



SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT HANDBOOK 2022



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North Inland Special Education Region Special Education Local Plan Area

The education of a child is a responsibility shared by both the parents and the school. When a child has a disability, that partnership is especially strong. A true partnership is based on equal knowledge and respect.



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INTRODUCTION

The education of a child is a responsibility shared by both the parents and the school. When a child has a disability, that partnership is especially strong. A true partnership is based on equal knowledge and respect. Parents are the ultimate experts on their children. School staff contributes knowledge of programs, services, and curriculum in order to help the child meet his/her goals. As we recognize each child's strengths and work together to meet his/her needs, we all invest in the child's success.

This handbook is written to answer many of the questions parents frequently ask about special education. The handbook is designed to be a reference for parents but is not intended to grant lesser or more rights than as provided by law. If you have questions that are not answered here, or you need clarification, feel free to call or visit your district special education administrator or the North Inland Special Education Region (NISER), Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) director.

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SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special education is defined by federal and state law as specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, whose educational needs cannot be met with accommodations and/or modifications of the general education setting. Related services are provided when required for the child to benefit from special education. Children with significant physical, emotional, communicative, or learning needs may be eligible for special education and related services.

Who may receive special education services?

In order to be eligible for special education, students between the ages of 3 and 22 must have one or more of the following state and federally recognized disabilities (see Appendix B for definitions of terms):

1. Intellectually Disabled/Intellectual Disability (ID)
2. Hard of Hearing/ Hearing Impaired (HH/HI)
3. Deafness (DEAF)
4. Speech or Language Impairment (SLI)
5. Visual Impairment (VI)
6. Emotional Disturbance (ED)
7. Orthopedic Impairment (OI)
8. Other Health Impairment (OHI)
9. Established Medical Disability (0-5 years only; CA definition only) (EMD)
10. Specific Learning Disability (SLD)
11. Deaf-Blindness (DB)
12. Multiple Disabilities (MD)
13. Autism (AUT)
14. Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Children from birth until their 3rd birthday may be eligible for special education early intervention services if they meet eligibility criteria. These early intervention services are provided through outside agencies.

Do different agencies use different terms and guidelines?

Yes. Since various state and federal agencies operate under different laws and guidelines, the eligibility criteria may differ significantly. The same term may also be used by various agencies with different meanings. This can be very frustrating and confusing to parents seeking assistance for their child. Therefore, parents should ask for clarification of terms from any agency providing services. School districts must adhere to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and California Education Code laws and regulations in the determination of eligibility and the provision of special education services.

Do all students with an identified disability require special education?

No. Special education is not for all children with disabilities. The educational needs of many students with disabilities can be met with accommodations and/or modifications to the general education program. If after a complete assessment your child requires special education, an Individualized

Education Program (IEP) will be developed to specify appropriate special education and related services. For children from birth until their 3rd birthday, an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is developed. Please contact the HOPE Infant Family Support Program at 858-298-2029 for further information regarding the IFSP.

What is an Individualized Education Program?

An IEP is a written document that is developed, reviewed, and revised for a child with a disability at least yearly by a team that includes you as the child's parent/guardian. Each required component of the IEP is discussed by the team and recorded on the IEP form, including:

1. The strengths, interests, and learning preferences of the student.
2. The child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, including the results of the initial or most recent assessment of the child and/or the results of the child's performance on any general state or district wide assessment programs as appropriate.
3. Measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals, and benchmarks or short-term objectives for children with disabilities who take alternate assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards. Goals are developed to meet the child's needs that result from the disability to enable the child to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum (or appropriate activities for preschool children) or to meet each of the child's other educational needs that result from the disability.
4. The concerns of the parent/guardian for enhancing the education of their child.
5. A description of how the child's disability affects involvement and progress in the general education curriculum, or for preschoolers, participation in appropriate activities.
6. An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with nondisabled children in the regular class and extracurricular activities.
7. A statement of the supplemental aids and services, based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable, to be provided to or on behalf of the student, including low incidence specialized equipment and services.
8. A statement of program modifications or supports for school personnel that are required for the child to advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals specified in the IEP.
9. A determination of the student's need for assistive technology devices and services, or low incidence services, equipment, and materials to meet the educational goals and objectives.
10. A statement of how the child's progress on the annual goals will be measured and when periodic reports on the progress will be provided to the parents.
11. If the child is Limited English Proficient, a consideration of the language needs of the child as such needs relate to the child's IEP.
12. If the child is Deaf or Hard of Hearing, a consideration of the child's language and communication needs, opportunities for direct communication with peers and professional personnel in the child's language and communication mode, academic level, and full range of needs, including opportunities for direct instruction in the child's language and communication mode.
13. If the child's behavior impedes his/her learning or that of others, a description of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies, to address the behavior, including behavior goals and a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) if required.

