

# Awards Nomination Handbook

JANUARY 2026

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**ONTARIO**

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# Ontario Provincial Awards

Ontario CEC has established awards to recognize individuals who have given outstanding service to The Council for Exceptional Children or directly to exceptional children and youth. Based on the Provincial Awards procedures, CEC chapters in Ontario may have a local process through which recipients are selected for chapter awards. Chapters and/or Subdivisions can then send nominations to the Provincial Awards Committee. Nomination forms will be emailed to Ontario Chapters and Subdivisions contacts by the Provincial Awards Committee.

The following awards will be presented at the Ontario CEC Annual Conference:

- ❖ The President's Award to a CEC Member
- ❖ CEC Lifetime Achievement Award
- ❖ Lynn Ziraldo Advocacy Award
- ❖ Teacher of The Year Award by Chapter
- ❖ Educational Leader of The Year Award by Chapter
- ❖ Paraprofessional of the Year Award by Chapter
- ❖ Subdivision or Chapter Member of the Year Award
- ❖ The President's Award to a Partner in Education
- ❖ Business, Community and Agency Award by Chapter
- ❖ Yes I Can Parent Award by Chapter
- ❖ Kenn Kloby Teacher of the Year Award
- ❖ Irene Mackowski Educational Leader of the Year Award
- ❖ Post Secondary Adult Student Award
- ❖ Yes I Can Student Awards

## General Instructions

### Timelines and Communication

- Nominations for provincial awards must be forwarded to the Chair of the Ontario CEC Awards Committee by **June 30** each year. Nominations submitted after this date may be considered for the following year.
- The Ontario CEC Awards Committee will make its recommendations to the Ontario CEC Board of Directors in August. Recipients selected by the committee to receive awards/recognitions shall be notified in writing by the Ontario CEC Chair of the Awards Committee by the end of August. The nominator and chapter awards chair and/or subdivision will be notified via email at this time.

### Who Can Nominate?

- **Adult Awards** – Chapters and/or Subdivisions may submit nominations for most adult awards unless otherwise specified. Please see requirements for each award.
- **Yes I Can Student Awards** – Chapters, Subdivisions, and Ontario CEC members residing outside a chapter area may submit nominations for Yes I Can Student awards.

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# President's Award to a CEC Member

<b>Nominated by:</b>	Chapters and/or Subdivisions
<b>Nomination deadline:</b>	June 30 – <a href="#">Link to Nomination Form</a>
<b>Recognition:</b>	An engraved plaque
<b>Presented:</b>	At the Annual Provincial Conference

## Criteria:

A member of CEC who has contributed in any of several ways, to the work of CEC or exceptional children and youth.

## Requirements:

1. The individual nominated should be a current member in good standing and have been a member of CEC for a minimum of **three (3)** years.
2. Individuals should have contributed to the welfare of exceptional children and youth on a local or province-wide basis. (e.g. legislation, program development, recreation, curriculum, Ontario CEC service, education of the public).
3. The individual cannot be a current officer of Ontario CEC or a current member of the Awards Committee.
4. At least one letter of support and a resume must accompany the nomination.

Examples of types of individuals to be considered include:

- Author of a major CEC publication or report.
- Longstanding membership in CEC with significant contributions in a number of areas (*e.g. committees, etc.*).
- Significant contribution at all levels of CEC (*local, provincial, national and/or international*).
- An individual showing leadership and significant contribution to CEC development.
- Any CEC member that the local Chapter and/or Subdivision determines should be recognized.

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# CEC Lifetime Achievement Award

<b>Nominated by:</b>	A member of Ontario CEC, Chapter or Subdivision
<b>Nomination deadline:</b>	June 30 - <a href="#">Link to Nomination Form</a>
<b>Recognition:</b>	An engraved plaque
<b>Presented:</b>	At the Annual Provincial Conference

## Criteria:

A member of CEC who has made continued and sustained contributions to the work of CEC and/or to children and youth with exceptionalities.

## Requirements:

1. The individual nominated should be a current member or full member in good standing and have been a member of CEC for a minimum of **ten (10)** years.
2. Individuals should have made significant contributions to the education of children with exceptionalities (*e.g. legislation, program development, curriculum, Ontario CEC service, education of the public, etc.*).
3. Individuals will have made significant contributions in at least two levels of CEC, i.e. Chapter, Subdivision, Provincial, National or International.
4. Individuals will have demonstrated exemplary leadership and significant contribution to CEC development.
5. At least one letter of support and a resume must accompany the nomination.

