

Special Education: What Do I Need to Know? A Brief Overview for Parents

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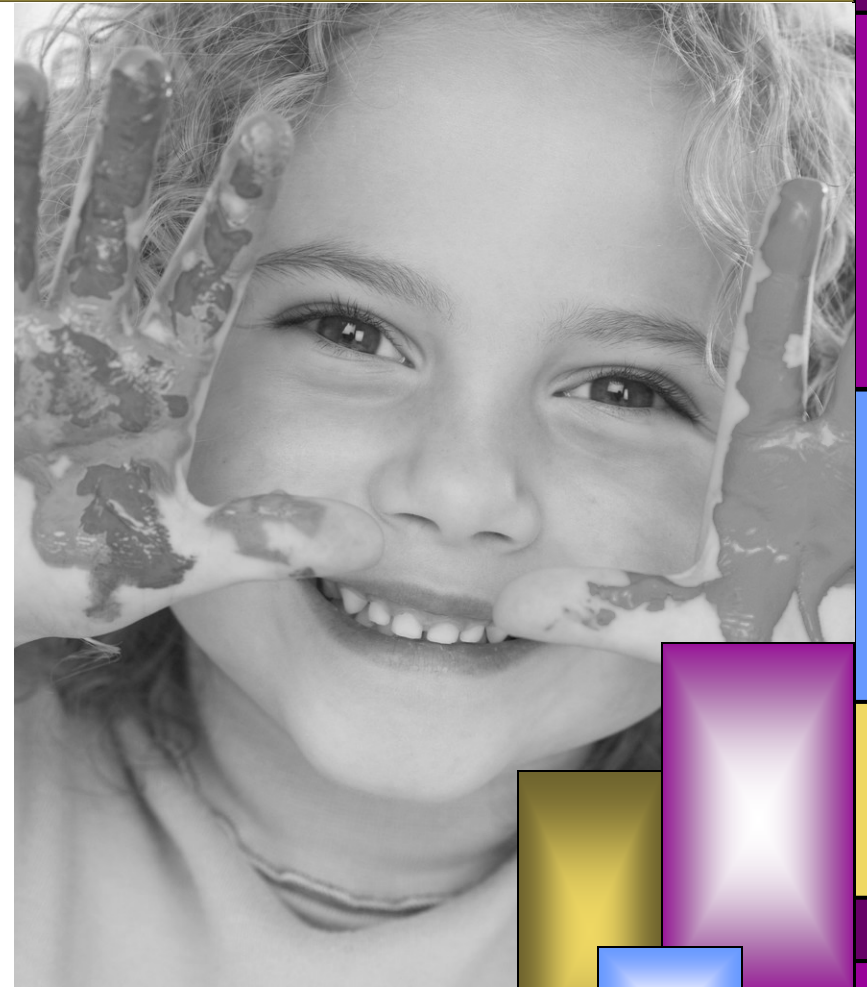
What do I need to know about SPECIAL EDUCATION?

Special Education means:

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

Services are provided:

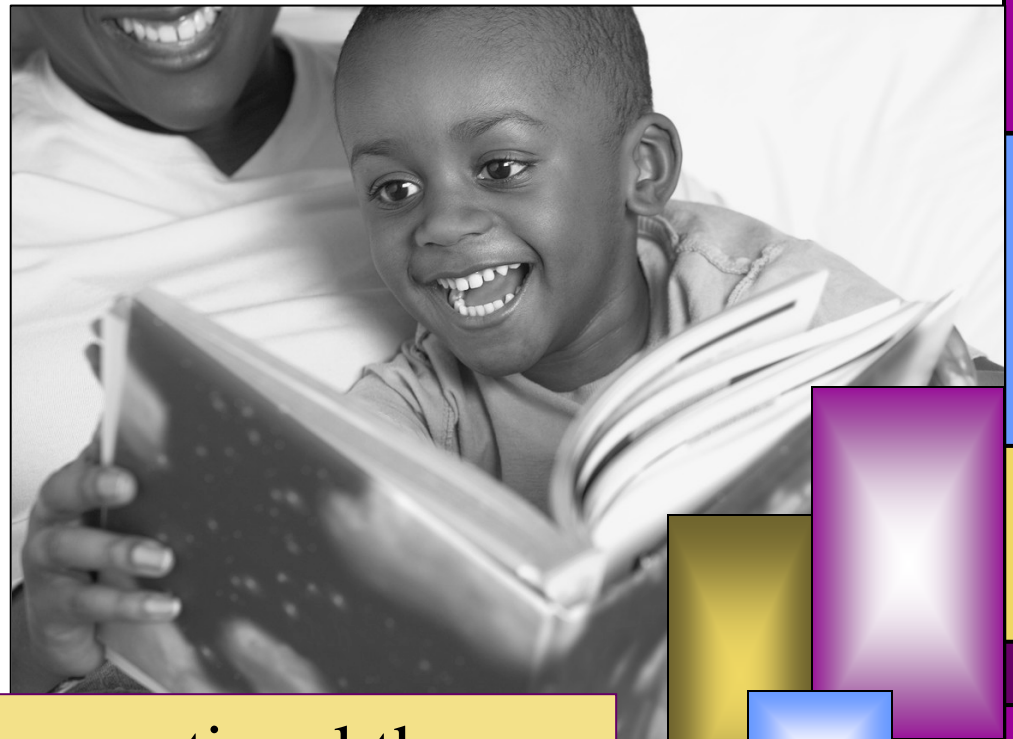
- In the classroom
- In the home
- In hospitals, institutions, or where a child goes to school



What do I need to know about RELATED SERVICES?

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

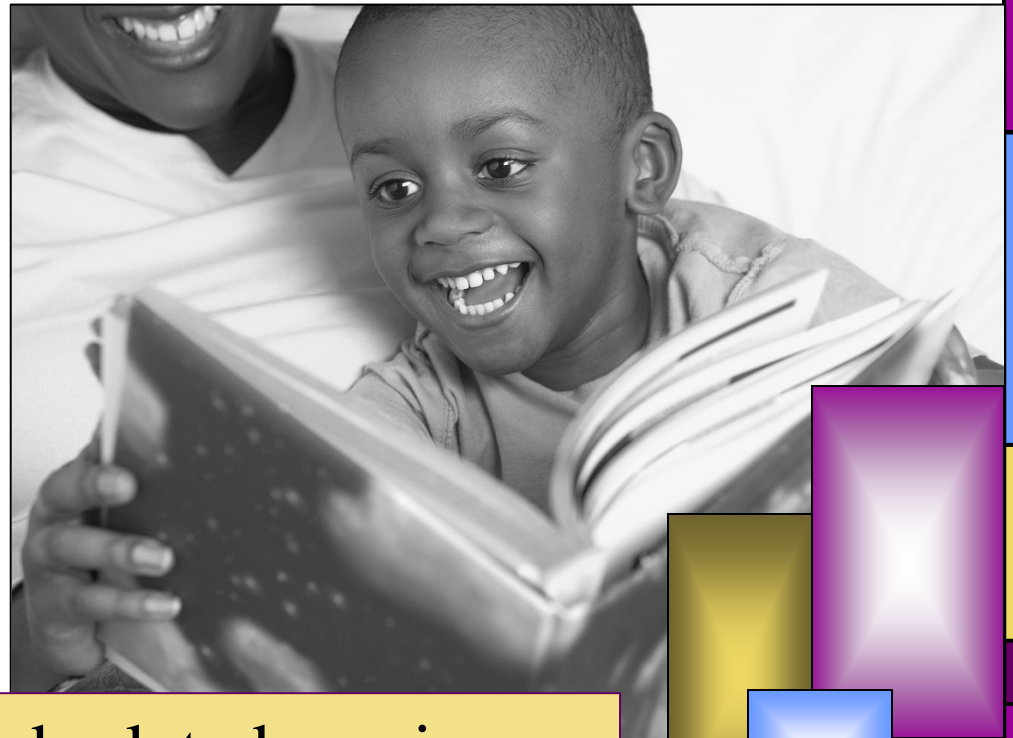
- Speech-language
- Audiology
- Interpreting services
- Psychological services
- P.T. and O.T.*
- Recreation
- Early identification



*Physical therapy, occupational therapy

What do I need to know about RELATED SERVICES?

