THE NURTURING SUPPORT CENTER (NSC)

Essential Conditions for Successfully Implementing an NSC

All of the following elements are essential to the successful implementation of a Nurturing Support Center (NSC). They are presented below in a recommended order of priority to guide reflection and decision-making throughout the implementation process.

1. School Leadership and Administrative Stability

The successful implementation of an NSC depends largely on the commitment and leadership of school administration.

According to the Competency Framework for School Administrators:

"School administrators demonstrate leadership when they mobilize members of the school team or centre team around a common project. This project enables everyone to find their place, become engaged, and pursue ongoing professional development in order to collectively contribute to the desired outcomes. Administrators guide decision-making processes by keeping student success at the centre of their actions, supporting the development of their team's potential, and promoting positive interpersonal relationships. To achieve this, they demonstrate innovation, creativity, and adaptability while also attending to their own professional development and personal well-being." (*Ministère de l'Éducation*, 2013, p. 30 — translated from French)

A strong partnership with school administration is essential to completing the first two stages of a change management process:

- **Exploring Together**: Developing a shared understanding of the current situation and needs.
- **Building a Shared Vision**: Establishing a common vision and commitment to collective goals.

These two stages are carried out by school administration in collaboration with members of the NSC implementation committee, in preparation for presenting the project to the entire school team.

Stage 1 — Exploring Together

Developing a Shared Understanding of the Current Situation and Needs

1. Why This Project, and Why Now?

- What events, data, or observations have led the school to consider establishing an NSC? What tensions or concerns are most prominent at present?
- What would be concretely different if the situation improved?

2. How Are Students—and Adults—Doing?

- What signs are you noticing regarding well-being, engagement, and the school climate?
- Are there particular areas or groups where needs are more significant?
- Where are positive practices already taking place (sources of hope and internal strengths)?

3. What Practices and Structures Already Support Inclusion and Emotional Regulation?

- What is working well that should be preserved or strengthened?
- Which previous initiatives have been challenging, and why?
- What have we learned from previous attempts?

4. How Does School Administration Currently Exercise Leadership Around School Climate and Support?

- When do you feel that the team is moving forward together?
- In what situations does the shared sense of purpose become lost or fragmented?
- What leadership approaches would you like to strengthen through this project?

5. What Organizational Conditions Influence Day-to-Day Functioning?

- Routines, rituals, transition management, calming spaces—what is stable, and what varies?
- What practical constraints (time, resources, logistics) must we consider from the outset?
- What is within our control—and what is less so?

Stage 2 — Building a Shared Vision

Clarifying the Vision, Purpose, and Collective Commitment

1. What Meaning and Purpose Would You Like the NSC to Have in Your School?

- If you had to summarize the intention of the project in one sentence, what would it be?
- Which school values does this project embody?
- What would you hope the NSC could achieve for students? For adults?

2. What Vision of Success Would You Like to Share With the School Team?

- In 12 to 18 months, what would you like to be able to say we have transformed?
- What indicators of success would make you say, "It was worth it"?
- What early, achievable wins could help build momentum?

3. What Role Would You Like Collective Participation to Play?

- Who should be involved from the very first stages—and why those individuals?
- What opportunities for co-creation or dialogue would you like to establish?
- What role would you personally like to play as the school leader guiding this project?

4. What Risks Do We Anticipate—and How Can We Address Them?

- What could weaken buy-in or engagement?
- What resistance can we anticipate—and what might it tell us?
- What safeguards or guiding principles would reassure the team?

5. What Conditions for Success Do We Want to Establish Before Starting?

- What decisions must be clear from the outset (framework, shared language, priorities)?
- What communication will be needed to build a shared sense of purpose?
- What flexibility or room for decision-making do we want to protect for the team?

Meeting Conclusion

- If we could act on only two realistic priorities in the first year, what would they be?
- What absolutely needs to change—and what needs to remain stable?
- What does the team need to feel safe during this change?
- What would you like to hear a staff member say one year from now?

Priority Actions Following the First Meeting

These actions aim to establish a shared sense of purpose, consistency, and commitment before implementation begins.

1. Co-Develop a Statement of Purpose for the NSC Project

Develop three or four clear sentences that explain:

- Why the project is being implemented.
- Who it is intended to support.
- What the school hopes to achieve.

2. Develop a Brief Shared Portrait of the School

Include:

- Key observations and findings.
- Existing strengths and resources.
- Priority needs.
- Areas requiring particular attention.

3. Clarify Expectations, Roles, and Responsibilities for All Stakeholders

Consider the involvement and responsibilities of:

- The school team.
- Complementary educational services.
- External partners.
- Students and parents, depending on the context.

