

Resources

Special Education Made Easy



Revised 3/28/08

Special Education - Referral and Eligibility

To be eligible for special education and related services your child must be between 3 and 21 years old and must have one or more of the following disabilities, determined by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004):

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Autism• Deaf-blindness• Deafness• Developmental delay (for 3- to 5-year-olds)• Emotional disturbance• Hearing impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intellectual disability (mental retardation)• Multiple disabilities• Orthopedic impairment• Other health impairment (limited strength, vitality or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical impairment;• Specific learning disability• Speech or language impairment• Traumatic brain injury• Visual impairment including blindness
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PPT Checklist

Before the PPT Meeting

- Review current IEP/and Past Records
- Prepare an agenda with questions for the team. (Pass out at PPT)
- Find out how much time is allotted for the upcoming PPT. Let team know if you will need additional time.
- Know the purpose of the PPT. Examples: Placement change, IEP development, Behavior plan, Review evaluations.
- Fill out pages 4 & 5 of the IEP DOCUMENT. (Bring to the PPT).
- Try to visit the classroom before the PPT.

Prior to the PPT Meeting

- Get a copy of any and all evaluations completed and review them for understanding – (Speech, PT, OT, Academic.)
- Create a Vision Statement for your child.
- Consider sitting down with the classroom teacher to design goals and objective.
- Consider bringing a friend
- Get to the meeting early so you can sit at the head of the table.
- If bringing a tape recorder, let the school know in advance so they can prepare to have one.

At the Meeting

- If your child is not at the meeting bring in a picture or a composite of who your child is. Share a photo album.
- Take time to recognize what's going well. Offer words of appreciation. Acknowledge gifts and talents of all team members. Renew commitments to one another.
- If not in writing it does not exist.
- If your child is going to the PPT have him/her share what he/she is feeling. Help your child express their needs.
- You are a full and equal partner in this process. Don't be afraid to take charge. You should see yourself as equally as important as the professionals. You know your child best. You are the constant team member.
- All requests must be presented as an educational benefit. (Example: If requesting a Consultant, gives reasons why).
- Make sure you understand the objectives. Make sure they are measurable. Ask questions.
- Be ready for the "No's" at the PPT. Be prepared to support your request or refute their denial.
- Under supports required for school personnel (page 8) consider requesting a specific time allotted for modification planning between Sp. Ed and Regular Ed Teachers.
- All actions proposed or denied must be recorded on page 5.
- Consider alternatives for communication: Communication log, Parent generated checklist (for unusual incidents, routine changes, academic updates) and E-mail. Consider giving permission to everyone to share communications, ideas and concerns with you.
- Review the list of recommendations with the expectation of who's doing what and in what time period.
- On page 8 build in **supports/and training** for the Teacher and Para who work with your child. Make sure they are informed about your Child's specific disability.

After the PPT Meeting

- Your finalized IEP should arrive 5 business days after the PPT (By Law).
- Review the document for accuracy. Contact your Special Education Director with any discrepancies noted.
- If you make a commitment, keep it. (Examples: getting copies of outside reports, and following up with medical appointments.

Final Tips

- Consider Thank You Cards to all staff (related service included) for all their efforts on your child's behalf.

