DEPARTMENT OF
EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION
www.fldoe.org/ese

FDLRS Gulfcoast
Serving Hernando, Pasco, Pinellas

www.fdlrsgulfcoast.org

The Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System is funded by the State of Florida, Department of Education, Division of Public Schools, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, through federal assistance under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B; IDEA Part B, Preschool; and State General Revenue funds.

This brochure was adapted from "Possibilities: A Parent's Guide to Exceptional Student Education" developed by FDLRS Alpha and The School District of Palm Beach County.

Parents....
have a voice at the state level! Take the ESE Parent Survey, available each year from February 1 to May 31
www.esesurvey.com
This guide was created to help parents and guardians of children with special needs to learn about Exceptional Student Education (ESE) in Pinellas County Schools and to try to answer many common questions.

What is ESE?

Exceptional Student Education (ESE) is the name given in Florida to educational programs and services for students with special learning needs (including those who have disabilities and those who are gifted).

When a child is having difficulty in school, several kinds of help or interventions are tried before a referral for evaluation is made. If the interventions are not successful, then the school and the parent will meet to discuss the option of evaluation. The evaluation will only happen with parent consent.

In order to be eligible for ESE programs and services, a student must meet all the requirements listed in Florida State Board of Education Rules for a specific disability.

HELPFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND CONTACTS

Pinellas County School District
Superintendent, Dr. Michael A. Grego
Main Office
(727) 588-6000
www.pcsb.org

Exceptional Student Education
Executive Director, Lynne Mowatt
ESE Department
(727) 588-6032
www.pcsb.org/ese

ESE Student Transfer Team (727) 588-5128
ESOL (727) 588-6068
FDLRS (727) 793-2723
Florida Inclusion Network (FEN) (727) 793-2723
GED Information/Testing (727) 588-6321
Gifted Education (727) 588-6088
Home Education (727) 588-6209
Hospital/Homebound (727) 669-1221
Medicaid (727) 588-6506
Parental Advocacy (727) 588-6537
Parent Svcs.-Staff Development (727) 588-6062
Psychological Services (727) 588-6054
School Health Services (727) 588-6320
SEDNET (727) 669-1221x2024
Special Olympics (727) 669-1221x2008
Student Assignment (727) 588-6210
Student Services (727) 588-6307
Transportation Call Center (727) 587-2020
YOUR DISTRICT ESE OFFICE

If you have a question or concern that can’t be addressed at the school level regarding your child or the school’s ESE program the next step is to contact your District ESE Office. The District office assists schools regarding procedures for identifying, evaluating, and placing students who have a disability.

District ESE Specialists are here to help you!

- Pre K/Kindergarten: (727) 588-6027
- Elementary School: (727) 588-6505
- Middle School: (727) 588-6482
- High School/Extended Transition: (727) 588-5125
- Behavior: (727) 588-5120
- Compliance: (727) 588-5123
- Dispute Resolution and Policy: (727) 588-6077
- Specialized Services: (727) 793-2732
- Secretary: x2000
- Speech-Language Pathologists: x2069
- Occupational/Physical Therapists: x2070
- Visually Impaired Program: x2068
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing Program: x2026
- Sign Language Interpreters: x2033

AREA SUPERINTENDENT OFFICES

- Area 1 Superintendent: (727) 588-5023
- Area 2 Superintendent: (727) 588-5024
- Area 3 Superintendent: (727) 588-5020
- Area 4 Superintendent: (727) 588-5022

Area offices and school alignment can be found at: www.pcsb.org/Page/6037
**Exceptional Student Education**

**ACRONYMS**

- ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act
- ADD: Attention Deficit Disorder
- ADHD: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- APD: Agency for Persons with Disabilities
- ASA: Autism Society of America
- ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorders
- ASHA: American Speech/Language Hearing Association
- AT: Assistive Technology
- BEESS: Bureau of Exceptional Education & Student Services
- C.A.R.D.: Center for Autism and Related Disabilities
- CBI: Community Based Instruction
- CEC: Council for Exceptional Children
- CED: Compliance Educational Diagnostician
- CHADD: Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders
- CMS: Children's Medical Services
- CST: Child Study Team
- DCF: Department of Children and Families
- DD: Developmentally Delayed
- DHH: Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- DOE: Department of Education
- DOH: Department of Health
- DSI: Dual-Sensory Impairment
- DSM V: Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
- EBD: Emotional or Behavioral Disability
- EIP: Early Intervention Program
- EP: Education Plan
- ESE: Exceptional Student Education
- ESY: Extended School Year
- ET: Extended Transition
- FAAST: Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology
- FAPE: Free and Appropriate Public Education
- FBA: Functional Behavior Assessment
- FCC: Family Care Council
- FDDC: Florida Developmental Disabilities Council
- FDLSRS: Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System
- FERPA: Family Educational Rights Privacy Act
- FIN: Florida Inclusion Network

---

**GLOSSARY OF ESE TERMS (cont)**

**Speech Impaired (SI) and Language Impaired (LI):** Related to a student's ability to talk, write, listen or read. This includes understanding others and making himself or herself understood.