4. Identify One or Two Quick-Start Pilot Initiatives Based on Identified Priorities

5. Define Simple, Meaningful Indicators for Monitoring Progress Toward the Desired Outcomes

These may include:

- Well-being and school climate indicators.
- Behavioural indicators: Number of classroom removals, suspensions, interruptions to schooling, major incidents involving violations of the school's code of conduct, successful full reintegrations into the regular classroom, etc.
- Indicators reflecting adults' experiences: Staff perceptions, experiences, and observations related to the implementation process.

6. Develop a Brief Internal Communication Plan

The plan should include:

- A consistent message from school administration.
- Clear communication about what is changing and what will remain unchanged.
- An explanation of why the initiative matters to everyone.

7. Plan a Shared Project-Engagement Session with the School Team

This session should provide:

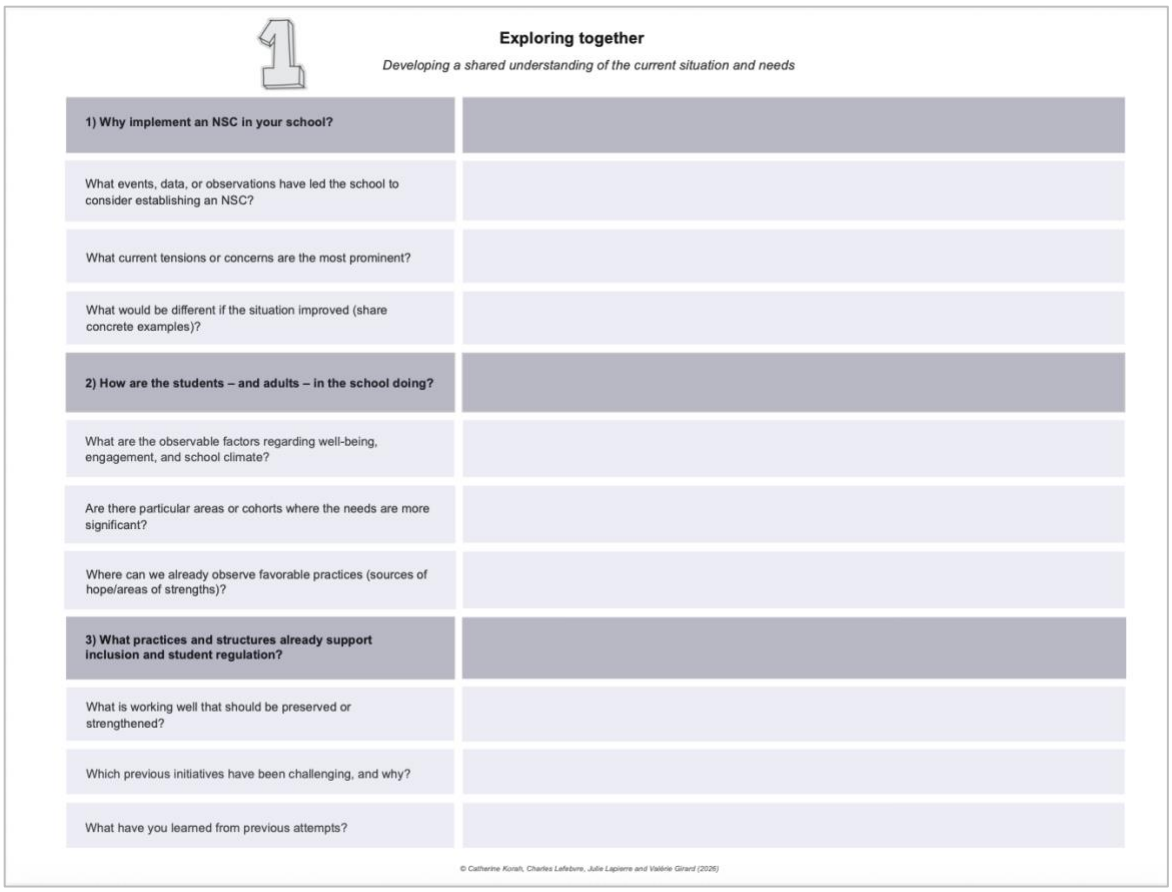
- An introductory activity focused on the project's purpose, values, and intentions.
- Opportunities for staff to express their hopes and concerns.

Important Consideration: Stability of School Leadership

It is strongly recommended that the implementation of an NSC take place in a school where the principal has been in their position for more than one school year.