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# Lynn Ziraldo Advocacy Award



- Nominated by:** Provincial Awards Committee  
**Nomination deadline:** June 30  
**Recognition:** An engraved plaque  
**Presented:** At the Annual Provincial Conference

*"I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do."  
Power of One by Edward Everett Hale*

## History:

The Lynn Ziraldo award was created in 2016 to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ontario Council for Exceptional Children and to honour an individual who selflessly advocated on behalf of children/youth with special education needs and their families.

## Criteria:

This award may be given annually to an individual or an organization who embodies the spirit and qualities of Lynn Ziraldo. The recipient of this award shall:

- Passionately advocate for children and youth with special needs;
- Champion those who have limited voice and ensure that their voices are heard, including children and youth, and their families;
- Foster self-advocacy;
- Support community development in the understanding of the principles of equity and inclusion; and
- Walk the talk, especially when it's not popular but it's the right thing to do.

## Requirements:

1. The individual or organization nominated does not need to be a member of CEC.
2. The individual or organization should have demonstrated leadership in the advocacy of children and youth with special needs; such leadership will have had a positive impact on the lives of children and youth with special needs.
3. One to two letters of support and resume must accompany the nomination.
4. A member of Ontario CEC, Chapter or Subdivision must submit the nomination.
5. Lynn Ziraldo, or a designate, will assist in determining the award recipient, from among the eligible nominations.
6. Lynn Ziraldo, or a designate, will present the award at the annual Ontario CEC Special Education Conference.

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# Teacher of the Year Award by Chapter

<b>Nominated by:</b>	Chapters and/or Subdivisions
<b>Nomination deadline:</b>	June 30 - <a href="#">Link to Nomination Form</a>
<b>Recognition:</b>	An engraved plaque
<b>Presented:</b>	At the Annual Provincial Conference

## Criteria:

A teacher, who is **not** in a consultative or supervisory capacity and who, in the opinion of the Chapter and/or Subdivision, has made a significant contribution to exceptional children and youth. Individuals should have contributed to the welfare of exceptional children/youth in any of the following ways:

- Contributed to the educational growth of exceptional students
- Affected the attitude of parents, teachers, administrators, etc.
- Contributed to the general life of the school
- Submitted an article or paper for publication at the local, provincial, national or international level

This award will be presented to recipients from all Chapters if a suitable candidate is selected by the Provincial Awards Committee.

## Requirements:

1. Individuals nominated do not need to be members of CEC.
2. The individuals **cannot** be a current officer of CEC (Provincial) or a current member of the Awards Committee.
3. At least one letter of support and a resume must accompany the nomination.

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# Educational Leader of the Year Award by Chapter

<b>Nominated by:</b>	Chapters and/or Subdivisions
<b>Nomination deadline:</b>	June 30 - <a href="#">Link to Nomination Form</a>
<b>Recognition:</b>	An engraved plaque
<b>Presented:</b>	At the Annual Provincial Conference

## Criteria:

An individual, who is in a leadership, consultative or supervisory capacity and who has made a significant contribution to exceptional children and youth. Individuals should have shown leadership by contributing to the welfare of exceptional children and youth in any or all of the following ways:

- Involved in the development of programs and/or services for exceptional students
- Increased the awareness of parents, administrators, and the community regarding exceptional students
- Submitted an article or paper for publication at the local, provincial, national or international level
- Promoted staff development relating to special education

This award will be presented to recipients from all Chapters if a suitable candidate is selected by the Provincial Awards Committee.

## Requirements:

1. Individuals nominated do not need to be members of CEC.
2. The individuals **cannot** be a current officer of CEC (Provincial) or a current member of the Awards Committee.
3. At least one letter of support and a resume must accompany the nomination.