Timelines / PPT Checklist

Special Education Timelines

Here are important timelines concerning the special education process

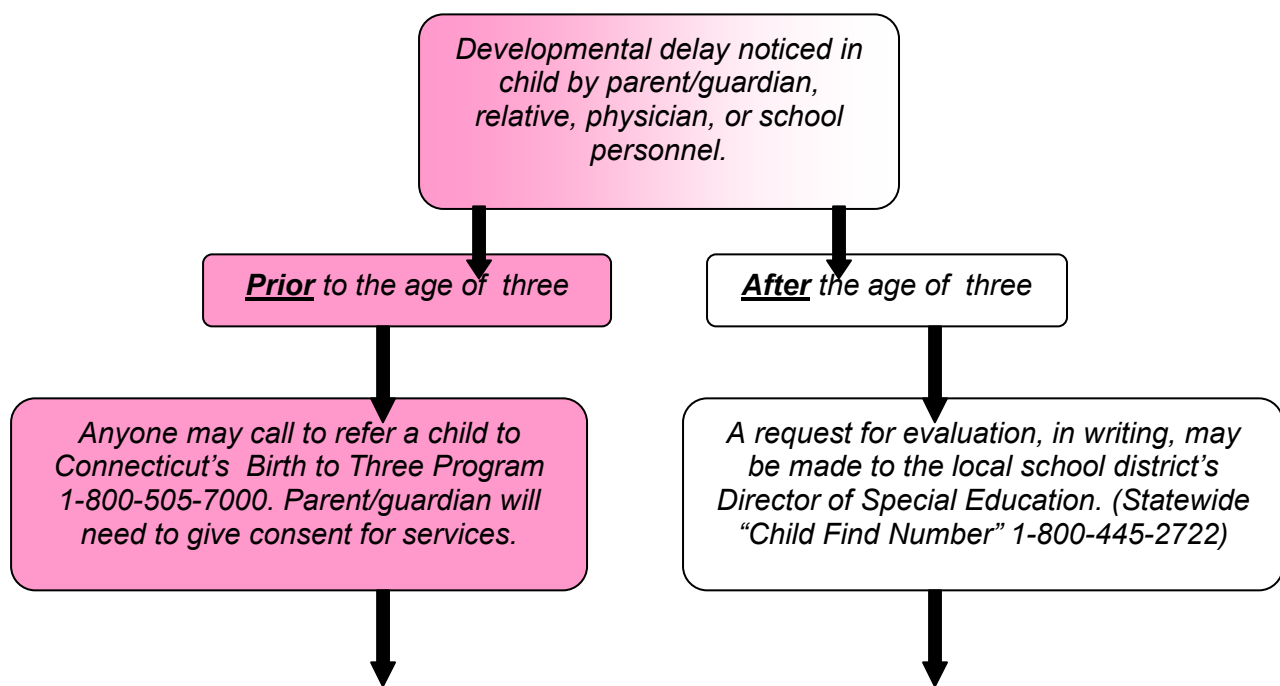
Referral to Special Education from Birth to Three	It is recommended that a formal referral to a child's school district be made when the child is 2 and no later than six months before the child's third birthday.
Transition Planning Conference for Birth to Three to LEA Transition	Transition planning conference must take place no later than 90-days before and as early as nine months before the child's third birthday.
PPT for IEP Development for child transitioning from a Birth to Three program to special education.	There is no prescribed timeline by law for the scheduling of a PPT meeting for children transitioning from a Birth to Three program to special education. However, the law is clear that all special education activities must take place before the child turns 3.
	On the child's third birthday or next possible school day following 3 rd birthday.
Special Education Referral Notice to Parent	Written notice of student's referral to Special Education shall be sent to the parent no later than five school days after the date of the referral.
IEP Implementation:	The IEP shall be implemented within 45 school days from date of Special Education referral (not including time needed to obtain consent) and The IEP shall be implemented within 60 school days for students in out-of-district placement (not including time needed to obtain consent).
Parental Consent for Evaluation, Placement or Private Placement:	School should obtain Parental Consent for Evaluation, Placement or Private Placement within ten school days of the notice or PPT meeting in which the parent participated.
PPT Meeting Notice to Parent:	Parent should receive copy of written notice of PPT at least five school days prior to the PPT meeting date.
Delivery of IEP to Parent after PPT:	Parent should receive copy of the IEP resulting from PPT within five school days of the PPT meeting.
From the receipt of the IEP:	Implementation of the IEP starts five school days after parent receives IEP or as otherwise indicated on the IEP.
Reevaluation:	At least once every three years unless the parent and the district agree a reevaluation is not necessary, at the request of the parent or staff working with child and not more often than once a year unless the parent and district agree.
Transition Planning from School to Adult Life	Development of transition goals and objectives for transition should be reviewed no later than the child's 16th birthday.
Complaint timeline:	No more than 60 calendar days is allowed from the filing of the complaint to the mailing of the decision, unless an extension is granted due to extenuating circumstances.
Resolution timeline:	No more than 45 calendar days is allowed after wrap-up of resolution meeting is held, to mailing of the final decision, unless hearing officer grants an extension (No extensions may be granted for an expedited hearing).

The disability must adversely affect your child's educational performance; and as a result; your child requires a specially designed instructional program to address his or her unique educational needs.

A written referral to your public school system is the first step in the process of determining if a child should receive special education services. It serves as a written request for an evaluation of a child who is suspected of having a disability and who may be in need of special education and related services. A referral to special education may be made by the student (18 years old or older), a parent, guardian or surrogate parent, school personnel, or other individuals from other agencies (e.g., physicians, social workers) to whom parental permission to make a referral has been given.

Children with disabilities placed by their parents in private schools do not have an individual right to receive some or all of the special education and related services that he or she would receive if enrolled in a public school. The school district in which the private school is located is responsible for providing what special education services it designates to children with disabilities placed by their parents in the private elementary or secondary schools in its town.

Special Education Eligibility



Due Process

Due process is a set of specific procedures for resolving disagreements with any of the school's processes or decisions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational placement or provision of **FAPE** (Free And Appropriate Education). A due process complaint must allege a violation that occurred no more than two years in the past.

When a due process complaint is filed, prior to proceeding with a formal due process hearing, IDEA specifies steps for a **resolution process**. Your school must convene a **resolution meeting** within **15 days** of receiving the parents' due process complaint. The purpose is for the parent to discuss the due process complaint, so that the education agency has the opportunity to resolve the dispute. If the education agency has not resolved the due process complaint to the satisfaction of the parent within **30 days**, the due process hearing may occur.

The meeting does not have to be held if the parent and education agency agree in writing to waive the meeting or both agree to use the mediation process.

Mediation

Mediation is a dispute resolution process that uses a trained person to assist other people in coming to their own agreements about how to resolve their conflict or dispute. Unlike a judge or arbitrator, the mediator does not decide the outcome of the dispute.

If mediation does not resolve the dispute or if parents decline to participate in mediation, they are still entitled to an impartial due process hearing. If either party is dissatisfied with the hearing officer's decision, all parties still have the right to initiate civil action through state or federal courts.

Mediation should be available for resolving disputes whether or not a due process hearing is requested. Mediation is voluntary for both the parents and the schools. The state must bear the cost of the mediation process. Mediation sessions must be scheduled in a timely manner and be held in a convenient location for all parties involved. The mediator must be impartial. An agreement reached during the mediation process must be recorded in a legally binding written agreement.

Mediation cannot be used to deny or delay a parent's right to a due process hearing.