This allows sufficient time for school leadership to become established, for the principal to develop a thorough understanding of school staff and the student population served, and to gain insight into the school's existing strengths, opportunities, challenges, and organizational dynamics.

Such stability provides an important foundation for building trust, mobilizing the school team, and supporting the successful implementation and long-term sustainability of the Nurturing Support Center.



Exploring together

Developing a shared understanding of the current situation and needs

1) Why implement an NSC in your school?	
What events, data, or observations have led the school to consider establishing an NSC?	
What current tensions or concerns are the most prominent?	
What would be different if the situation improved (share concrete examples)?	
2) How are the students – and adults – in the school doing?	
What are the observable factors regarding well-being, engagement, and school climate?	
Are there particular areas or cohorts where the needs are more significant?	
Where can we already observe favorable practices (sources of hope/areas of strengths)?	
3) What practices and structures already support inclusion and student regulation?	
What is working well that should be preserved or strengthened?	
Which previous initiatives have been challenging, and why?	
What have you learned from previous attempts?	

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2. Embracing a Paradigm Shift in Education / Establishing a School-Wide Culture of Responsive and Developmentally Sensitive Practices

The Nurturing Support Center is part of the broader continuum of interventions and supports available to students and school personnel. For the NSC to be fully integrated into the school environment, it is essential that all members of the school community—including teachers, professionals, school administrators, and parents—understand its underlying philosophy and the specific role it plays in supporting students with identified needs.

All school staff should have the opportunity to participate in an information session outlining the NSC's philosophy and the types of interventions offered, allowing them to understand the rationale behind certain practices. This helps position the NSC not as an "exception" but as an additional support measure that benefits both students and teachers.

The physical layout and organization of the NSC should also be clearly communicated. An open house is recommended to introduce teachers, parents, and other school stakeholders to the various individualized areas and workstations designed to meet students' specific needs. This opportunity helps clarify the purpose of the materials and resources available and prevents misunderstandings regarding the interventions provided.

To support the successful implementation of the NSC within the school, it is important to:

- Inform and normalize: Communicate the purpose of the NSC without actively promoting it as a separate or exceptional service, positioning it instead as one component of the school's continuum of support.
- Recognize and honour the fundamental needs of both students and adults.
- Understand behavioural manifestations through the lens of their unmet needs.
- Consistently respond to student needs through an effective Response to Intervention (RTI) framework: Begin with universal classroom practices and build upon them through targeted and individualized supports when necessary.

This approach encourages the entire school community to embrace a paradigm shift in education, placing the well-being and support of all individuals at the centre of school practices and operations.

An Educational Code of Conduct

Research demonstrates that school climate has a significant influence on students' perceived sense of safety and their readiness to learn. Conversely, an overly punitive or restrictive code of conduct can contribute to increased reliance on school suspensions.

Before implementing a program such as the NSC, it is therefore essential to establish preventive interventions, including an educational code of conduct as a foundational Tier 1 measure.

An educational code of conduct goes beyond a simple list of rules. It represents a comprehensive, collaboratively developed approach involving the entire school team and grounded in evidence-based practices.

This process includes:

- Building collective agreement and commitment among school staff regarding proposed changes (ideally achieving more than 80% agreement).
- Identifying shared values that will guide the school's educational and behavioural expectations.
- Developing five to seven clearly defined, actionable rules, accompanied by explicit descriptions of expected behaviours. These behaviours are modelled by all staff members and reinforced through repeated explicit instruction.

The process also includes:

- Establishing a graduated intervention framework for responding to minor and major behavioural incidents or violations of school expectations.
- Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the various school stakeholders involved in implementing and maintaining the code of conduct.
- Promoting a caring, supportive, structured, consistent, and predictable adult posture, while explicitly rejecting condescension, humiliation, or relational withdrawal as disciplinary responses.

School personnel should receive professional development to strengthen their understanding of behavioural manifestations, develop competence in evidence-based behaviour support practices, and increase awareness of the impact of relational trauma.

The emphasis is placed on adjusting the environment rather than attempting to directly change student behaviour, thereby promoting sustainable, respectful, and developmentally responsive interventions that benefit the entire school community.

For additional guidance, please refer to the Guide to Supporting the Implementation of an Educational Code of Conduct (Charles Lefebvre and collaborators, 2026).

3. Supporting the Implementation Process of a Nurturing Support Center

Ongoing guidance and support throughout the implementation process are essential to the successful functioning of Nurturing Support Centers. This process relies on the involvement of a designated support facilitator, who may be a pedagogical consultant, whose role is to support and guide school teams in implementing the planned actions.