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



Not all children need related services

What do I need to know about 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.



What do I need to know about REFERRAL?

Referral. You may ask in writing for an evaluation.

The school district may say-

- **Yes.** Written notice and written consent
- **No.** Written notice and rights
- **Let's try something else first.**
 - Different teaching method
 - Accommodations



What do I need to know about EVALUATION?

Why have an evaluation?

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



What do I need to know about EVALUATION?

**Assessments are part of
evaluation. They include:**

- Tests
- Medical reports
- Observation
- A review of the child's work
- Interviews with teachers
- Interviews with parents
- Other sources



What do I need to know about EVALUATION?

**You may ask questions about
evaluation, such as:**

- What assessments will be used?
- Are they accurate?
- Will tests be in my child's first language?
- May I see test results?

Evaluation may not discriminate against
your child (culture, disability, or other)



What do I need to know about EVALUATION?

Evaluation results will show if a child needs special education.

If the evaluation does not “fit” what you know about your child:

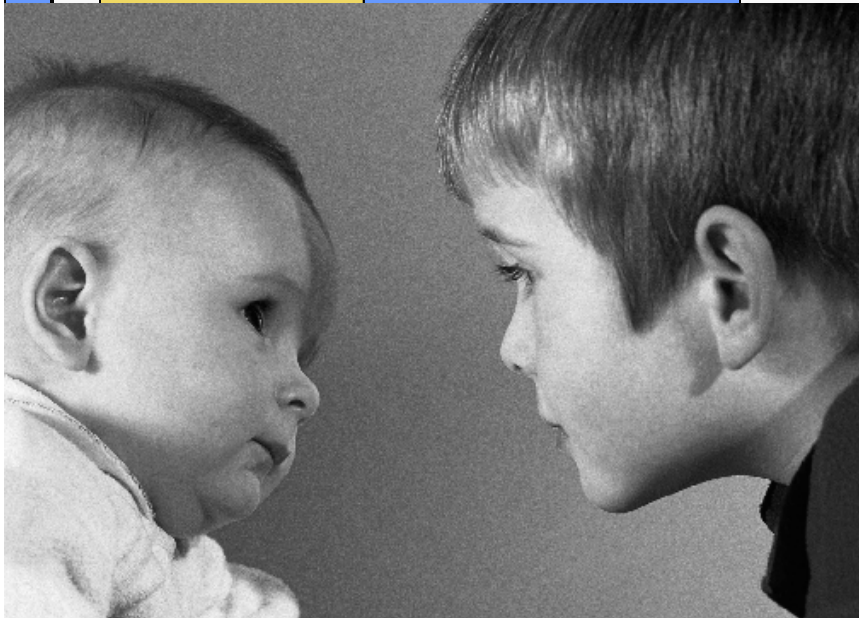
- Say so in writing
- Meet to talk about the concerns
- Ask for more testing, or
- Ask for Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)



An IEE is an evaluation by non-district persons

What do I need to know about ELIGIBILITY?

A group (parents & professionals) determines eligibility



If you disagree with the decision:

- Do it in writing
- Ask what steps to take
- Follow through with the steps!

What do I need to know about ELIGIBILITY?

If you agree with the decision:



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

You must be invited to help develop your child's IEP!

What do I need to know about THE IEP TEAM MEETING?

IEP Team members include:

- Parents
- Special education teacher
- Regular education teacher
- District representative
- Person who understands evaluation

May also include:

- The child
- Others



What do I need to know about THE 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

What do I need to know about DEVELOPING THE IEP?