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# Paraprofessional of the Year Award by Chapter

<b>Nominated by:</b>	Chapters and/or Subdivisions
<b>Nomination deadline:</b>	June 30 - <a href="#">Link to Nomination Form</a>
<b>Recognition:</b>	An engraved plaque
<b>Presented:</b>	At the Annual Provincial Conference

## Criteria:

A Paraprofessional who is employed to assist or support teachers in the education, and care and treatment of individuals with exceptionalities. Examples of these positions are: Teaching Assistant, Educational Assistant, Child and Youth Worker, Dedicated Early Childhood Educator. The individual should exhibit exemplary personal and paraprofessional skills in working with staff and exceptional children and youth. This award will be presented to recipients from all Chapters if a suitable candidate is selected by the Provincial Awards Committee.

## Requirements:

1. Individuals nominated do not need to be members of CEC.
2. The individuals **cannot** be a current officer of CEC (Provincial) or a current member of the Awards Committee.
3. At least one letter of support and a resume must accompany the nomination.

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# Subdivision or Chapter Member of the Year Award

<b>Nominated by:</b>	Chapters and/or Subdivisions
<b>Nomination deadline:</b>	June 30 - <a href="#">Link to Nomination Form</a>
<b>Recognition:</b>	An engraved plaque
<b>Presented:</b>	At the Annual Provincial Conference

## Criteria:

A member of a Subdivision or Chapter who has made a significant contribution to exceptional children and the Subdivision or Chapter. Individuals should have contributed to the welfare of exceptional children and the advancement of Subdivision/Chapter in any of the following ways:

- Contributed to the growth and well-being of exceptional students
- Affected the attitude of parents, teachers, administrators, etc.
- Contributed to the overall welfare of the Subdivision/Chapter
- Contributed to furthering the goals and purpose of the Subdivision/Chapter
- Submitted an article or paper for publication at the local, provincial, or national level

## Requirements:

1. Individuals nominated should be a current member in good standing and have been a member of CEC and the nominating Subdivision/Chapter for a minimum of **three (3)** years.
2. At least one letter of support and a resume must accompany the nomination.

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# The President's Award to a Partner in Education

<b>Nominated by:</b>	Provincial Awards Committee
<b>Nomination deadline:</b>	June 30
<b>Recognition:</b>	An engraved plaque
<b>Presented:</b>	At the Annual Provincial Conference

## Criteria:

Generally, an individual who has contributed, in any of several ways, to the work of CEC or exceptional children and youth.

## Requirements:

1. The accomplishments of the individual should have Province-wide implications.
2. The candidate cannot be a member of the executive of a local chapter or subdivision, nor the provincial board.
3. The candidate may be a paid professional worker with exceptional children or a lay individual.
4. The contribution most appropriately will be in the area of education of exceptional children and youth.
5. The contribution need not have been made in the current year but should have current significance.

Examples of types of individuals to be considered include:

- Individuals in public office who have made outstanding contributions to the cause of exceptional children and youth.
- Individuals connected with the mass media of communication, T.V., radio, press, who have advanced public understanding of the needs of exceptional children and youth.
- Community leaders who have sparked the development of special services for exceptional children and youth in their own communities so effectively that their example has had province-wide effect.
- Research workers who have significantly advanced our knowledge of exceptional children and youth and our ability to meet their needs.
- An author whose book has been of significant impact or contribution to understanding the diversity of exceptional children and youth.
- Any individual a Chapter or Subdivision determines should be recognized.

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# Business, Community and Agency Award by Chapter

<b>Nominated by:</b>	Chapters and/or Subdivisions
<b>Nomination deadline:</b>	June 30 - <a href="#">Link to Nomination Form</a>
<b>Recognition:</b>	An engraved plaque
<b>Presented:</b>	At the Annual Provincial Conference

## Criteria:

This award was established to recognize a business, agency, or community organization that has promoted and provided for the enhancement, awareness, and employment of individuals with exceptionalities in order to promote and support their full participation within the community. Individuals should have contributed to the welfare of exceptional children/youth in any of the following ways:

- Contributed to the educational growth of exceptional students
- Affected the attitude of parents, teachers, administrators, etc.
- Contributed to the general life of the school
- Submitted an article or paper for publication at the local, provincial, national or international level

This award will be presented to recipients from all Chapters if a suitable candidate is selected by the Provincial Awards Committee.

