



WHAT IS SPECIAL EDUCATION?

SPECIAL EDUCATION:

What is “Special” about Special Education? Who Benefits from Special Education?

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BEFORE SPECIAL EDUCATION...

Before 1975 children with disabilities were denied an education. In 1975, America passed an important federal law.

FAPE: Free Appropriate Public Education

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Almost 7 million children with disabilities receive services under IDEA. These services are called Special Education and related services.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Education means:

- Specially designed instruction
- No cost to parents (FAPE)
- Meets the needs of a child with a disability

Where services are provided:

- In the classroom
- In the home
- In hospitals, institutions, or where a child attends school

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RELATED SERVICES

Some children who receive special education also need related services. These services include:

- Speech-language
- Audiology
- Interpreting services
- Psychological services
- Physical Therapy (PT)
- Occupational Therapy (OT)
- Recreation
- Early Identification



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RELATED SERVICES

- Counseling Services
- Orientation & mobility services
- Medical (to evaluate)
- School health services
- School nurse services
- Social work services
- Parent counseling & training



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REFERRAL

- **Referral.** The school may ask to evaluate your child. The request is made in writing.
 - **You may say YES or NO to the request.**



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REFERRAL

- **Referral.** The parent may ask in writing for an evaluation. **The school district may say-**
 - **YES.** Written notice & written consent
 - **NO.** Written notice & rights
 - **Let's try something else first**
 - Different teaching method
 - Accommodations



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WHY HAVE AN EVALUATION?

- To see if you child has a disability and needs special education and related services
- To understand your child's needs and strengths
- To make educational decisions

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EVALUATION RESULTS

Evaluation results will show if a child needs special education.

As a parent, if the evaluation results is not what I know about my child:

- Say so in writing
- Meet to talk about the concerns
- Ask for more testing, or
- Ask for an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) at public expense



*An IEE is an evaluation by non-district personnel

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ELIGIBILITY for Special Education

A group (including the parents & professionals determines eligibility.

If you disagree with the decision:

- Do it in writing
- Ask what steps to take
- Ask for a meeting to talk with school
- Follow through with the steps!



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ELIGIBILITY for Special Education

If you agree with the decision:

- “Team meeting” will be held (parents & school staff)
- Team reviews evaluation
- Team writes Individualized Education Program (IEP)

You **MUST** be invited to help develop
Your child’s IEP!



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IEP TEAM MEETING

IEP Team members include:

- Parents
- Special education teacher
- Regular education teacher
- District representative
- Persons who understand evaluation
- Child (if appropriate)
- Others that are invited by the parents or school staff (IE: parent advocate, friend, relative etc.)

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IEP TEAM MEETING

School Staff will set up the meeting.

They will:

- Invite team members
- Tell you in advance
- Set the time and place so you are able to attend
- Tell you the purpose
- Tell you who will be there

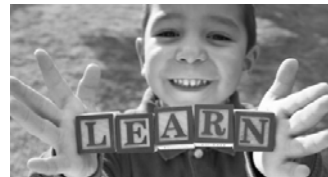
You may participate by phone or reschedule

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IEP DEVELOPMENT

The IEP team must discuss:

- What the child can do- his/her strengths
- Your concerns as a parent (must be taken seriously by the team)
- Evaluation results
- Academic needs
- Functional needs
- Services



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IEP DEVELOPMENT

The IEP team must discuss:

- What to do when behavior affects learning
- Language/communication needs related to English skills
- Braille (if vision impaired)
- Communication needs
- Assistive technology needs



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IEP DEVELOPMENT

The IEP will describe:

- How your child is currently doing in school
- Annual goals
- Objectives (for some children)
- Special education & related services
- Least Restrictive Environment
- Modifications
- Dates and places for services
- Transition services, on or before age 14
- How progress will be measured & reported


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PLACEMENT

Special education is a program, not a place!

Placement is where services are provided.

FIRST: The team determines IEP goals & services
THEN: The team will talk about where services will be provided.



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PLACEMENT

Services are in the
Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

The first place to be considered is the general education classroom. The TEAM will talk about the supports and services your child needs to be successful there. If the TEAM agrees that you child cannot succeed in a general classroom, they may consider other placements. *Different placements:*

- Regular Education classroom
- Special Education classroom
- Special Schools

**A hospital, institution, or other setting. You are a part of the group that decides where services are provided.*



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PLACEMENT

Parents may disagree with placement decisions.

If you disagree with a placement:

- Disagree in writing
- Talk about why
- Try to find agreement

BUT

If this does not work,
use your rights.



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DUE PROCESS RIGHTS

Due process rights provide ways to resolve disagreements

- Meet with school staff
- Complaint
- Facilitated IEP
- Mediation
- Resolution session
- Facilitated Resolution session
- Due process hearing



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RESOURCES

PACER www.pacer.org

US Dept of Education www.ed.gov

PA Dept of Education www.education.state.pa.us

PaTTAN www.pattan.net

Parent Education Network (PEN) www.parentednet.org

PEAL Center www.pealcenter.org

Hispanos Unidos para Ninos Excepcionales (HUNE)
<http://huneinc.org>

Mentor Parent Program www.mentorparent.org

ConsultLine/ODR www.odr-pa.org