14. If the child is blind or visually impaired, a provision for instruction in Braille and the use of Braille unless the IEP team determines that instruction in Braille or the use of Braille is not appropriate for the child.
15. A description of the means by which the IEP program will be provided under emergency conditions in which instruction, services, or both cannot be provided for more than 10 school days.
16. Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child is 16 years of age or younger, appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and where appropriate, independent living skills and the transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals.
17. Beginning not later than one year before the child reaches the age of 18 years, a statement that the student has been apprised of his or her rights transfer to him/her at the age of majority.
18. A statement of the special education and related services, based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable, to be provided to the child, including the projected date for beginning the services and modifications, anticipated frequency, location, and duration of those services and modifications.
19. A statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on state and district wide assessments, or for a child that will take an alternate assessment, a statement of why the child cannot participate in the regular assessment and that the alternate assessment selected is appropriate for the child.
20. For students in grades 7-12, any alternative means and modes necessary for the student to complete the district's prescribed course of study and to meet or exceed proficiency standards required for graduation.
21. Linguistically appropriate goals, objectives, programs, and services for students whose native language is not English.
22. Provision for transition into the general education program if the student is to be transferred from a special class, center, or nonpublic, nonsectarian school into a general education program in a public school for any part of the school day.
23. Extended school year (ESY) services, when the IEP team determines, on an individual basis, that the services are necessary for the provision of free appropriate public education (FAPE) to the student.
24. Parental consent to all or part of the IEP.

Is the IEP process any different when my child is older?

In addition to all the requirements of the IEP for younger children, beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child is 16 (or younger if determined appropriate), the IEP will also include an Individual Transition Plan (ITP). Your child will be invited and should attend all transition plan meetings. With your permission, other agencies may also be invited to participate in planning a smooth transition for your child from school to post-school activities. The ITP includes measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to education, training and/or employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills. The ITP also includes transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals. An ITP should be updated at least annually or more frequently if needed to address student needs.

When and how is the IEP implemented?

You must first give your written permission for assessment and then again for the initial IEP before any services can be implemented. No services can be provided, however, until your written permission is provided to the district.

Can my child with a disability be disciplined?

Generally, a student with an IEP is subject to the same grounds and procedures for discipline as students who do not have disabilities. However, if a student is suspended for 10 or more consecutive or cumulative days, the district must determine if the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability, update the IEP to address any behavior needs, and determine services that are required to continue to participate in general education and make progress on goals.

Most districts within the North Inland SELPA utilize alternative means to suspension such as Restorative Practices. All students with disabilities can access alternatives to suspension following the same procedures as students who do not have a disability.

CHILD FIND AND REFERRAL

School personnel and other concerned parties are responsible for identifying children who are having difficulty in school and may need special education services. Teachers usually contact a parent to discuss these concerns. Others who are in contact with children including doctors, childcare workers, etc., may also recognize that a child is having difficulty with some aspect of his/her development and may initiate a referral for assessment. No child will be evaluated without written parental permission.

Who do I contact if I think my infant or preschooler may need special education services?

If your child is three or older, notify your local school district special education department that you want to make a referral for a special education assessment. If your child is an infant, please contact the California Early Start Referral Desk at the HOPE Infant Family Support Program 858-298-2029, San Diego Regional Center 760-736-1200, and/or Exceptional Family Resource Center 619-594-7416.

How do I know if my school age child might need special education services?

If your child is having difficulty functioning effectively in a general education program without special assistance, then your child might need special education and related services. Public schools also have other services available to assist students who need help. These other services should first be considered, and implemented, if appropriate, before a referral for a special education assessment is indicated.

Whom do I contact if I have a concern?

First contact your child's teacher. He/she may be able to suggest other school services, such as Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) or other support programs, to help your child and/or initiate the Student Study Team (SST) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 process.

What happens before a referral to special education?

The law requires districts to consider interventions in the general education program prior to referral for a special education assessment. Many districts are implementing a MTSS model to address students' learning needs. MTSS provides scientifically based interventions for students with learning gaps. MTSS interventions can be effective for both primary and secondary students and can address behavior issues. Each student's progress is carefully monitored to provide feedback and modify instruction, as needed. Many MTSS programs utilize a three-tier model to identify the level of intervention for students. If students do not respond to the initial intervention, the intensity of services can be increased.