**State Board of Education Rules:** The rules developed to implement Florida's laws related to education.

**Transfer of Rights:** The shift of rights from the parents of a student with a disability to the student when the student reaches the “age of majority.”

**Transition IEP Meeting:** Used for students age 14 or older. The transition IEP helps prepare students for life after school. A major purpose of the meeting is to help plan a young person's move into adult life.

**Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI):** An acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force resulting in a disability that adversely affects educational performance.

**Visual Impairment (VI):** A student who has a loss of some or all of the ability to see.

**Vocational Services:** Relating to skills needed for a trade or technical career. Examples of vocational skills are typing and carpentry.

Definitions adapted from *An Introduction to Exceptional Student Education*. Copyright 2012; State of Florida Department of Education. Available through the Clearinghouse Information Center of the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS).
**Orthopedic Impairment (OI):** Severe skeletal, muscular, or neuromuscular impairment.

**Other Health Impaired (OHI):** Having limited strength, vitality, or alertness with respect to the educational environment that is due to chronic or acute health problems.

**Physical Therapy (PT):** Treatment for a student that helps to maintain, improve, restore or develop the student’s movements and coordination so that he or she can benefit from ESE services.

**Placement:** The type of setting in which the child is to receive special services.

**Positive Behavior Intervention Plan (PBIP):** A plan that helps a student decrease his or her problem behaviors. The PBIP includes strategies the student will be taught that will allow the student to stop the problem behaviors or replace them with other behaviors. The PBIP also includes the method for determining the student’s progress in decreasing the problem behavior.

**Present Levels of Educational Performance:** Statements in an IEP that describe what a student can do or they know now.

**Procedural Safeguards:** Federal special education law under IDEA that outlines the protections for families of students with disabilities.

**Related Services:** Special help given to a student with a disability in addition to classroom teaching. Examples of related services are special transportation, physical and occupational therapy and the services of readers for the blind.

**Screening:** A way of testing a group of students to find out if any of them need an individual evaluation.

**Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD):** A student who has average or above average ability, but is still unable to learn things as easily as most other students do.

---

**Exceptional Student Education**

**Additional ACRONYMS**

- FND: Family Network on Disabilities
- FSA: Florida Standards Assessment
- FSAA: Florida Standards Alternative Assessments
- HH: Hospital Homebound
- IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- IEP: Individual Educational Plan
- IFSP: Individualized Family Support Plan
- Ind: Intellectual Disabilities
- IPE: Individual Plan of Employment
- IVE: Intensive Varying Exceptionalities
- LEA: Local Education Agency
- LES: Local Early Steps
- LI: Language Impairment
- LRE: Least Restricive Environment
- MMI: Mild, Moderate, Intensive
- MTSS/RTI: Multi Tier System of Support/Response to Intervention
- NORD: National Organization for Rare Disorders
- OCR: Office of Civil Rights
- OHI: Other Health Impaired
- OI: Orthopedic Impairment
- OSEP: Office of Special Education Programs
- PBIP: Positive Behavior Intervention Plan
- PVE: Profound Varying Exceptionalities
- SEA: State Education Agency
- SEDNET: Severely Emotionally Disturbed Network
- SI: Speech Impairment
- SLA: Specific Learning Disabilities
- SLP: Speech Language Pathologist
- SP: Service Plan
- SSI: Supplemental Security Income
- SVE: Supported Varying Exceptionalities
- TATS: Technical Assistance & Training System
- TBI: Traumatic Brain Injury
- TIEP: Transition Individual Education Plan
- UCP: United Cerebral Palsy
- VI: Visual Impairment
- VPK: Voluntary Prekindergarten
### WHO TO TURN TO … at the school level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP 1</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STEP 2</td>
<td>Case Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP 3</td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### TEACHER:
Your first and primary contact is your child's teacher. You may send a note with your child or leave a message for the teacher to set up a conference to discuss your concerns.

### ESE CASE MANAGER:
The ESE Case Manager can schedule a meeting to discuss options for your child.

### PRINCIPAL:
If your child continues to have difficulties after receiving services or you do not feel your child's needs have been met, contact the principal's office to arrange a meeting.

---

### GLOSSARY OF ESE TERMS (cont)

**Individual Educational Plan (IEP):** A written plan describing the individual learning needs of a student with disabilities and the services, supports, accommodations and/or modifications that will be provided to the student.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** The most important United States law regarding the education of students with disabilities.

**Intellectual Disabilities (InD):** Significantly below average general intellectual and adaptive functioning manifested during the developmental period (birth to 18 years) with significant delays in academic skills.

**Interventions:** Strategies used to help a student make progress in learning or behavior.

**Job Coaching:** Help for a student with disabilities in which a specially trained adult goes to the workplace with the student and to help the student learn all the tasks that are part of that job.

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):** The school setting (placement) that allows a child with a disability to be educated to the greatest extent possible with children who do not have disabilities.