Discussions during mediation are confidential and may not be used as evidence in any subsequent due process hearings or civil process hearings or civil proceedings.

Complaint Resolution Process - Due Process - Mediation

Complaint Resolution

Parents have the right to request a due process hearing by the educational agency when they present complaints about their child's special education identification, evaluation, educational placement or program of services. They must submit a written request for a hearing utilizing the state's guidelines for documenting relevant information about the child, the nature and facts of the problem and a proposed resolution. The school may also file a due process complaint. The Connecticut State Department of Education has forms to assist parents and schools in filing due process and State Complaints. The due process hearing is conducted by a Connecticut DOE hearing officer.

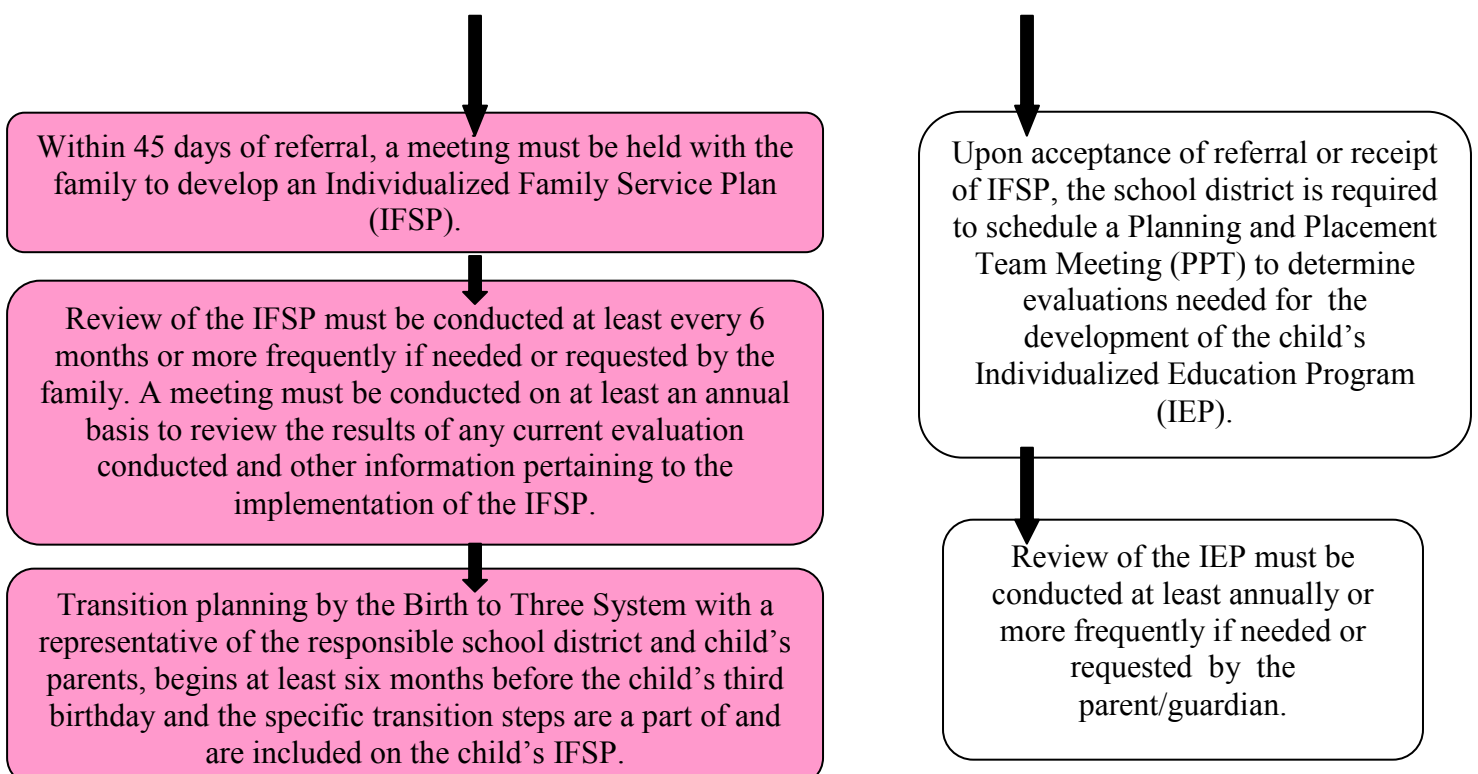
Parents have the following rights at hearing:

- To have the hearing at a time and place convenient for the parents.
- To have either an open or private hearing.
- To present evidence at the hearing.
- To view all written material supporting the school district's position at least five days before the hearing.
- School districts have the right to view all the parents' evidence five days before the hearing.
- Evidence which has not been shared with the other party five days before the hearing may be excluded.
- To ask questions of the school district's witnesses.
- To demand the attendance of witnesses.
- To have the child present at the hearing.
- To get written findings of facts and decisions within 45 days of a request for a due process hearing.
- This timeline may be extended by the hearing officer at the reasonable request of either party. For example, a hearing officer may agree to an extension to get the results of an independent evaluation.
- To bring an attorney or an advocate to the hearing.
- If parents win at a due process hearing or on appeal the school district will ordinarily have to pay the parents' attorney fees.

While hearing and appeal procedures are in process, the student should remain in his or her existing program. This is called "stay put".

In the case of an initial placement the school must serve the student until a decision is reached. The decision must be mailed to each of the parties no later than 45 days after the receipt of a request for a hearing or an appeal.