## Requirements:

1. Individuals nominated do not need to be members of CEC.
2. The individuals **cannot** be a current officer of CEC (Provincial) or a current member of the Awards Committee.
3. One letter of support must accompany the nomination; additional letters of support may be included.

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# Post-Secondary Adult Student Award

<b>Nominated by:</b>	Ontario College or University Faculty who is a CEC member
<b>Nomination deadline:</b>	June 30 – <a href="#">Link to Nomination Form</a>
<b>Recognition:</b>	An engraved plaque and a 1-year CEC membership
<b>Presented:</b>	At the Annual Provincial Conference

## Criteria:

A post-secondary adult student who has contributed, in several ways, to exceptional children and youth, and in the view of the student, exhibits potential to help exceptional children and youth.

This award will be presented annually if a suitable candidate is available.

## Requirements:

1. Nominee may or may not be a member of the Ontario CEC Student Chapter.
2. Nominee has contributed to the field of exceptional children and youth in any or all of the following areas:
  - Leadership
  - Advocacy
  - Program Development
  - Research
  - Interest in promoting aims and goals of CEC through volunteerism.
3. One recipient will be selected by the Provincial Awards Committee.

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# Recognition for Long-Term Membership Ontario CEC

## Criteria:

- All recognitions for long-term membership will be acknowledged at the Annual General Meeting.
- Members who have 20 and 25 years of membership will receive a plaque at the Annual General Meeting.
- Members with 30, 35 and 40 years or more of membership will receive a plaque at the Annual Awards Luncheon.
- There is no need for members to complete a form for this recognition.
- The Membership Chair of the Ontario CEC will submit names based on the membership list by July 31.

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# Yes I Can Parent Award by Chapter

<b>Nominated by:</b>	Chapters and/or Subdivisions
<b>Nomination deadline:</b>	June 30 - <a href="#">Link to Nomination Form</a>
<b>Recognition:</b>	An engraved plaque
<b>Presented:</b>	At the Annual Provincial Conference

## Criteria:

A parent/guardian of a child/youth with a disability and/or gifts and talents.

This award will be presented to recipients from all Chapters if a suitable candidate is selected by the Provincial Awards Committee.

## Requirements:

1. Individuals nominated must be a parent/guardian of a child/youth with a disability and/or gifts and talents.
2. The individual nominated will have contributed to the welfare of exceptional children in many of the following ways:
  - encouraging awareness of exceptional children and youth
  - influencing the attitudes of parents, teachers, administrators, etc. regarding the needs of exceptional children and youth
  - advocating for special education in the community
  - involvement in the development of programming and/or services for exceptional children and youth

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# Kenn Kloby Teacher of the Year Award

- Nominated by:** Provincial Awards Committee  
**Nomination deadline:** June 30  
**Recognition:** An engraved plaque  
**Presented:** At the Annual Provincial Conference



*"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an art, but a habit."  
-Aristotle*

## History:

The Kenn Kloby Teacher of the Year Award was established in 1995 by the Ontario Council for Exceptional Children to honour an outstanding educator. An individual who teaches children and/or youth with disabilities, gifts and/or talents, possesses a great dedication and soon learns that the job entails much more than “educating” in the classroom. They welcome all individuals and instill a sense of mattering and belonging and strives diligently to empower children and/or youth to reach their full potential.

## Criteria:

The recipient of this award is selected by the Provincial Awards Committee, from among the Provincial Teacher of the Year Award nominees. The recipient of this award may be considered for the International CEC Teacher of the Year Award.

## Requirements:

1. The recipient must be currently involved in the provision of direct services to students who have disabilities and/or are gifted and talented.
2. The recipient should have demonstrated exemplary performance over a period of time as a teacher (or provider of direct services) exhibiting such qualities as sensitivity, innovativeness, imagination, creativity, caring, sense of humour, commitment, ability to inspire, and volunteer work in the community at large. Demonstration of these qualities must be clearly recognized by members of the profession and others knowledgeable of the candidate.
3. The recipient should be an appropriately qualified teacher or related specialist as recognized by the Ministry of Education and Training.