Why is the Student Study Team (SST) process necessary?

The SST assists in documenting interventions implemented and whether these meet the student's educational needs. Documentation that the interventions cannot meet the student's needs can be utilized when determining that the student may require special education and related services.

What is a referral for special education assessment?

A formal referral is a written request for assessment to determine whether the student requires special education and related services. Within 15 days of receipt of the referral, not counting days between the pupil's regular school sessions or terms or days of school vacation in excess of five school days, district staff will respond to the referral which may include an assessment plan from the district. No assessment may begin without written parental permission.

ASSESSMENT

A comprehensive assessment will be conducted by a team of specialists to determine how a child is functioning in all areas of his/her suspected disability. An assessment may include intellectual, adaptive behavior, academic, physical, motor, health, speech/language, behavior, assistive technology (AT), and/or emotional development. The assessment team may include the School Psychologist; Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP); Specialized Academic Instructor; School Nurse; General Education Teacher; and others depending on the student's needs. The areas to be assessed will be specified on the assessment plan.

Whom should I contact if I have questions about the assessment?

The name and telephone number of a contact person shall be listed on the assessment plan.

How will the assessment be conducted?

Assessment information may be gathered in different ways: tests; observations; discussions with the student, classroom teachers, and/or parent(s); review of previous records; and educational or medical records from other agencies (with parental permission), etc. A child must be assessed in all areas of suspected disability. No single test may be used to determine special education eligibility.

How long does the assessment take?

Within 15 days after the district receives a written referral, not counting days between the pupil's regular school sessions or terms or days of school vacation in excess of five school days, an assessment plan will be developed and submitted to you for your signature. Assessments are completed within 60 days, not counting days between the pupil's regular school sessions or terms or days of school vacation in excess of five school days, after written parental consent to the assessment plan is received by the district. When the assessment is completed, a written report will be developed and discussed with you at the IEP meeting. You will be provided a copy of the assessment report. You are encouraged to ask for clarification or ask questions about any area of the assessment. Not all children who are referred and assessed are found eligible for special education.

What will the report(s) include?

The assessment report(s) shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following: whether the pupil may need special education and related services; the basis for making the determination; the relevant behavior noted during the observation of the pupil in an appropriate setting; the relationship of that behavior to the pupil's academic and social functioning; the educationally relevant health and development, and medical findings, if any; for pupils with learning disabilities, whether there is such a discrepancy between achievement and ability that it cannot be corrected without special education and related services; a determination concerning the effects of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage, where appropriate; and the need for specialized services, materials, and equipment for pupils with low incidence disabilities.

The assessment materials will be selected and administered so as not to be culturally or racially discriminatory and must be valid for determining your child's educational needs. The decision regarding whether or not your child is eligible for special education is made by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, based on the assessment results.

How often will these assessments be conducted?

An assessment must be conducted prior to a student's initial special education services. At least once every three years thereafter, the IEP team shall determine what (if any) additional information is needed

to determine whether your child continues to be a child with a disability and/or to determine what the appropriate services are to meet his/her educational needs. A parent or other professional may request a reassessment at any time.

As the assessment is shared, what is my role as a parent?

You will be given a full explanation of the assessment. During this process you may present any additional information you have about your child, ask any question you may have about the assessment or findings, and/or request the school to provide additional assessments, if necessary.

What if I have an independent assessment, I want the district to consider?

All assessments provided by the parent must be considered in the decision-making process, along with school evaluations.

What if I disagree with the school's assessment findings?

If you disagree with an assessment conducted by the school district, you may be entitled to an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) at district expense. The district will provide you with information about how an IEE may be obtained. However, the district may initiate a due process hearing to show that its assessment is appropriate. If the final decision of the hearing officer is that the school's assessment is appropriate, you still have the right to an IEE but not at public school expense.

What happens after the assessment is completed?

An IEP meeting will be held when the assessment is completed within the 60-day timeline. You are a member of this team and must be invited, in writing, to attend the meeting. Attempts will be made to schedule the meeting on a date and time convenient to both you and school personnel.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM MEETING

The IEP meeting is designed to give parents, general education teacher(s), special education staff, and the school administrator the opportunity to come together to discuss your child's unique needs. IEP meetings are held at least annually but may be held more frequently at the request of the parent or school personnel. Special education and related services are to be provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

How will I be notified about the IEP meeting?