Parties have the right to appeal decisions of due process hearings conducted by the state education agency to state or federal court.



Referral Process

Planning and Placement Team (PPT)

A Planning and Placement Team (PPT) reviews referrals to special education, determines if your child needs to be evaluated, decides which evaluations will be given to your child, determines whether your child is eligible for special education services, develops the IEP, if eligible, and provide ongoing review and updates to educational plan. You are a valued member of the team. The PPT is composed of:

The parents of the child with a disability;

- At least one regular education teacher of the child (if the child is, or may be participating in the general education environment);
- At least one special education teacher of the child, or if appropriate, at least one special education provider of the child;
- A representative of the school district who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities and is knowledgeable about the general curriculum and about the availability of resources of the school district;
- A pupil services personnel member (for example, a school psychologist, school social worker or guidance counselor);
- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results (who may be one of the previously listed team members other than the parent);
- If appropriate, the child with a disability; and
- At the discretion of the parent or the school, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel.

A planning and placement team reviews referrals to special education, determines if the child needs to be evaluated, decides what evaluations will be given to the child, and determines whether the child is eligible for special education services. This team meets minimally on a yearly basis to collaborate on the specific educational needs of the child and development, review, and revision the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP). It is important to note that parents may invite anyone they want to come to the PPT with them, though notification of such to the PPT coordinator should be provided.

The school district may place your child in an interim alternative education setting (IAES) for up to 45 school days, whether or not the behavior is found to be a manifestation of your child's disability, if your child:

- Carries a weapon to school or a school function, or is in possession of a weapon in school or a school function;
- Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of controlled substances while at school or a school function; or
- Inflicts serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, or at a school function.

If you are a parent, teacher or administrator who is dealing with behavior problems or school discipline issues, you need to know about the right to a free appropriate education, the role of the IEP team, functional behavior assessments, and behavior intervention plans

Behavioral Intervention

In the case of a child whose behavior impedes his/her learning, or that of others, a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) needs to be completed and may lead to the design and implementation of a positive Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP). The BIP assists the student in the development of positive communication, behavioral, and social presentation. Provision of personal supports, goals/objectives, and/or other supportive strategies may be necessary. In the event that a behavior plan exists, it will be then necessary to review, and possibly modify the current plan, to address the behavior and return the child to the placement from which the child was removed, unless the parent and the school district agree to a change in placement as part of the modification of the behavior intervention plan.

Helpful Definitions

A "**Functional Behavioral Assessment**" (FBA) looks beyond the behavior itself. The FBA focuses on identifying significant factors within the students social, cognitive, and/or environment associated with the occurrence (and non-occurrence) of specific behaviors. The FBA provides an understanding of "why" a student behaves the way they do, leading to an effective behavior plan. An "ABC" chart is a direct observation tool that can be used to collect information when doing an FBA. "A" refers to the antecedent, The "B" refers to observed behavior, and "C" refers to the consequence, or the event that immediately follows a response.

A "**Behavioral Intervention Plan**" (BIP) must:

- be developed when a student's behavior interferes with his/her learning.
- be based on recent and meaningful assessment data.
- be individualized.
- include positive behavioral strategies and supports.
- be implemented as designed.
- have effects monitored.

Disciplinary Procedures-Manifestation Determination-Behavioral Intervention

Disciplinary Procedures

Code of student conduct applies to all students, including special education students. Unless an emergency exists, your child has the right to an informal hearing by the school administration before being suspended or removed from his or her education program. Your child should be informed of the reasons for the disciplinary action at this time and given an opportunity to explain the situation.

If your child has violated the school district's discipline code, he/she may be suspended for a period not to exceed 10 consecutive school days. The length of the removal must be comparable to the length of the removal that would be applied to non-disabled child who breaks the same rule. The school district is not required to provide services if the removal does not exceed ten consecutive school days in the same school year and if the school district does not provide services to a non-disabled child who has been suspended from school for removals that do not exceed 10 consecutive school days in the same school year.

Determination that removals do not constitute a change in placement:

If in the same school year, your child has been subjected to a series of short term removals that add up to more than 10 school days in a school year, school personnel must decide whether the removals constitute a change in placement. A change in placement occurs if:

- 1. The removal is for more than 10 consecutive school days; or*
- 2. The child has been subjected to a series of removals that constitute a pattern:*
 - The series of removals total more than ten school days in a school year;*
 - The child's behavior is substantially similar to the child's behavior in previous incidents that resulted in the series of removals; and*
 - Additional factors such as the length of each removal, the total amount of time the child has been removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another.*

Determination that removals do not constitute a change in placement:

If school personnel decide that a series of removals for more than ten school days in a school year do not constitute a change in placement, school personnel, in consultation with one of your child's teachers, determine the extent to which education services are needed to enable your child to continue to participate in the general curriculum and to progress toward meeting the goals set out for your child in his/her IEP. The child shall receive, as appropriate, a functional behavior assessment and behavioral intervention services and modification that are developed to address the behavior so that it does not recur.

Manifestation Determination

A "Manifestation Determination" is the review of the relationship between your child's behavior and your child's disability. Within ten school days of the decision to change the placement of a child with a disability, a manifestation determination must be made. If you disagree with the manifestation determination, you have the right to initiate due process. Your child will remain in the disciplinary placement pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the time period imposed for the misconduct, whichever comes first, unless you and school district agree otherwise.