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# Irene Mackowski Educational Leader of the Year Award



<b>Nominated by:</b>	Provincial Awards Committee
<b>Nomination deadline:</b>	June 30
<b>Recognition:</b>	An engraved plaque
<b>Presented:</b>	At the Annual Provincial Conference

*“Successful is the individual who has lived well, laughed often and loved much, who has gained the respect of children, who leaves the world better than they found it, who has never lacked appreciation for the earth’s beauty, who never fails to look for the best in others or give the best of themselves.” - Ralph Waldo Emerson*

## History:

The Irene Mackowski Educational Leader of the Year Award was established in 2000 by the Ontario Council for Exceptional Children to honour an outstanding educational leader.

## Criteria:

The recipient of this award is selected by the Provincial Awards Committee, from among the Provincial Educational Leader of the Year Award nominees. The presentation of this award is entirely contingent upon there being a suitable candidate and therefore may not be awarded annually.

## Requirements:

1. The recipient must have been a recipient of the Educational Leader of the Year Award in their Region in order to be considered for this award.
2. The recipient must embody the “walk the talk” attitude.
3. The recipient should have demonstrated exemplary performance over a period of time as a leader, exhibiting such qualities as:
  - A passion for education
  - Courage to stand out in a crowd
  - A willingness to advocate on behalf of students with disabilities and/or gifts and talents
  - A sense of caring and commitment
  - A volunteer in the community at large

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# Provincial Yes I Can Student Awards

<b>Nominated by:</b>	Chapters and/or Subdivisions
<b>Nomination deadline:</b>	June 30 - <a href="#">Link to Student Nomination Form</a>
<b>Recognition:</b>	A certificate and a medallion
<b>Presented:</b>	At the Annual Provincial Conference

Chapters, Subdivisions, and Ontario CEC members residing outside a chapter area may submit nominations. Nominations may be for children and youth from a school (English, French, public, separate, or independent) or a community-based organization in Ontario. Awards chapter chairs and subdivision representatives will be advised annually regarding the number of students they may nominate for a provincial award.

## Categories:

- **Academic Award** – achievement in a particular subject area such as math, science, reading, social studies, language arts, foreign languages, etc.
- **Arts Award** – achievement in a particular area such as music, art, drama, dance or written expression.
- **School & Community Award** – achievement in organized activities at the school or community level through groups such as school-based clubs/activities (yearbook, theater, debate, tutoring, peer mentoring, social, service) or community-based clubs/activities (volunteer work, Boy/Girl Scouts, places of worship, service, cleanup campaigns).
- **Technology Award** – significant achievement through the use of assistive and adaptive technology devices and equipment (computerized or otherwise).
- **Self-Advocacy Award** – achievement in assuming practical responsibility for oneself, using knowledge of legal rights, advancing one’s goals, or effectively obtaining appropriate accommodations for oneself or others.
- **Transition Award** – achievement in mastering activities that lead to successful experiences in the areas of a) work, b) vocational training, or c) independent living. Nominations should be made in only one of the three areas.

## Requirements:

1. Complete the Nomination Form sent to Chapters and Subdivisions, including a one-paragraph summary outlining the reasons why the student was nominated.
2. Students will be nominated for one category only.
3. A permission for release of media publication form will be provided to the parent/guardian by the Provincial Awards Chair.

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# Ontario Subdivisions

## Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities – Ontario Subdivision (DADD)

Contact: Cindy Perras [cindy.perras@gmail.ca](mailto:cindy.perras@gmail.ca)

## Division of Leaders and Legacy – Ontario Subdivision (DLL)

Contact: Dianne Parr [kdparrr@hotmail.com](mailto:kdparrr@hotmail.com)

## Ontario Council of Administrators of Special Education (OCASE)

Contact: Laurie Moore [laurie.moore@ontario.ca](mailto:laurie.moore@ontario.ca)

# Ontario CEC Chapters

Chapter 289 – Hamilton/Wentworth

Chapter 391 – Halton/Peel

Chapter 56 – Toronto

Chapter 543 – York Region

Chapter 125 – Windsor/Essex

## Contact Information for Provincial Awards

Cindy Thomas  
Ontario CEC Awards Chair  
[cindy.thomas@yrdsb.ca](mailto:cindy.thomas@yrdsb.ca)

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# International CEC Awards Information

As a unit of International CEC, Ontario CEC may submit nominations for the International CEC Awards.

For information regarding the International CEC Awards, visit:

<https://exceptionalchildren.org/award-programs>