You will receive a written notice of the IEP meeting. You should receive the meeting notice within a reasonable amount of time so that you can arrange to attend. It will tell you the purpose of the meeting, date, time, place, and the titles of the individuals who are invited. If you cannot attend the meeting at the time scheduled, contact the person listed on the meeting notice as soon as possible to reschedule.

What is the purpose of this IEP meeting?

The purpose of the initial IEP meeting is to review the assessment findings, determine if your child is eligible for special education, and, if eligible, develop the IEP. At each subsequent IEP meeting, your child's individual needs will be addressed, and any necessary changes made to the IEP. Changes to the IEP must be made through the IEP process.

Who will be at the IEP meeting?

You, as your child's parent/guardian, are an important member of the IEP team. Other team members shall include a school representative; a general education teacher if your child is, or may be, participating in general education; your child's special education teacher or service provider; your child, if appropriate; and with your permission an agency representative. At the discretion of the parent/guardian or district, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding your child, including related services personnel, as appropriate, may also be invited. The determination of whether the individual has knowledge or special expertise about your child shall be made by the party who invites the individual to be a member of the IEP team. If this is an IEP meeting to review the results of an assessment, the assessor or an individual who can interpret the instructional implications will also participate.

May I bring someone with me to the IEP meeting?

Yes, you may bring anyone you wish with you to the IEP meeting, such as your child's Regional Center worker or social services worker. Be sure to notify the school district so they can inform them of the date, time, and location of the IEP meeting. If you cannot attend the IEP meeting in-person, you may have someone attend to represent you, participate telephonically or through some other means. However, you must ultimately give your written permission for your child to receive special education services.

May I excuse someone from attending the IEP meeting?

A member of the IEP team may be excused from attending an IEP team meeting, in whole or in part, if the parent/guardian consents and the district agrees, in writing, that the attendance of the member is not necessary because the member's area of the curriculum or related services is not being modified or discussed at the meeting. If the meeting involves a discussion of the member's area of the curriculum or related service, the IEP team member may be excused from the meeting if the parent/guardian consents in writing to the excusal and the member submits to the parent/guardian and team written input into the development of the IEP prior to or during the meeting.

How do I prepare for the IEP meeting?

You may want to review your child's school records for any information that may assist the IEP team. Be sure to set an appointment to review the school records at least five days in advance of the time you want to see them. You may provide any additional information you want considered at or prior to the IEP meeting.

During the IEP meeting, you will be asked your concerns relevant to your child's educational progress. Before the IEP meeting, you should consider what skills you would like your child to obtain during his/her educational experience. Additionally, consider areas where your child may need support in order to be successful in participating in the least restrictive environment. Make notes of your thoughts and/or questions before the IEP meeting. Bring your notes with you to the IEP meeting.

What is my role during the IEP meeting?

You are an integral member of the IEP team. You should share your observations, concerns, and/or goals for your child. It is not unusual for students to behave differently at school than at home and sharing these differences helps the IEP team plan special education services more appropriately.

If I need time to think about what is presented, may I request a continuation of the IEP meeting at a later date?

Yes. The IEP meeting may be continued or tabled so you may consider the results and/or recommendations.

What happens if the IEP team finds my child eligible for special education?

Once your child has been found eligible for special education based on the assessment results, and you agree, you and the IEP team will develop an IEP specifically tailored to your child. The IEP team may provide a draft copy of the IEP prior to or during the meeting in order to facilitate collaboration and parent participation. Remember, this is a draft and can be changed.

If your child is found eligible for special education and related services based on the initial assessment, and you do not want your child to receive special education services, you can decline all special education services.

What if I no longer want my child to receive special education?

At any time, you may terminate all special education services for your child. However, if you terminate all special education services for your child, certain protections will no longer apply to him/her, such as modifications to the curriculum or protections related to disciplinary consequences due to your child breaking school rules that could lead to expulsion.

What if the IEP team finds that my child is not eligible for special education?

If you agree with the IEP team's decision, sign the IEP indicating your agreement.

If you do not agree with the IEP team's decision, you may request:

- Additional assessment followed by an IEP meeting,
- A follow-up IEP meeting that includes district office special education staff, and/or
- A state level due process hearing that may include mediation.

Your child will remain in his/her last agreed upon placement until the disagreement is resolved unless you and school staff mutually agree on an alternative placement.

How often must the school review my child's IEP?

