



ESY - Extended School Year

What is Extended School Year?

Extended School Year (ESY) services are special education and related services provided to students with disabilities beyond the regular 180-day school year. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the federal special education law, requires school districts, intermediate units, and charter schools to provide ESY services if a student needs these services to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). In some cases, interruptions in the school schedule, such as summer break, weekends, and holidays, will result in children with disabilities losing many of their basic skills and taking a long time to get those skills back once school begins again. ESY services are provided during breaks in the educational schedule to prevent this loss.

Who decides if a student with a disability receives ESY services?

Every student with a disability, who qualifies for special education, has an Individualized Education Program (IEP). It describes the programs and services necessary for FAPE. This plan is written at a meeting of the IEP team, which is made up of the student's parents,

teachers, and other educational professionals. One of the issues discussed and decided upon at the IEP meeting is whether or not the student needs ESY services as part of the special education program. ESY must be considered each year for every child with a disability at the IEP meeting, not just for students with certain categories of disability or those with severe disabilities.

What is NOT ESY?

Extended School Year services are not day care or respite services. They are not a summer recreation program or other programs or services that are not required to ensure the provision of a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) to a student - even if they provide some educational benefit.

Dear Parents,

The Parent Support Center is staffed by myself, Michele Kulesza. I am a parent of a child with special needs and can serve as a facilitator between parents and educators. I have been through many of the same concerns that other parents of children with special needs have been through.

If you need support or have any questions or concerns, please contact me at the Parent Support Center:

*(814) 734-5610, ext. 7070
or toll-free (800) 677-5610, ext. 7070
michele_kulesza@iu5.org*

-Michele Kulesza

www.iu5.org/parentsupport

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When will the ESY decision be made?

ESY decisions are made at the IEP meeting. There is guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education regarding students who are identified as severely disabled mentally, physically or emotionally. Decisions about ESY for this target group of students need to be made by February 28 of each year, in order to be sure that parents have sufficient time to exercise their procedural safeguards rights, if necessary. This means that the Notice of Recommended Educational Placement/Prior Written Notice (NOREP/PWN) concerning the school district's, intermediate unit's, or charter school's recommendation regarding eligibility for ESY can be issued no later than March 31, in order to give parents enough time to raise concerns. The federal court decision in *Armstrong v. Kline* established the mandate in Pennsylvania for ESY programming for children with any type or severity of disability who meet the court's eligibility standard. According to court guidelines, each LEA must consider ESY programming for students in the Armstrong target group at the time of the annual review of the IEPs. The target group consists of those students with severe emotional disturbances, autism, moderate and severe levels of intellectual disability, or multiple disabilities. For purposes of ESY eligibility determination, the IEP review meeting is to occur no later than February 28 of each school year for these students. Notice of the team's determination (NOREP/PWN) is to be issued to the parent no later than March 31 of the school year. These timelines offer a way to comply with guidance in the federal regulations that states that public agencies should make determination of need in a timely manner so that a student with a disability who requires Extended School Year (ESY).

For More Info about ESY, contact:

Special Education ConsultLine
(800) 879-2301 (V/TTY)

Parent Education and Advocacy
Leadership Center
(866) 950-1040

Your local school district

Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit 5
(814) 734-5610 or toll free (800) 677-5610

What is the ESY decision based on?

The IEP team makes its decision about providing ESY services by looking at information about the student's performance that has been gathered all year. Some of this information measures student achievement before and after breaks from school. The team can also gather information from teachers' and parents' observations of the student's behavior and skills before and after breaks. Medical or other agency reports can also be accessed. The team needs to look at these seven factors:

- Will the student regress (revert to a lower level of functioning) in skills or behaviors as a result of an interruption in educational programming?
- Will the student take a long time to recoup (recover) the skills or behavior patterns that were lost during a break in educational programming?
- Will a pattern of difficulties with regression and recoupment make it unlikely that a student will maintain the skills and behaviors relevant to IEP goals and objectives?
- Will a lapse in services substantially reduce a student's chances of ever learning a critical life skill or behavior related to the IEP?
- Is the student at a crucial stage in mastering a life skill that is related to the IEP goals of self-sufficiency and independence from caregivers?
- Will successive interruptions in educational programming result in the student's withdrawal from learning?
- Does the student have a severe disability such as autism/pervasive developmental disorder, a serious emotional disturbance, severe intellectual disability, degenerative impairments with mental involvement, or severe multiple disabilities? There are seven factors, and no single factor can be used to determine eligibility for ESY services. The IEP team must consider all seven factors when determining eligibility. The student may be eligible by meeting just one of the criteria, but all seven factors must be considered by the IEP team.

**taken from "Extended Services in Pennsylvania, available booklet from the Pennsylvania Bureau of Special Education*