**Mediation:** A process in which parents and school personnel try to settle disagreements with the help of a person who has been trained to resolve conflicts.

**Modification:** A change in the requirements of a course or the standards a student must meet; a change in what the student is taught or tested on.

**Occupational Therapy (OT):** Treatment for a student with a disability that helps the student to maintain, improve, restore, or develop skills needed for daily living.

**Orientation and Mobility:** Instructing individuals who are blind or visually impaired with safe and effective travel through their environment.
GLOSSARY OF
ESE TERMS (cont)

**Exceptionality:** A disability or special learning need.


**Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE):** The words used in the federal law (IDEA) to describe the right of a student with a disability to special services that will meet his or her individual learning needs, at no cost to his or her parents.

**Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA):** The process of gathering data about problem behaviors of students with disabilities.

**Functional Vocational Evaluation:** An ongoing process that identifies a student’s work-related skills, interests and need for training.

**GED Diploma:** A high school diploma earned by a student who is at least 18 years old and who passes the Tests of General Educational Development.

**General Curriculum:** The academic content that most students are studying in Florida. The general curriculum or Common Core State Standards describe what students are expected to know and be able to do at various points in their education.

**Gifted:** Students who exhibit high cognitive abilities and need special learning experiences that allow them to make progress that reflects those abilities. It is possible for a gifted student to have a disability as well.

**Hospital Homebound (HH):** A student in this program must be taught at home or in a hospital for an extended period of time due to a severe illness, injury or health problem.

**Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE):** An evaluation requested by a student’s parents and carried out by someone who does not work for the school district.

**Independent Functioning:** A student’s skills in meeting his or her own needs, such as feeding, dressing and toileting; traveling safely; and using time management and organizational strategies.

### WHO TO TURN TO …
beyond the school level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>District ESE Specialist</strong></th>
<th><strong>District ESE Compliance</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact Info</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**District ESE Specialist:**
Contact the District ESE Office when you feel your child’s needs and your concerns have not been met at the school level.

**District ESE Compliance:**
The District ESE Compliance person can assist with questions regarding IEP’s and IDEA.
**Access Points**: Academic Expectations written specifically for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

**Accommodation**: A different way of doing something that takes into account a person's disability. Accommodations are changes in how a student is taught or tested. Accommodations do not change the requirements of a course or the standards the student must meet. (Compare with "modification").

**Assessment**: A way of collecting information about what a student knows and can do and what a student still needs to learn. Assessment may include testing, observing the student, and looking at a student’s portfolio or work samples.

**Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**: Characterized by an uneven Developmental profile and a pattern of qualitative impairments in social interaction, communication and the presence of restricted repetitive, and/or stereo-typed patterns of behavior, interest and activities.

**Child Study Team (CST)**: A group of people who help teachers meet the learning needs of their students. The team may refer a student for an "evaluation."

**Consent**: Parents' agreement to let the school take an action that affects their child's education. Consent is usually shown by the parent signing a form.

**Continuum of Services**: The range of possible placements for students with disabilities. It includes services provided in a general education classroom, some in a special class, services provided in a special school, or other placements.

**Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing (DHH)**: A student who has a loss of some or all of the ability to hear.

**Developmentally Delayed (DD)**: This program is for children ages birth to five years of age only. A child with a developmental delay is developing more slowly than his or her peers either mentally, emotionally, or physically.

**Diploma Options**: Various types of standard diplomas earned based on successful completion of state defined criteria - standard diploma and standard diploma via access points.

**Disability**: A condition that makes it hard for a student to learn or do things in the same ways as most other students. A disability may be short-term or permanent.

**Dismissal**: A decision made at an IEP or an EP meeting to dismiss a student from ESE services because the student no longer needs those services. The IEP team reviews evaluations and other information about the student before making this decision. Parents will receive written notice before services are stopped.

**Dual-Sensory Impaired (DSI)**: A student who is deaf-blind and has such severe problems with both seeing and hearing that the student cannot learn well in either a program for the deaf or hard-of-hearing or in a program for the visually impaired.

**Due Process Hearing**: A formal meeting held to settle disagreements between parents and school districts about the evaluation, eligibility, placement, services, or IEP of a child with a disability. The meeting is run by an administrative law judge.

**Education Plan (EP)**: A written plan describing the individual learning needs of a gifted student and the modifications that will be provided to the student.

**Eligibility Criteria**: The requirements a child must meet to be eligible for each exceptionality category (program). The eligibility criteria are listed in Florida's State Board of Education Rules.

**Eligibility Staffing**: A meeting at which the parents and a group of school staff members decide if a student is eligible for ESE services.

**Eligible**: Refers to a student who meets the requirements for and is in need of ESE programs and services.

**Emotional or Behavioral Disability (EBD)**: Persistent and consistent behavior that adversely affect educational performance. Not attributable to age, culture, gender or ethnicity.

**Evaluation**: A way of collecting information about a student's learning needs, strengths and interests. It is used to help decide whether a student has a disability and is eligible for ESE programs and services.