

Special Needs Education

In Flanders

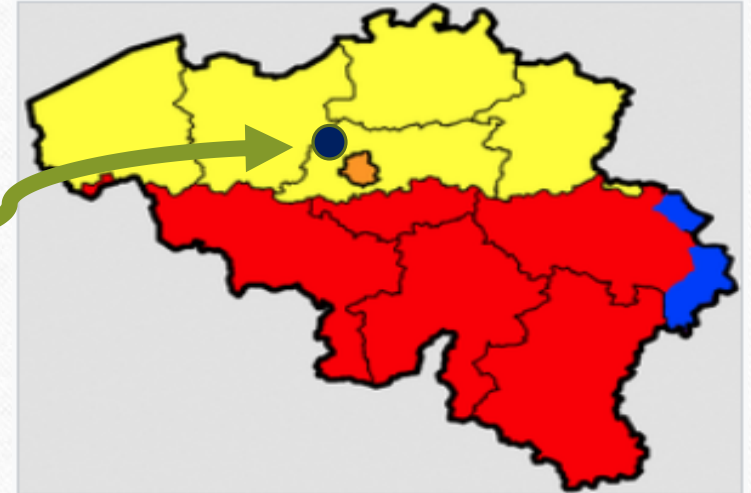


Belgium's approach to special needs education

- Inclusion
- Equality
- **Every child has the right to an education which maximizes its potential**



OPWIJK



Map indicating the language areas and provinces of Belgium. Provinces are marked by the thinner black lines.

- Dutch-speaking
- French-speaking
- German-speaking
- Bilingual FR/NL

Community:

Flemish
Flemish and French
French
German-speaking

Region:

Flanders
Brussels
Wallonia
Wallonia

Because Belgium has passed responsibility for implementing government policy to the individual language communities and their respective Ministries of Education, the exact approach used depends on where the child is resident.

Full-time education:

- compulsory from 6 to 16, (in 2020 from 5) and
- at least part-time education compulsory until the year the child reaches 18
- inclusion of a child with special needs in mainstream education is not always possible: in extreme cases may be given exemption from compulsory schooling
- alternatively (due to illness or repeated periods of hospitalization), a child may be taught at home.
- **however**, in many cases education is provided by a **specialist school**.

Dutch: **BUITENGEWOON ONDERWIJS**

French: **Enseignement spécialisé**

German: **Vorschul**

At primary level, specialist schools are classified in 9 categories (types)

- T1 slight mental disability
- T2 moderate and/or severe mental disability
- T3 severe emotional and/or behavioral problems
- T4 physical disabilities
- T5 sick (hospitalized)
- T6 visually impaired
- T7 hearing impaired
- T8 severe learning difficulties
- T9 autistic



Some schools will combine more than one category
In some cases they operate as specialist units attached to mainstream schools.
Special education is available to children from 2,5 to 21 years of age.

At the secondary level, specialist schools are classified in 4 'forms of education' (opleidingsvormen)



- OV 1** Self-reliant living will not be possible
 - one single phase of a minimum of four years
 - attendance at a day center or therapy center
- OV 2** Training for a working life in a protected environment
 - two phases, each a minimum of two study years.
- OV 3** Vocational training for a job in a normal working environment
 - 3 or 4 phases: observation (1 year), training (2 years), qualification (3 years) and integration (1 year)
- OV 4** Intellectual capacities are sufficient to attend ordinary educational programs but teaching methods and facilities adapted to particular disability

All can combine pupils of different types according to the nature and severity of their disability.