The IEP team must discuss:

- What the child can do – his or her strengths
- Your concerns (must be taken seriously by the team)
- Evaluation results
- Academic needs
- Functional needs*
- Services

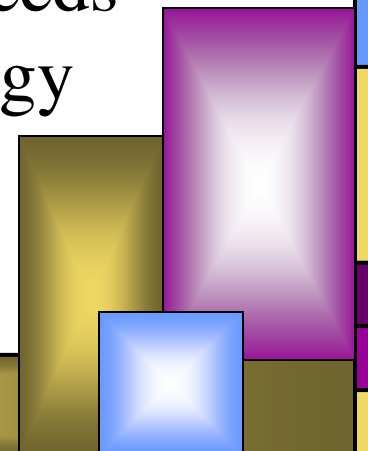
*Functional needs: routine activities of everyday living

What do I need to know about DEVELOPING THE IEP?



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



What do I need to know about DEVELOPING THE IEP?

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



What do I need to know about DEVELOPING THE IEP?

The IEP will describe:

- Modifications
- Dates and places for services
- Transition services
-age 16 (14 in some states)
- Age of majority
- How progress is measured



What do I need to know about PLACEMENT?

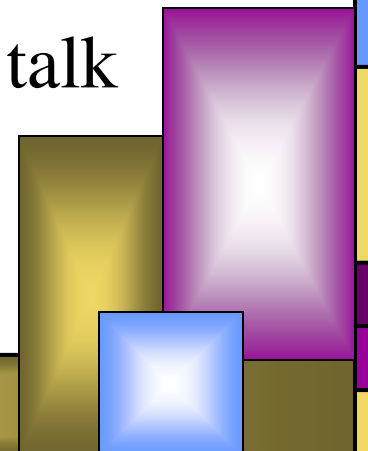
Special education is a program, not a place!

Placement is where services are provided--



FIRST: The team determines
IEP goals and services

THEN: The team will talk
about where services
will be provided



What do I need to know about PLACEMENT?

Services are in the Least Restrictive Environment

- Services must be provided in the most normal setting possible
- The team will consider whether a child can be placed in the regular classroom
- You will help decide placement



What do I need to know about PLACEMENT?

Parents may disagree with placement decisions.

If you disagree with placement:

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

BUT

If this does not work,
use your rights.



What do I need to know about DUE PROCESS RIGHTS?

**Due process rights provide ways
to resolve disagreements**

- Meet with school staff
- Mediation
- Resolution sessions
- Due process hearing
- Complaint



What do I need to know about DUE PROCESS RIGHTS?

**Due process rights provide ways
to resolve disagreements**

Meet with school staff: Talk about differences. Be clear about why you do not agree, and seek agreement. If this does not work, consider one of the other steps.



What do I need to know about DUE PROCESS RIGHTS?

**Due process rights provide ways
to resolve disagreements**

Mediation: Parent/school meeting, where both sides agree to mediation. A person who does not work for the district (*a mediator*) helps people to reach agreement.



A mediator must be impartial

What do I need to know about DUE PROCESS RIGHTS?

**Due process rights provide ways
to resolve disagreements**

Resolution Session. Required if a parent submits a due process complaint. Parents, some IEP team members and district staff who can make decisions meet within 15 days of the complaint.



What do I need to know about DUE PROCESS RIGHTS?

**Due process rights provide ways
to resolve disagreements**

Due process hearing: parents and schools each present their position before a hearing officer. This person decides what will happen, based on evidence and law.



Attorneys may represent parents or schools in hearings

What do I need to know about DUE PROCESS RIGHTS?

**Due process rights provide ways
to resolve disagreements**

Complaint: a written complaint that a school is not following the law. Each state investigates complaints and issues decisions.



**Complaint forms: available at the school or at
the state department of education**

Thank you for learning with us!

For more information about special education or your rights, call your state's Parent Center. If you do not know the number, call the ALLIANCE National Center at:

1-888-248-0822

We will be happy to connect you with someone who can help you.