You and the school district may agree in writing that the attendance of a required member of the PPT is not necessary and excuse that PPT member from attending the meeting when that team member's area of curriculum or related service is not going to be modified or discussed at the meeting or if the team member can not make the meeting and plans to submit written input into the development of the IEP to the parent and the team prior to the meeting. You do not have to enter into such an agreement; if you don't agree to excuse a team member, the team member will be expected to attend the meeting.

The PPT is responsible for completing the required annual review of your child's IEP, and as appropriate, periodic revisions. You and the school district may agree in writing to change your child's IEP between annual reviews without holding a PPT meeting. If you disagree with suggested changes to the IEP, the PPT will reconvene to reach agreement.

An "Administrator/Designee" should be in attendance for all PPT meetings and one who is knowledgeable of Special Education law and have the authority to commit funds and resources as deemed necessary by the PPT.

Most parents, because they often are not educators, don't understand that they have a unique role to play in the PPT process. Parents are the experts on their child. Think about it.

You spend hours every day in the company of your child. You make casual observations about your child in hundreds of different situations. You are emotionally connected to and attuned to your child. You notice small but important changes in your child's behavior and emotions that may be overlooked by others. You have very specialized knowledge about your child. This also helps to explain why your perspective is so valuable, even if it may be different from that of the educators who only observe your child in the school setting.

Refer to back resource page for professional advocacy and/or legal assistance resources.

Note: If you have asked for your child's paraprofessional to attend PPT and they do not attend, reason should be found on Page 3 of IEP, "Prior Written Notice".

Planning and Placement Team (PPT)

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) has been referred to as “the cornerstone” or “centerpiece” of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It is a written education program/plan for a child with a disability that is developed by the PPT; reviewed and updated at least yearly and describes the child’s present performance, what the child’s learning needs are, what services the child will need, when and for how long, and identifies who will provide the services. An IEP details your child’s special education program for one school year. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act-2004 (IDEA) states that all children eligible for special education services must have an IEP.

Some key elements of a child’s IEP include the following:

- *Present levels of educational and functional performance, established by assessments*
- *Measurable educational goals linked to present levels of academic and functional performance for the coming year and short-term instructional objectives derived from those goals*
- *Evaluation procedures and performance criteria*
- *An explanation of the extent, if any, to which your child will not participate in the regular education class, the general education curriculum or extracurricular activities;*
- *Modifications and accommodations your child needs to participate in the general education curriculum including nonacademic and extracurricular activities;*
- *Special education and related services required by your child including transportation and physical and vocational education programs;*
- *Recommended instructional settings and a list of people who will work with your child to implement the IEP;*
- *Determination of training needs for school staff and families;*
- *The date services will begin and end, and the frequency of the identified services;*
- *The length of the school day and year;*
- *Statement of accommodations and modifications needed to facilitate CMT/CAPT, or district-wide testing;*
- *Recommendations for participation in alternate assessments (if needed); e.g. Related Service, Functional Behavioral Assessment, Assistive Technology, Sensory Assessment.*
- *Transition service needs;*
- *and Positive Behavioral Support plan when necessary*

INCLUSION IN EDUCATION: A CHOICE FOR YOUR CHILD

Do you know that many students with disabilities are successfully learning and joining in the same classroom with their friends and neighbors who are not disabled? Inclusion is possible for ALL students, including YOUR child. The key to success for inclusion is to build the services and supports necessary to insure a good program.

Inclusion means:

- *Educating all children with disabilities in regular classrooms regardless of the nature of their disabling condition(s).*
- *Providing all students enhanced opportunities to learn from each other’s contributions.*
- *Providing necessary services within the regular schools.*
- *Supporting regular teachers and administrators (e.g., by providing time, training, teamwork, resources, and strategies).*
- *Having students with disabilities follow the same schedules as non-disabled students.*
- *Involving students with disabilities in age-appropriate academic classes and extracurricular activities, including art, music, gym, field trips, assemblies, and graduation exercises.*
- *Students with disabilities using school cafeteria, library, playground, and other facilities along with non-disabled students.*
- *Encouraging friendships between non-disabled and disabled students.*
- *Students with disabilities receiving their education and job training in regular community environments when appropriate.*
- *Teaching all children to understand and accept human differences.*
- *Placing children with disabilities in the same schools they would attend if they did not have disabilities.*
- *Taking parents’ concerns seriously.*
- *Providing an appropriate individualized educational program.*

*Inclusion does **not** mean:*

- *Placing students with disabilities into regular programs without preparation or support.*
- *Providing special education services in separate or isolated places.*
- *Not planning for children’s individual needs.*
- *Jeopardizing students’ safety or well-being.*
- *Placing unreasonable demands on teachers and administrators.*
- *Isolating students with disabilities in regular schools.*
- *Placing students with disabilities in schools or classes that are not age-appropriate.*
- *Requiring that students be “ready” and “earn” their way into regular classrooms based on cognitive or social skills.*

Extended School Year Services

School districts may limit analysis of a child's eligibility for extended school year services to a regression/recoupment criterion. However, there are both regression and non-regression factors which must be considered in determining whether or not a child may be eligible for extended school year services.