This individual ensures rigorous follow-up, coherent planning, and continuous evaluation of practices. By providing a neutral, external perspective, the support facilitator helps clarify processes, identify areas requiring attention, and encourage adjustments to interventions based on the actual needs of school teams and the organization.

This ongoing support establishes a safe, structured, and supportive framework, which is essential to ensuring that the initiatives implemented are effective, consistent, and sustainable.

To illustrate how this support process unfolds within schools and extends across the different levels of the organization, it is helpful to visualize it as a cascade of support.

This model illustrates how each stakeholder receives support appropriate to their role and, in turn, supports those at the next level, while maintaining consistency and clarity in responsibilities.

The cascade makes the flow of support throughout the organization more tangible, promoting collaboration and autonomy across all teams.

The Cascade of Support Model



In supporting the implementation of Nurturing Support Centers, we propose viewing the process through a cascade of support, illustrating the guiding principle of "Who takes care of whom?"

The student remains at the centre of the initiative but is positioned at the base of the cascade, receiving direct support from the adults who work most closely with them.

These adults, in turn, receive support tailored to their respective roles and responsibilities. This support is structured through

successive levels of the school organization, extending to regional and central support services.

Each stakeholder therefore receives guidance appropriate to their needs and responsibilities, allowing support to flow coherently throughout the entire cascade.

Importantly, this model does not represent a hierarchy of authority, but rather a coordinated approach to support, in which each individual fulfills their own role without taking over the responsibilities of others.

This principle applies to all forms of implementation support, whether through knowledge transfer, monitoring and reviewing practices, or other initiatives designed to strengthen school teams.

Although the specific arrangements may vary depending on the organizational structure of the school or board, the underlying principles remain the same:

- Clarify roles and responsibilities so that each stakeholder understands their contribution to the support process.
- Promote collaborative practices that strengthen coordination and consistency across the organization.
- Foster autonomy and capacity-building among teams and individuals, enabling them to develop the skills and confidence needed to fulfill their responsibilities.

By adopting this approach, schools are better equipped to address complex situations, strengthen clarity around responsibilities, and reinforce each stakeholder's sense of personal effectiveness and professional competence.

At the same time, the cascade of support promotes greater autonomy among school teams and strengthens the organization's overall capacity to respond to student needs.

The result is a coherent, effective, and sustainable support process, in which each stakeholder receives the guidance necessary to effectively support those positioned at the next level of the cascade.

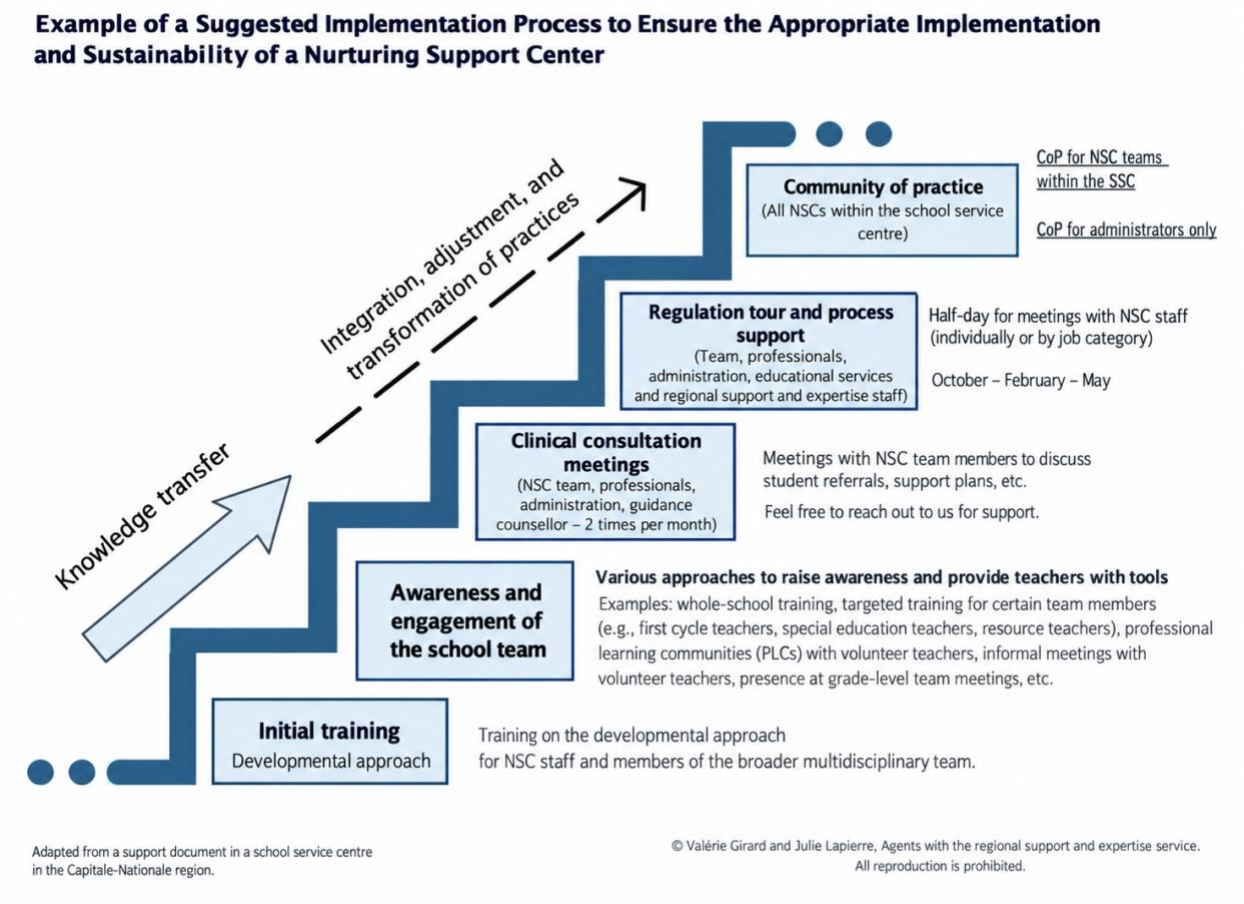
Illustrating the Cascade of Support in Practice

