

# Special Education and Referral Procedures

## What is Special Education?

Since 1975, public schools have been responsible for providing special education services to children with disabilities. Part of that obligation is identifying students with disabilities who are in need of special education and related services. Special Education is a Federally Mandated Program, which provides special education services for children from birth to age 21. The evaluation and instructional service is at no cost to the parent(s). Special education support services are provided in conjunction with general education curriculum.

### Special Education is NOT:

- Tutoring in regular education courses.
- An assurance that students will pass regular classes or tests.
- Special education is not a cure. It assists in removing barriers caused by the disability but does not remove the disability.
- Rehabilitation for a physical disability.

## Who Can Receive Special Education Services?

To qualify for special education services a child must have a disability as defined by MN State eligibility criteria in one or more of the following areas:

- Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)
- Deaf-Blind (DB)
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH)
- Developmental Cognitive Disability:
- Mild to Moderate or Moderate-Severe (DCD-MM, DCD-MS)
- Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)
- Emotional or Behavioral Disorders (EBD)
- Other Health Disabilities (OHD)
- Physically Impaired (PI)
- Severely Multiply Impaired (SMI)
- Specific Learning Disability (SLD)
- Speech or Language Impairments (S/LI)
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Visually Impaired (VI)

The school district will conduct an evaluation to determine if the child meets criteria for one or more of the areas listed above. If you have concerns about your child in one or more of these areas, please contact the principal in the school building.

## What Should You Expect If Your Child Receives Special Education Services?

Parents should expect to participate as a team member in decisions regarding their child's special education program. Your child should receive instruction that has been individualized to meet the specific needs of your child. Special education instructors will work with regular education teachers to provide the appropriate accommodations and modifications within the regular education setting.

## What is a Disability?

A disability is a lifelong handicapping condition often associated with a physical or mental impairment that limits a major life activity, including education.

## How Does a Child Receive Special Education Services or How Do I Refer My Child to Special Education?

If a parent(s) or teacher identifies a concern with a student's academic performance, communication, health/physical status, social/emotional or behavioral skills, motor skills, or functional skills, the parent(s) and teacher will meet to discuss and identify the concern and possible interventions. If the concerns persist and interventions were not successful, then:

1. The teacher gather's information on student performance, including tests, assignments and interventions attempted in the classroom.
2. The teacher brings the data and concerns identified to the Student Assistance Team (SAT) and they develop systematic interventions that can be implemented in the general education classroom.
3. The teacher collects data on the systematic interventions for 4-6 weeks using a pre-referral form and brings the data to the Student Support Team (SST) team as well as continues to communicate this information with the parent.
4. The SST determines whether the pre-referral information is adequate. If not, the information is returned to the referring party for completion. The SST then determines if an evaluation is needed.
5. If evaluation is needed, an Evaluation Planning meeting is held with the parent(s) and an evaluation plan is completed. The final plan is shared with parents for their written consent.
6. If the referral is inappropriate, alternative options for action will be recommended.

Upon parental consent, the school district will conduct an evaluation to determine if your child meets criteria for special education services in one or more of the disability areas.

If your child qualifies for special education services, as a team (including the parents), an Individual Educational Program (IEP) or Interagency Individual Intervention Plan (IIIP) will be written. The IEP will outline the present level of performance, areas of need, goals, and objectives. Specialized instructional service will be determined based on the needs and goals on the IEP. Special education areas of need may include:

- Reading
- Self-help skills
- Communication
- Writing
- Motor skills
- Transition skills
- Social skills
- Math skills
- Organizational skills
- Related services\*

\* Related services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, DAPE, etc. are provided if the student has an identified need and it is determined the child would not be able to meet their goals without this service. Related services cannot be provided unless the student is already receiving a special education service in a disability area.