Requirements for enrolment

- at the request of the family
- can take place at any point in the school year
- before a place is given: a multi-disciplinary examination

handled by the psychological-medical-social-centre, the so called Centre for Guidance (Centrum voor LeerlingenBegeleiding: **CLB**)

Findings of the examination committee will determine the school judged to be most appropriate

Educational approach

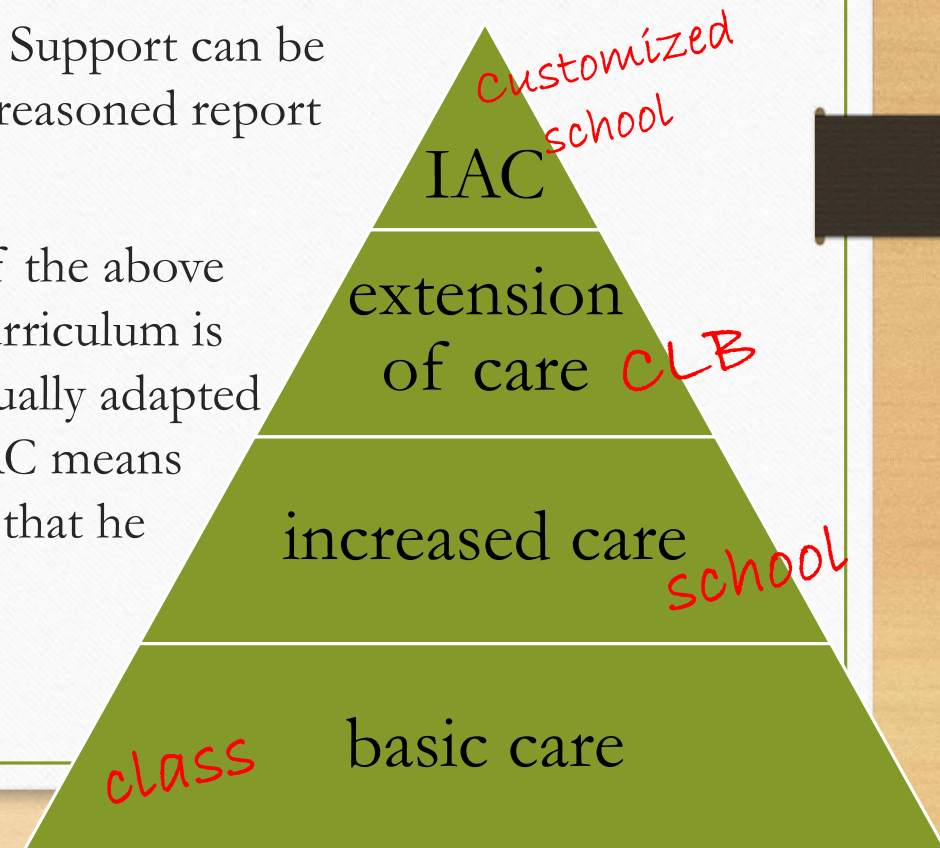
- school day and school term follows that of mainstream schools very closely
- children are taught by qualified teaching staff at all stages and have **personalised study plans**
- where required, teaching staff are supported by medical professionals, social workers and psychologists
- pupils are observed and **evaluated continuously**
- pupils may return to mainstream education at any time. Parents may request or oppose such a move.

Special Needs Education in Mainstream Schools

- 2015 : new decree: offer more children with disabilities a place in ordinary education
- Every school develops a care continuum through 4 phases to guide students in an appropriate way.
 - 0 - BASIC CARE: the school offers the same broad basic care for all pupils, with attention to the needs of each student
 - 1 - INCREASED CARE: when basic care is no longer sufficient: Additional measures are being taken to ensure that the student can achieve the learning goals. This can be done by means of remedies, differentiation, compensation or dispensation

Special Needs Education in Mainstream Schools

- 2 - EXTENSION OF CARE: the CLB is given an active role. Support can be enabled from the support network. The CLB must draw up a reasoned report for this purpose.
- 3 – INDIVIDUALLY ADJUSTED CURRICULUM (IAC). If the above phases have been completed and the follow-up of the joint curriculum is still not feasible, the CLB may draw up a report for an individually adapted curriculum or for access to the special needs education. An IAC means that learning objectives are tailored to the student's needs and that he does not have to meet the goals of the joint curriculum.



Goal of the 2015 decree:
decreasing the number of
pupils in special education

This would also reduce employment in
special needs education...

Vacant positions could have been used
to support teachers or pupils in
mainstream education.

➔ Support networks



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To Be
Continued...

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