To make this approach more concrete, it is helpful to present an example illustrating how support is progressively provided throughout the cascade.

Each stakeholder receives guidance adapted to their role and, in turn, provides support to those at the next level.

This graduated approach helps clarify responsibilities, strengthen collaboration, and build the autonomy of school teams while ensuring consistency and continuity of support throughout the organization.

An illustrated example of this process is presented on the following page.



4. Knowledge Transfer to Support the Initiative

Ongoing Professional Development for School Staff

To integrate the Nurturing Support Center within a developmental approach and the framework of an educational code of conduct, it is essential that all school personnel share a common vision and philosophy.

A minimum of three hours of foundational training (e.g., during a professional development day) on developmental approaches and relational trauma is recommended. This training enables teachers and other school staff to better understand the objectives and practices of the NSC.

It is important to avoid introducing multiple theoretical models simultaneously, particularly since certain approaches, including those based on punitive consequences, have not demonstrated significant effectiveness in reducing behavioural difficulties.

Following the establishment of the NSC, a staff meeting should be organized to present its purpose, theoretical foundations, roles and responsibilities, intervention structure, and the processes for student integration and reintegration.

Particular attention must also be given to staff transitions and turnover to ensure that all personnel possess the knowledge required to fulfill their respective roles.

Ongoing Professional Development for NSC Team Members

Training and ongoing support for staff assigned to the NSC are essential to successful implementation. The goal is to establish the NSC not only as a space for intervention but also as a centre of applied theoretical expertise, grounded in three foundational areas: attachment, trauma, and neuroscience, in alignment with the principles of the reference framework.

To achieve this, a continuous professional learning structure should be established around three key competency areas.

1. Professional Posture and Ethical Intervention Practices Within the NSC

- Provide a calming and supportive environment that helps students become emotionally regulated and available for learning.
- Offer support without replacing the educational responsibilities and interventions of Tier 1 staff.
- Intervene through an approach grounded in inclusion and an organizational culture of care.
- Develop a systemic understanding of situations, considering the interactions between students, adults, and the school organization.

2. Capacity for Supporting Others and Exercising Professional Influence

- Engage in collaborative planning and co-construction with the school team rather than assuming direct responsibility for managing students.
- Establish and promote collaborative practices.
- Ensure coordination and alignment with school administration and complementary educational services.
- Support the meaningful understanding, ownership, and integration of practices rather than simply encouraging their application.

3. Intervention Expertise

- Attachment-building rituals and practices.
- Understanding trauma, including complex trauma, single-incident trauma, and trauma associated with migration experiences.
- Knowledge and understanding of neurodivergence.
- Supporting emotional regulation in both students and adults.
- Understanding and responding to frustration and aggression, alarm and anxiety, and oppositional or resistant behaviours.
- Supporting social-emotional development.

- Developing thoughtful, individualized intervention plans and incorporating intentional pauses or opportunities to step back.
- Understanding the interconnected relationship between instructional practices, school climate, and safety.