Every student receiving special education services must have his/her progress, IEP, and ITP reviewed at least once each year. Teachers, however, will be monitoring each student's progress regularly throughout the school year. You will receive progress reports on your child's IEP goals at least as often as general education students receive report cards. Every three years, a reassessment to determine your child's continuing eligibility for special education services will be held. The district will also schedule an IEP meeting upon parent's written request, within 30 days from the date of that request.

Can the IEP be transferred to another school district?

If you move to another district, it is helpful if you provide your new school district with a copy of your child's current IEP and most recent assessment.

If you move to another school district within the North Inland SELPA, the district will implement the existing approved IEP unless the parents and district agree to implement a new IEP.

If you move to a school district outside of the North Inland SELPA, the new district will provide comparable services to the existing approved IEP for up to 30 days and then either adopt the most recently approved IEP or develop a new IEP.

If you move to a district within the North Inland SELPA from outside of California, the district will provide services comparable to the existing approved IEP until an assessment to determine eligibility can be completed.

PROGRAM OPTIONS

Who operates special education programs?

Each district operates programs to serve children with disabilities. However, it is not feasible for every district to provide programs to serve **ALL** children of various ages, especially for students with low incidence disabilities. In California, as in many other states, local districts work together with neighboring districts to develop programs for all children with disabilities within the Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA). The ten districts in northeastern San Diego County comprise the North Inland Special Education Region (NISER). The NISER districts include Borrego Springs Unified School District, Escondido Union School District, Escondido Union High School District, Julian Union School District, Julian Union High School District, Ramona Unified School District, San Pasqual Union School District, Spencer Valley Elementary School District, Valley Center-Pauma Unified School District, and Warner Unified School District.

What is the least restrictive environment (LRE)?

Special education services and supports will be provided for students with disabilities to ensure maximum interaction with their peers in the general education environment as appropriate for the student's individual needs. The IEP team will make the decision regarding the least restrictive environment (LRE) for each student on an annual basis. Students with disabilities shall have equal access to all activities, programs, and facilities in the general school environment. Participation in activities will be determined based on the individual needs of the student with a disability.

What is the continuum of special education services and placements?

Special education and/or related services can be provided in a wide variety of educational settings. A full range of program options are provided to students from 3 to 22 years of age by the LEAs in the North Inland SELPA. The appropriate placement for a student is determined by the IEP team based on the student's instructional needs and not on the student's disability category. Options include:

- **General Education Classroom:** Students are educated in age-appropriate general education classrooms at their neighborhood schools with the necessary accommodations, supports, and services for the student to progress toward his/her IEP goals.
- **Related Services:** Means transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education, and includes speech-language pathology and audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, including therapeutic recreation, early identification and assessment of disabilities in children, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling, orientation and mobility services, and medical services for diagnostic or assessment purposes. Related services also include school health services and school nurse services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training. Specialists provide these services and may work with students individually or in small groups either in the general education classroom or other appropriate settings. In some instances, these services are provided by certified nonpublic agencies/providers.
- **Specialized Academic Instruction (SAI):** This term refers to a broad range of services from supplementing the general education program to providing intensive services for students whose disabilities are more severe. Services may occur in either individual or small group settings, as a component of the educational program, and/or as consultative or collaborative services within the general education setting. Districts may choose to provide Specialized Academic Instruction within a general education classroom or in a more restrictive environment as determined to be appropriate by the IEP Team.

- **Specialized Services:** Low incidence services and equipment are provided for students with low incidence disabilities including hearing impairments, visual impairments, and severe orthopedic impairments. Services may be provided on an itinerant basis or in a special class setting.
- **Services Provided by Another Local School District:** In such cases, the district of geographic residence retains the responsibility to ensure that the students assigned to these programs receive a free appropriate public education.
- **Nonpublic, Nonsectarian School Services:** Nonpublic school services are considered after all programs available within the district, SELPA, or neighboring SELPAs have been considered and determined by the IEP team to not be appropriate to address the individual student's needs. Every effort is made to ensure that nonpublic school students are educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE) and that transition back to the public-school setting is considered annually.
- **State Special Schools:** Schools such as the California School for the Deaf and Blind, are available to students when local programs that meet the unique needs of students are not available and are recommended by the student's IEP team.
- **Extended School Year (ESY):** ESY services are specified on the IEP when the IEP team determines that the student's unique needs require special education and related services in excess of the regular academic year. Students who require ESY are usually because an interruption of the student's educational programming may cause significant regression, when coupled with limited recoupment capacity, that renders it impossible or unlikely that the student will attain the level of self-sufficiency and independence that would otherwise be expected in view of his/her disability.
- **Instruction In Other Settings:** Specially designed instruction may occur include locations in the community such as day treatment or residential settings.
- **Instruction in Home, in Hospitals, and in Other Institutions:** These settings are typically considered the most restrictive along the continuum of placement options.

