physical activity. These students learn best when they participate in a structured and consistent program which is balanced by several "body breaks" throughout the school day. Basic life skills are the main focus of this program in areas of Social Skills, Communication, Personal Management, and Leisure. Opportunities to practice these skills are provided in the classroom, school, and community.

The **Autism Support Program** is designed for students who are diagnosed with Autism. This program teaches students according to their individual needs related to communication skills, independence skills, life skills, self-care skills, academics and leisure skills. The students in the Autism Support Program enjoy frequent body breaks throughout the day and experience a variety of activities within the classroom and school as well as in the community.

The **Enriched Learning Program** provides activities and experiences for students with an emphasis on skill-building and maximizing learning potential. Many of these students are able to communicate their needs, wants, and feelings on a basic level. Strategies are incorporated into daily activities to enhance awareness of self, others, and the environment.

The **Interactions Program** is comprised of students who are keenly interested in interacting with their environment and with each other. These students enjoy a varied and active program with a balance of individual, small group, and large group learning goals. Socialization and communication guide all activities.

MARY VINISH SNOEZELLEN PARK

This park is designed to offer a stimulating and relaxing leisure environment for the students of John Dolan School. Students with special needs throughout our school division also benefit from visits to this wonderful park.

The term "Snoezelen" is a combination of two Dutch words meaning "to sniff" and "to doze", capturing the concepts of sensation and relaxation. Inside our park, students experience a soft, safe and stimulating environment – cushioned floors and walls, comfortable seating, interactive wall panels, large-muscle play activities, special lighting, shimmering reflections and soothing music.

The goal of experiencing the Snoezelen environment is simple – it is a place for students to enjoy, explore and play. Research has shown that children using Snoezelen rooms show increased focus, motivation, responsiveness, communication, happiness, interactive play skills and social relationships.



SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Administration	Half-time Principal Full-time Secretary
Caretaking	Full-time Building Operator
Health	Full-time Nurse
Occupational Therapy	Referral basis
Speech Therapy	Part-time Speech Language Pathologist
Physical Therapy	Part-time Physical Therapist
Programs	
Active Learning	Each classroom is staffed
Autism Support	with a Teacher and
Enriched Learning	Educational Assistants
Interactions	
Sensory	

The **Sensory Program** offers students opportunities to experience basic life skills and awareness through a variety of sensory-rich activities. Areas of focus include Socialization, Communication, Personal Management, Leisure, Large and Fine Motor Development, and Literacy. Sensory experiences might include vision training, balance, and body awareness. Students have daily opportunities to explore sensory kits and enjoy regular visits to our Snoezelen Park.

GENERAL INFORMATION

REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

Parents of students with multiple disabilities should contact our Coordinator of Special Education, Randi Barker at (306)683-8324.

CONSULTATIVE SERVICES

John Dolan staff work closely with physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech language pathologists and consultants for students with autism and sensory impairments.

SCHOOL NURSE

We have a full-time nurse. In addition to providing direct health and medical care to our students, the nurse offers consultation and advice to school staff and families.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Parents, guardians and caregivers participate in program planning meetings in October, March and June. Parents are encouraged to visit the school and observe their children in the classroom. Invitations are extended to families when the school hosts special activities and assemblies.

VOLUNTEERS AND PRACTICUM STUDENTS

Volunteers and practicum students assist in the implementation of the school program. Interested volunteers should contact the principal. Practicum placements are arranged through Saskatoon Public Schools.

VISITORS AND TOURS

Tours for educational purposes can be arranged by calling the principal.

HISTORY

In April 1955 John Dolan and a group of parents initiated a pilot program for eight children with cognitive disabilities in North Park School with Mrs. E.L. Fawcett as their teacher. The Canadian Mental Health Association provided financial support for the project.

September 1955 saw the formation of John Dolan School as a private school with a Board of Directors and grant support from the Department of Education. Additional support came from the Public and Catholic Boards of Education, as well as rural unit boards in the form of tuition fees for the children attending John Dolan School from each jurisdiction. Flora Brand served as the first principal. In September 1967 the Saskatoon Public School Division accepted full financial and administrative responsibility for the school, making it one of its elementary schools.

In April 1977 the Saskatoon Public School Division opened a new facility on Arlington Avenue. The new school was built on the philosophy of preparing children for inclusion.

In January 1979 the Saskatoon Public School Division incorporated the Developmental Centre for Multiply Handicapped Children in the John Dolan School program after several years of partial responsibility by the Saskatoon Public School Division.

Mary Vinish, teacher and principal at the school for twenty-five years, retired in 1988. In her honour, funds were collected for a park on school property bearing her name. For a number of reasons the project was delayed and its focus changed. In 2002 an indoor park, built on the Snoezelen concept was opened and named the *Mary Vinish Snoezelen Park*.

GOALS

Each student's educational goals are outlined in an Inclusion and Intervention Plan. These plans are guides for school staff, together with families and caregivers, to assist the student in attaining goals related to self-awareness, independence and quality of life. Examples of goals include the following:

COMMUNICAITON-making choices, using eye contact, communicating emotions, showing likes and dislikes, using verbal/visual/sign prompts

SOCIAL SKILLS-Taking turns, interacting with peers and staff, being patient, practicing good manners, practicing social skills in the community, understanding emotions

PERSONAL MANAGEMENT-brushing teeth, practicing eating skills, practicing drinking skills, managing clothes, participating in personal care routines

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT-developing listening skills, anticipating routines, adapting to change, following directions, showing initiative in making choices, developing basic skills such as printing, colouring, cutting, sorting & folding

LEISURE/RECREATION-enjoying music, playing games, relaxing, going on community outings, using gym equipment, socializing with peers, listening to stories, enjoying technology

VOCATIONAL SKILLS-shredding paper, recycling, folding, cooking and baking, helping with school jobs such as pickups and deliveries, laundry and shopping

MOTOR DEVELOPMENT-walking, stair-climbing, bike riding, standing, reaching, pushing and pulling, balancing, swinging, participating in exercise routines

SENSORY DEVELOPMENT-enjoying massages, using black light and the light box, exploring different textures, tastes and smells, enjoying music and musical instruments, experiencing Snoezelen activities