Additional resources to deepen knowledge in these areas are provided at the end of the reference framework.

Networking Among NSCs Within the Same School Board

To encourage the sharing of effective practices and resources, annual NSC Networking Meetings within a school board may be jointly organized by the pedagogical consultant.

These meetings bring together school administrators, professionals, teachers, and special education technicians (SETs).

The objective is to maintain an optimal level of consistency and standardization in the implementation and operation of NSCs across the school board.

It is strongly recommended that NSC teams engage in annual ongoing professional development and adopt a Community of Practice (CoP) model.

This model promotes the sharing of expertise, consistency in professional practices, and alignment of interventions across the school board.

Professional Development for the Special Education Pedagogical Consultant

The special education pedagogical consultant plays a key role in the implementation and ongoing support of NSCs.

This professional must maintain a high level of expertise in the theoretical frameworks and evidence-based approaches underlying the NSC model to provide effective guidance and support to schools.

5. Clearly Defined Roles and Responsibilities Within the School

The successful implementation of a Nurturing Support Center depends on clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

These roles and responsibilities involve all adults within the school, from classroom teachers and student supervisors to school administrators and the educational services departments of a school board.

Roles and responsibilities should be reviewed periodically, particularly when staffing changes occur within the school.

To support initial reflection and discussion, a proposed table outlining roles and responsibilities is provided in the appendix.

6. Ensuring Consistency Across Alternative Support Spaces

In schools where several rooms or spaces serve different purposes, confusion may arise if their respective functions and approaches are not clearly defined. Ideally, all support spaces should operate according to a shared philosophy and consistent intervention approaches.

It is possible to respond to a variety of student needs within a single space, allowing for more efficient use of resources and physical environments.

Additional spaces may be designated for specific needs when necessary. Adults should be assigned to clearly defined spaces, and when they work across multiple settings, their roles and intervention practices should never be contradictory.

It is essential that adults explicitly explain the purpose and function of each space to students, particularly when the role of a space changes over the course of a student's educational experience.

For example, a special education technician (SET) may be assigned to both the NSC and a separate withdrawal or removal room.

In both settings, the underlying philosophy and practices should ideally remain aligned, emphasizing co-regulation, connection, and shared reflection.

The primary difference lies in the duration and nature of the support provided: students attending the NSC generally require more time and a wider range of options to return to a regulated state.

7. Prioritizing Pedagogy

In an inclusive school, pedagogy is the first and most powerful means of supporting student engagement, achievement, and participation.

Before considering targeted support measures such as the Nurturing Support Center, the regular classroom must provide a learning environment that is structured, predictable, differentiated, and relationally safe.

The effectiveness of an NSC depends directly on the strength of this first tier of support: the more robust universal instructional practices are, the less likely students are to experience difficulties that interfere with their readiness and ability to engage in learning.

Universal Instructional Practices

Students who experience behavioural or social-emotional challenges often also present academic, language, organizational, or attentional vulnerabilities.

Consequently, the implementation of an NSC must be accompanied by a strengthening of universal classroom practices, particularly:

- Explicit teaching of routines, expectations, and learning strategies.

- Differentiated instruction and the application of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- Planning meaningful learning activities aligned with curriculum expectations.
- Establishing a positive, predictable, and structured relational climate.
- Implementing flexible assessment practices that support learning and reduce barriers.

These research-supported practices contribute to creating accessible learning environments for all students and significantly reduce pressure on specialized support services such as the NSC.

They also help prevent students from being referred too quickly to Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions when adjustments to universal classroom practices would be sufficient.

The NSC: A Setting Where Pedagogy Remains Central

Even—and especially—when a student attends the NSC, they remain a learner with the same fundamental right to meaningful educational opportunities.

The support provided must therefore reflect a commitment to educational continuity: instructional interventions should be consistent with classroom practices, closely coordinated with what is being taught in the regular classroom, and adapted to the student's individual learning profile.

For many students, academic success is also a powerful means of promoting re-engagement, strengthening self-worth, and reducing challenging behaviours.

Instruction within the NSC should be:

- Flexible: Responsive to fluctuations in the student's readiness and availability for learning.
- Creative: Designed to overcome barriers related to attention, motivation, or language.
- Highly individualized and contextualized: Adapted to the student's grade level, learning profile, individualized education plan (IEP), and emerging competencies.
- Situated within the student's zone of proximal development: Maintaining high but supportive expectations that promote both learning and a sense of safety.
- Planned and supervised by a qualified teacher: In close collaboration with the broader school team.

The more time a student spends in the NSC, the more important it becomes to systematically assess, monitor, and integrate their instructional needs into their individualized intervention plan.