They are:

- The nature or severity of the student's disability (non-regression);
- The student is likely to lose critical skills or fail to recover these skills within a
- Reasonable time as compared to typical students (regression/recoupment);
- The student's progress in the areas of learning crucial to attaining self-sufficiency And independence from caretakers (non-regression);
- The student's stereotypic, ritualistic, aggressive or self-injurious interfering Behaviors prevent the student, from receiving some educational benefit from the Program during the school year (non-regression); or
- Other special circumstances identified by the IEP team.

The provision of extended school year services; is the exception and not the rule for students receiving special education and related services. Extended school year means Services provided beyond the length of the regular school year as described in the IEP and is provided at no cost to the parents. The determination of whether or not a child will be eligible for an extended school year program and the content and location of the program are generally discussed at the annual review for the child. This should be done early enough to allow sufficient time for any dispute regarding the provision of the services to be resolved before, the start of the extended school year program.

Tips On Writing An Individualized Education Program (IEP)

If your child has a current IEP, make sure you have a copy, ask the school if you don't have one. Review the information in each section so you are familiar with what your child is working on now. Think about what needs to be in the next IEP. Although there are many pages, there are four main parts to look at in developing an appropriate IEP.

The **first** is **present levels of performance**.

- Present levels should address all areas of need (communication, physical, academic, social/emotional).
- They should tell specifically what the child is having problems with and what things work for him. By knowing what Dan can and cannot do we have a place to start to write goals.

Examples: Poor- Dan is writing below grade level.

Better-Dan can write a simple sentence with correct capitalization but struggles with questions.

The **second** section is **the goals and objectives**.

- These come from the needs that the team wrote in present levels.
- Goals and objectives provide a road map of what the child is working on and should be making progress on in during the coming year. These can be academic, social and behavioral.
- The school must be able to measure the goals and objectives so team will know if the student is making progress.

Examples: Poor (too broad and general): Alexis will improve her writing skills.

Better: Alexis will be able to write a five-sentence paragraph with correct punctuation and capitalization.

The **third** section is **supports and services**. These are all the things the team thinks the child needs in order to:

- Make progress on his annual goals and within the general curriculum.
 - Participate in nonacademic and extra curricular activities.
 - Be educated and participate with children without disabilities.
- (Supports and services should be based on what the student needs, not on what is available.)

The **fourth** section is **placement**.

- This is the place, classroom(s) and other school environments, where the child can best work on her goals.
- To the maximum extent possible a student with disabilities should be educated in general education classrooms with supports and services.
- Removal happens only after all supports and services have been tried and the student cannot achieve her goals in that environment.
- There is a continuum of places from the least restrictive, general education classroom, to more restrictive environments, including special classes, home instruction, and hospital.

Parents should be receiving progress notes on how their child is doing on his IEP goals as often as the school gives out report cards to all children. If there is a problem, the team can meet at any time during the year.

Kentucky Protection and Advocacy office <http://www.kypa.net/drupal/?q=node/400>

The IEP (Individualized Education Program) and Tips

Accommodation & Modifications

Every child with a disability has a right to attend regular education classes and to have an accommodations and modifications so they can be successful in those classes. These can include changes in the method of instruction, the curriculum, and the environment. Accommodations and modifications are important tools for a child to successfully accomplish Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals and objectives and participate actively with other students in classroom and school activities. The IEP team determines accommodations and modifications that meet the unique and individual needs of the student.

Accommodations

Accommodations are changes in **how** a student accesses information and demonstrates learning. Accommodations do not substantially change the instructional level, content, or performance criteria. The changes are made in order to provide a student with equal access to learning and equal opportunity to show what he is or she knows and can do. Accommodations can include changes in the following:

1. Time/scheduling	3. Presentation and/or response format and procedures	5. Equipment
2. Instructional strategies	4. Environment	6. Architecture

Accommodation Examples: (This is not a complete list.)

- Test taken orally
- Weekly home-school communication tool, such as a notebook or daily log book
- Additional time to take test
- Locker with an adapted lock
- Large print textbooks
- Assistive Technology Devices
- Peer support for note taking
- Lab sheets with highlighted instructions
- Use of a computer for writing
- Tape record lectures
- Graph paper to assist in organizing and lining up math problems.

The school district must, without delay; agree to pay for the IEE or initiate due process procedures to defend the appropriateness of its evaluation. The school district must also provide the parent with a list of qualified independent evaluators when the parent asks for an independent evaluation.

The school district must consider the results of any independent educational evaluation, including the one the parent pay for, when making decisions regarding the child's educational program. However, the school district is not required to agree with or implement any or all of the results or recommendations of the independent educational evaluation. The parent may also submit the results of an independent educational evaluation as evidence at a due process hearing.

Re-Evaluation

The PPT must decide if the child needs a reevaluation at least **once every three years**. A reevaluation may occur sooner if conditions warrant, or if the parent or the child's teacher requests it. The federal law states that a reevaluation shall not occur more than once a year unless the parent and the school district agree otherwise.

The school must obtain the written consent before conducting a reevaluation of the child. If the parent refuses consent, the school district may continue to pursue consent for the reevaluation through mediation and/or due process hearing. If the school district can show that it has tried to get the consent for the reevaluation and the parent failed to respond to the school district's attempts to obtain the consent, the school district may proceed with the reevaluation as planned.

CMT/CAPT Skills Checklists

CMT/CAPT Skills Checklists have been created for use with those students with a significant cognitive impairment. The checklist has been designed to align with the skills and objectives outlined in the Connecticut Curriculum Frameworks in language arts and math at each grade level 3-8 and 10.

