

**Pennsylvania Parent Information and Resource Center (PA PIRC) Live, Online Session:  
WHAT IS SPECIAL EDUCATION? What is "Special" about Special Education? Who Benefits from  
Special Education?**

**Presenter: Kay Lipsitz, Director, Parent Education Network**

**Wednesday, March 23, 2011**

**Participant Chat Questions:**

**1. Ann: Could you give an example of what might necessitate recreation as a Related Service?**

- a. There are provisions in IDEA that state that a school should take steps to provide supplementary aids and services determined to be appropriate and necessary to provide nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities in the manner necessary to afford children with disabilities an equal opportunity for participation in these services and activities. Schools must ensure that each child with a disability has an opportunity to participate with non disabled children in extra-curricular, non-academic activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs and desires of the child.

Example- The school is holding a sporting activity where all students are welcome and encouraged to attend and participate. If a student with a disability wants to participate but needs assistance to be able to participate, the school should consider a related service to provide the support the student needs to be able to participate and access the activity. Remember, the definition of Related Services we talked about earlier in the presentation. Related Services assists a child in receiving equal access and equal opportunity; Audiology services, Counseling services, Early Identification, Interpreting services, Orientation and Mobility, Physical Therapy, School Health services, etc.

**2. Kimberly Lucas: Can someone without legal guardianship request an eval? I am thinking of a grandparent who is raising a grandchild as the parents are no longer involved.**

- a. IDEA 2004 defines parent; A biological, or adoptive parent of a child, including a foster parent. A guardian is generally authorized to act as a child's parent. An individual acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent (including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative) with whom the child lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare, or a surrogate parent who has been appointed. Answer is yes if parents are no longer involved or if parents cannot be located.

**3. Mrt: What do you do if school staff do NOT take parent concerns or suggestions seriously?**

- a. Take some time to write down what you want to be accomplished in meeting with the school again.  
Example:
  - i. You feel that your child is not benefitting from their academic program.
  - ii. You may feel that your child is not having the same non-academic, extracurricular opportunities as other students.
- b. Start with asking yourself what proof you have that indicates what you are saying is true.
- c. Look to see if there is a legal basis for your requests.
- d. Ask an advocate, friend to assist in prioritizing the issues and developing a plan to address the concerns. What do I need to prove? What proof and right do you have as a parent regarding what you are asking from the school?

If talking with the teacher, principal, school personnel isn't effective you might want to consider an IEP Facilitation. The IEP Facilitator assists in creating an atmosphere for fair communication. Mediation is also another viable alternative, bringing parents and schools together to work with each other to resolve a disagreement. Remember the focus is to find a solution that is in the best interest of the child.

**4. Wendy Schultz: Do these apply to college age students?**

- a. Transition planning in Pennsylvania is required by age 14. There are three main secondary goals that must be addressed: post-secondary education or training, employment, and independent living. It is important to remember that once a student graduates from high school or reaches age 21, he or she is no longer entitled to services through the educational system, IDEA. A youth must apply and meet eligibility requirements for services provided by adult agencies.