Collaboration with remedial education specialists, speech-language pathologists, teachers, and other professionals therefore becomes essential.

Responsibility for monitoring and supporting academic progress cannot rest with one individual. It must be understood as a shared responsibility among the professionals involved.

Pedagogy as a Tool for Regulation and Readiness to Learn

Within the NSC, pedagogy is not a secondary consideration. It is an intervention tool in its own right.

Providing meaningful, achievable, and rewarding learning tasks can:

- Support emotional regulation.
- Strengthen students' sense of competence.
- Promote engagement in learning.
- Reduce challenging behaviours.
- Maintain a consistent connection with the regular classroom.

This perspective highlights that students' cognitive, emotional, and social readiness for learning can be supported through appropriately adapted educational activities, rather than exclusively through relational or emotional interventions.

Essential Alignment with the Regular Classroom

The NSC is not a parallel educational setting. Rather, it serves as a targeted extension of the regular classroom.

Routines, expectations, instructional strategies, and the language used by adults should remain consistent across both settings.

Practices introduced within the NSC should be transferable to the regular classroom. Conversely, classroom practices should inform and guide the educational experiences provided within the NSC.

The overarching objective remains the same: to support the student's return to universal Tier 1 instruction within a safe, structured, and inclusive environment that enables full participation in learning.

Barriers to the Effectiveness of Pedagogy as a Support Strategy

Despite the recognized importance of universal instructional practices, several barriers limit their implementation in secondary schools and directly influence the success of an NSC.

1. Insufficient Implementation of Universal Practices

Instructional approaches known to support learning—including explicit instruction, differentiation, and scaffolding strategies—remain underused in regular classrooms.

This underutilization creates a significant gap: no specialized intervention, including the NSC, can compensate for a weak foundation of Tier 1 practices.

2. Inconsistent Understandings of Inclusion and Special Education

Understandings of inclusion are often shaped by personal beliefs or experiences, which may not align with current definitions or legal frameworks.

As a result, some students experiencing behavioural difficulties become marginalized, even though their fundamental needs are comparable to those of their peers.

The absence of a genuinely universal and preventive approach contributes to the emergence of behavioural difficulties and the accumulation of learning gaps.

3. Insufficient Clarity Regarding Roles and Responsibilities

Uncertainty surrounding the roles of various stakeholders—including teachers, professionals, and NSC staff—complicates coordinated intervention.

Even when resources are available, their effectiveness remains limited if objectives, responsibilities, and expectations are not clearly defined, understood, and shared.

4. Inconsistent Collaborative Practices

Collaboration among teachers, professionals, and support staff is essential for planning, monitoring, and adjusting interventions.

However, in many secondary school settings, collaborative structures and processes remain insufficiently developed, making it difficult to ensure alignment between classroom practices and NSC interventions.

5. A Narrow or Inadequate Understanding of Pedagogy

In many contexts, interventions prioritize social-emotional needs while placing cognitive and academic considerations in the background.

Yet access to meaningful, structured, and appropriately adapted instruction is a powerful means of supporting regulation, engagement, and academic success.

Without this balance, difficulties may become increasingly persistent, leading to greater reliance on intensive interventions.

In Summary: Reversing a Vicious Cycle

When these barriers accumulate, they create a self-reinforcing cycle:

- Limited universal practices and an unclear understanding of inclusion
- Insufficient collaboration
- Unmet student needs
- Escalating behavioural difficulties
- Increased reliance on targeted and intensive interventions

Recognizing and addressing these barriers is an essential prerequisite for implementing a coherent and effective NSC.

It is equally fundamental to strengthening the universal Tier 1 foundation upon which every inclusive school depends.

8. Regular Coordination and Follow-Up Meetings

Regular meetings involving NSC staff, the designated school administrator, and the professionals responsible for student services must be held at least every four weeks, despite scheduling constraints.

The NSC core team functions as a coordination committee, planning logistics, allocating resources, and clarifying responsibilities while prioritizing a preventive approach.

These meetings provide opportunities to:

- Discuss challenges and develop effective solutions.
- Review and update students' action plans.
- Reinforce the program's underlying philosophy, establish objectives, and resolve practical or operational issues.
- Support the ongoing professional development of team members.

Communication with teachers and other school personnel is essential. Each student's individualized support plan must be shared and implemented consistently across settings.

Teachers provide feedback regarding the effectiveness of the plan and receive recommendations from the NSC team to help them better respond to students' academic and behavioural needs.