In all instances where students are exempted from a district-wide assessment, a justification for this action is required. In addition, when a student is exempted from a district-wide assessment, the PPT must determine how the student will otherwise be assessed and record this information in the appropriate field on the page.

Evaluations/ Independent Educational Evaluations/ Reevaluations

Evaluations- Independent Educational Evaluations- Reevaluations and other Tests

An evaluation study is the process used by the PPT to determine the child's specific learning strengths and needs, and to determine whether or not the child is eligible for special education services. All assessments must be provided and administered in the language or form of communication with which the child is most comfortable, unless it is clearly not possible to do so.

When the child is referred to special education, **an evaluation study will be conducted to determine** if the child is eligible to receive special education services. Before this evaluation study can begin, the parent will receive a written notice that describes the tests and procedures to be used with the child. The parent has the right to withhold the written consent for the evaluation study or to revoke the consent at any time. A screening done by the child's teacher is not considered an evaluation.

Once the evaluation has been completed, the planning and placement team will meet to interpret the evaluation data. The interpretation of the data will determine: 1) if the child has a disability; 2) if the disability is having an adverse affect on the child's education; and 3) whether the child requires special education and related services. The parent will receive a copy of the evaluation report generated by the PPT. The parent may also request a copy of any of the individual evaluation reports that were generated as part of the evaluation process.

Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)

Federal law defines an IEE broadly as "an evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the public agency responsible for the education of the child in question." An IEE is not limited to evaluating only a child's academic or cognitive skills, but may include the evaluation of any skill related to the child's educational needs. Evaluations of neurological functioning, adapted physical education, sensory needs, even music therapy, are but a few examples of the types of IEEs covered under the IDEA. Parents may obtain an IEE, for virtually any purpose if it impacts the child's education.

If the parent disagrees with an evaluation conducted by the school district, the parent has the right to an independent educational evaluation at the school's expense, unless the school district can prove its evaluation is appropriate or the IEE does not meet the school district's criteria. If the school believes its evaluation is appropriate, it must initiate a due process hearing or pay for the IEE. If the school district initiates a due process hearing, a hearing officer will decide whether the school district's evaluation is appropriate. If the hearing officer decides in favor of the school district, the parent may still obtain an independent evaluation, but the parent will have to pay the costs associated with the independent evaluation.

Modifications

Modifications are changes in what a student is expected to learn. The changes are made to provide student opportunities to participate meaningful and productively along with other students in classroom and school learning experiences. Modifications might include changes in the following:

1. instructional levels	2. content	3. performance criteria
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Modification Examples: (This is not a complete list.)

- outline in place of essay for major project
- Picture Communication Symbols (PCS) choices on tests
- Alternative books or materials on the same theme or topic
- Spelling support from a computerized spell check program
- Word bank of choices for answer to test questions
- use of a calculator on a math test
- Film or video supplements in place of text
- Questions re-worded using simpler language
- Projects substituted for written report
- Assistive Technology Devices

Deciding which accommodations and/or modifications to use depends on the assignment and the needs of the individual student. For example, a particular student may need more time to take English tests and also need to use a calculator for all math assignments. When the appropriate adaptations are made to how/or and what the student is learning, he or she has true access to the general education curriculum.

Accommodations and modifications are types of adaptations that are made to the environment, curriculum, instruction, or assessment practices in order for students with disabilities to be successful learners and to participate actively with other students in the general education classroom and in school-wide activities.

Field Trips: Discussion in advance needs or appropriateness of each trip (i.e., what will be required, provisions need).

From PEAK 2002 www.peakparent.org

Transition from the Connecticut Birth to Three System to Special Education

Referral to Special Education

A child's Birth to Three service coordinator will work with family upon making a formal referral to the school district. Transition will be discussed at each individualized family service plan (IFSP) meeting with your Service Coordinator. It is recommended that a formal referral to the child's school district be made when the child is 2 and no later than six months before your child's third birthday. Birth to Three services will end by the time your child has turned 3 and the goal is to have other services and support programs in place for you and your child after early intervention has terminated.

Convening of the Transition Planning Conference

The child's Service Coordinator from Birth to Three Program is responsible for convening the transition planning conference. The purpose of the transition planning conference is to plan the "next steps" for the child before he/she child turns 3. At a minimum, three important people need to attend the transition planning conference: parent, the child's Birth to Three Service Coordinator and a representative from your school district. The transition planning conference is scheduled at a mutually convenient time and place for everyone. The Service Coordinator will notify the parent and child's school district of the date, time and place for the meeting. By law, the transition planning conference must take place no later than 90-days before and as early as nine months before your child's third birthday. If this meeting needs to be scheduled during the summer months and the school district finds it difficult to attend the transition meeting, the law allows for their participation by telephone conference call.

The Initial PPT

There is no prescribed timeline by law for the scheduling of a PPT meeting for children transitioning from a Birth to Three program to special education. However, the law is clear that all special education activities must take place before the child turns 3. (Special education activities include; the referral, evaluation, determination of eligibility for special education and the development of the individualized education program for the child.) All of those special education activities take place through the PPT. If your child is eligible for special education, your child's IEP must be implemented by their third birthday and additionally, in order for the special education and related services to be provided by your child's third birthday, all PPT meetings and activities must be completed before your child's third birthday. Federal law requires that an invitation to the initial PPT meeting be sent to your child's service coordinator and/or any other representatives from your child's Birth to Three program. The Birth to Three providers can participate in the PPT by sharing information about your child including your child's last Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP). When these individuals participate in the PPT meetings for your child, they can assist you, your child and the school district in the transition process and in making the transition both smooth and effective.