9. Adequate Funding and Budget Allocation

The Nurturing Support Center must have sufficient funding to:

- Hire and maintain staff assigned to the NSC.
- Purchase the furniture, intervention materials, school supplies, and food needed to meet students' needs.
- Cover daily operating expenses and ensure ongoing financial support.
- Fund continuing professional development for staff when training is not included in regular professional development opportunities.

The required budget will depend on the size of the school, the number of students requiring NSC services, and the physical space available.

To optimize costs, schools may reuse or repurpose furniture, equipment, and supplies already available within the school.

10. A Physical Environment Adapted to Students' Needs

The NSC Room

The size of the NSC depends on the size of the school, the available space, and the number of students who will access the service.

Ideally, the NSC should be approximately the size of a standard classroom to accommodate all necessary resources. However, a smaller space can also be functional.

The room should be exclusively dedicated to the NSC and should not be shared with other services, such as daycare or after-school programs.

It is recommended that the space include a sink with running water and electrical outlets to accommodate a refrigerator and microwave, helping to meet students' basic needs.

Organization of the Physical Space (these areas will vary in Elementary VS. Secondary)

The NSC should be organized into clearly defined areas, allowing students to receive appropriate support immediately upon arrival.

The main areas include:

- **Reception Area / Transition and Settling-In Zone**

  This area allows students to enter the NSC without disturbing others and ensures that staff can notice and welcome them upon arrival.

  The space may include personalized bins containing preselected tools and activities to provide structure and support while students wait for an adult to become available.

- **Instructional and Learning Area**

  This area should include tables, desks, and individual workstations designed to provide privacy and minimize distractions.

  Each student should have access to a personalized basket containing assignments, individualized tools, learning strategies, and intervention materials.

  Dedicated workspaces should also be available for staff.

- **Socialization Area**

  This area is intended for breaks and meals, providing opportunities for students to eat and socialize with peers and adults.

  Snacks and fruit may be made available to help address students' individual needs.

  Access to a refrigerator, microwave, and sink is particularly beneficial in this area.

- **Private Support Areas**

  The NSC should include two small private areas accessible from the main space.

  These areas provide the privacy necessary for adults to meet with students, offer individualized guidance, and provide instruction without interference from peers.

  They also serve as supportive spaces for emotional and social development.

- **Rest and Regulation Areas**

  Designated rest areas should provide students with a quiet environment in which to explore, process, and regulate their emotions.

  These spaces should include appropriate furniture and materials, such as:

  - Fine motor activities (knitting, origami, beading, etc.).
  - Individual games and activities (puzzles, mandalas, Sudoku, etc.).
  - Art materials (painting, drawing, clay, polymer clay).
  - Individual creative or construction projects.

A Dedicated Emotional Expression Room

A separate Emotional Expression Room may be established outside the NSC to provide a safe environment for emotional expression and co-regulation.

The goal is for students to experience this space as emotionally safe, allowing them to express their feelings—including frustration, anger, sadness, and other intense emotions—without fear or judgment.

The objects, materials, and activities available should allow students to express their emotions safely, become more familiar with their emotional experiences, and develop regulation strategies with adult support.

In schools where space is limited, students may instead be accompanied outdoors or to a gym or exercise room, where they can engage in physical activity to release tension and support emotional regulation.

An article published in La Foucade provides additional information about the Emotional Expression Room. It is available through a QR code in the appendix.

Furniture and Equipment

The NSC should be equipped with desks, chairs, tables, shelving, storage areas, a refrigerator, a microwave, and a sink to meet students' needs.

A comprehensive list of recommended furniture, materials, and equipment is available in the appendix through a QR code.

11. Evaluation Practices Supported by a Data-Informed Culture

To ensure the success and long-term sustainability of the NSC, it is essential to establish an ongoing process for evaluating its impact.

This evaluation process should be guided by three fundamental questions:

1. What are we trying to accomplish?
2. How will we know whether a change represents an improvement?
3. Are there any unexpected or unintended secondary problems emerging?

Evaluation should combine both quantitative and qualitative data to develop a comprehensive understanding of the NSC's impact.

Quantitative Data

Examples include:

- Number of student relocations to alternative settings.
- Number of classroom removals.
- Number of school suspensions.
- Student and staff well-being questionnaires.
- School climate measures.
- Measures of school personnel's sense of self-efficacy.

Qualitative Data

Examples include:

- Opinion surveys.
- Direct observations.
- Feedback and reflections from teachers.
- Student experiences and perspectives.
- Feedback from NSC team members.

Combining these different sources of information helps establish a more complete picture of the NSC's effectiveness and provides a foundation for ongoing reflection, adjustment, and improvement.