All of these activities will occur before your child turns 3 even during summer months. During the PPT to develop the IEP, the members of the PPT, including you, must decide if your child will require extended school year (ESY) services. ESY is the special education and related services that take place outside of the regular school calendar, including during the summer months. If the PPT determines that your child is eligible for special education, and is eligible for ESY services, then your child's special education and related services will be provided by your child's third birthday even if that falls during the summer months. If your child is determined eligible for special education and related services, and is not eligible for ESY services, then your child's special education and related services will be provided by the first day of school.

Transitioning from School to Adult Life

Transition planning is a partnership with families, students, school systems and adult service agencies to plan for and prepare the student to transition from school to adult life.

The reauthorized Individuals with disabilities Education Act (IDEA – 2004), requires that the annual PPT (Planning and Placement Team) meeting following the student's fifteenth birthday (or younger, if determined appropriate) the team must begin to discuss transition planning from school to adult life. The student must be invited to this PPT meeting, and all subsequent PPT meetings until he/she either graduates from high school with a diploma/certificate or until the end of the school year in which he or she turns 21. Upon receipt of a signed diploma, the town/school's responsibility will terminate. Typically, once the student completes their academic credits at 18, a further exploration of functional, vocational, and community goals are encouraged, if appropriate until the age to 21.

At the same PPT, the student's IEP (Individual Education Plan) will be developed and must include:

- Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to: education, employment and, where appropriate, independent living skills.
- By law "Transition Services" is defined as a coordinated set of activities designed to assist the student to develop skills, strengths and preferences in the areas of employment/vocational skills, post secondary education, community participation, independent living, advocacy and self determination.

Before the student exits his or her educational, the school district must provide the student with a summary of his or her academic achievement and functional performance. This **Summary of Performance (SOP)** must include recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting his or her goals upon exiting their educational program. The SOP must be completed during the final year of the student's educational program. The team can view the SOP form and Topic Brief of Frequently asked Questions on the CSDE website noted below:

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&Q=320730>.

Transitions: Birth-to-Three to LEA - School to Adult Life

Resources....

For assistance in understanding your rights, you may write or call the director of special education in your local school district or contact the:

Bureau of Special Education,
Connecticut State Department of Education
P. O. Box 2219, Room 369
Hartford, CT 06145-2219 at (860) 713-6910
www.state.ct.us/sde

In many communities there are social service organizations to which you may turn for help in understanding your rights. These groups may be affiliated with state and national advocacy groups. Local directors of special education may also have information about local groups and meetings are often publicized in newspapers.

Autism Society of Conn. – www.autismsocietyofct.org
Birth to Three Information and Infoline – 1-800-505-7000 (211-Infoline) www.birth23.org
Board of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB) 860-602-4000 www.besb.state.ct.us
Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) (800) 537-2549; (860) 424-4839 Website: <http://www.brs.state.ct.us>
Center for Children's Advocacy, Inc. Univ. of Conn. School of Law Tel: 860- 570-5327 Website:
<http://www.kidscounsel.org>
Children with Special Needs Program – Dept of Health -
CT Assn. For Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities - cacltd@ptonline.nt
Conn. Autism Spectrum Resource Center Inc. – 203-248-5222 - www.ct-asrc.org
Connecticut Birth to Three System - <http://www.birth23.org>
CT FEAT - Connecticut Families for Effective Autism Treatment — 860-571-3888 www.ctfeat.org
Connecticut Family Support Council – 860-657-8180 www.ctfsc.org
Connecticut Legal Services – New Britain – 800-233-7619
CT Parent Information and Resource Center 1-800-842-8678
CPAC - Conn. Parent Advocacy Center - Website: <http://www.cpacinc.org> 800-445-2722 / cpac@cpacinc.org
Child Development Info Line 1-800 505-7000
KASA – Kids as Self Advocates – 860-418-8709 www.ckasa.org
KidsCounsel-Center for Children's Advocacy-UCONN Law – 860-570-5327 – www.kidscounsel.org
NEAT (New England Assistive Technology) Market Place– 860-243-2869 toll free – 1-866-526-4492
www.neatmarketplace.org
Office of the Child Advocate - 566- 2106 Toll Free- 1-800-994-0939 www.oca.state.ct.us
Office of the Healthcare Advocate – 1-866-466-4446
P&A - Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities (Ages 18-59) 1-800-842-7303
www.ct.gov/opapd
SPED*NET website (www.spednet.com). Connecticut based website for parents and professionals.
Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut, Inc. (800) 453-3320 or (860) 344-0380
State Department of Developmental Services (860) 418-6000 Website: <http://www.dds.state.ct.us>
State Department of Developmental Services - Educational Liaisons (contact your DMR Case Manager)
State Department of Developmental Services - Transition Coordinators (contact your DMR Case Manager)
State Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education – 860-713-6910
State Department of Children and Family Services (DCF)– Hotline /Voluntary Services – 1-800-842-2288
State Education Resource Center (SERC) - - 860-632-1485 www.ctserc.orgWrightsLaw – On-Line Educational Resource www.Wrightslaw.com
UCP - United Cerebral Palsy of Connecticut -