When do special education services terminate?

If a student has received a district approved high school diploma, he/she is no longer eligible for special education services including transition. If the student earned another type of document (e.g., Certificate of Completion, Certificate of Attendance) other than a high school diploma, he/she remains eligible for a free appropriate public education (FAPE) until he/she reaches the maximum age of 21 years, subject to the following. If a person who becomes 22 years of age during the months of January to June, inclusive, while participating in a program under this part may continue his or her participation in the program for the remainder of the current fiscal year, including any extended school year program. However, a student shall not be allowed to begin a new fiscal year in a program if he or she becomes 22 years of age in July, August, or September of that new fiscal year. In the case of a person in a year-round school program and is completing his or her individualized education program in a term that extends into the new fiscal year, then the person may complete that term. Any person who becomes 22 years of age during the months of October, November, or December while participating in a program under this act shall be terminated from the program on December 31 of the current fiscal year, unless the person would otherwise complete his or her individualized education program at the end of the current fiscal year.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The provision of special education services is governed by state and federal laws. Local districts establish their own procedures to implement these laws. Students with identified disabilities have the right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Parents and the local school district have responsibilities as well as rights, to ensure identification, placement, and services for individuals with exceptional needs. These laws protect the rights of parents to be fully informed and to participate in all planning and decision making about their child's education.

Please refer to the California Department of Education website for a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/qa/pseng.asp>. If you have additional questions, please contact your district special education administrator or the North Inland Special Education Region (NISER), Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) director.

TRANSITION

Transition is an important part of the special education process.

How does a student transition from an infant/toddler early intervention program to a preschool program and from a preschool program to a kindergarten program?

For children transitioning from an infant/toddler early intervention program to a preschool program, parent(s) and district staff must be notified six months prior to the child's third birthday of the pending placement change. A written plan for transition should be developed by the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) team. School district staff attend this meeting. The plan must include the steps necessary to ensure a smooth transition to the preschool program and that an IEP will be developed and implemented by the child's third birthday if the child qualifies for special education services. The plan should include a referral for assessment no later than 90 days prior to the child's third birthday.

What is transition planning for postsecondary students?

Districts are responsible for assisting students with special needs to make a successful transition from school to adult living. This secondary transition is a results-oriented process that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of students with disabilities including movement from school to post-school activities based on assessments of the student. These assessments may be:

- Formal – standardized assessments that provide information on personality type, career interests/workplace preferences, academic achievement, etc. and/or
- Informal – observations, interviews, questionnaires, etc.

The process leads to the development of an Individual Transition Plan (ITP), whereby a student's IEP team addresses the following:

- Postsecondary education
- Vocational education
- Integrated employment (including supported employment)
- Continuing adult education
- Adult service
- Independent living
- Community participation

Included in the ITP are measurable, annual transition goals that support him/her achieving meeting his/her postsecondary goals. The annual transition goals are supported by special education and related services, program accommodations and/or modifications, agency cooperation, and work-related activities and experiences. The process includes establishing linkages with postsecondary support agencies, such as the California Department of Rehabilitation. With parent's permission, agencies will be invited to IEP meetings to discuss qualification criteria for agency support, services offered, and how to apply for services.

What happens when the student turns 18 years old?

Unless the student has been legally conserved, all rights (including educational rights) transfer to the 18-year-old adult student. At least one year prior to the student reaching his or her 18th birthday, the IEP team will inform the student of this transfer of rights.

Conservatorship is a legal proceeding by which an individual or agency is appointed by a court to be responsible for a person (18 years of age or older) who needs assistance in the activities of daily living.

What is a Summary of Performance (SOP)?

The SOP is not part of an IEP, but it includes many of the same components. It is given to the student in the spring of his/her last year in high school. The SOP document, along with the most recent psycho-educational assessment report and vocational assessments, makes a powerful portfolio for the student to take to his/her next educational/training/work setting. The SOP also assists agencies in supplying the most appropriate services for the student in a minimum amount of time. The SOP explains what accommodations are needed for the student to succeed, and it provides recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting his/her measurable postsecondary goals.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

One of the most critical aspects of your child's education is your involvement in the IEP process and regular communication with your child's educational team.

Are there parent organizations in which I can participate?

Yes. The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) is comprised of parents, community members, and school staff from the ten districts in the North Inland Special Education Region (NISER).

How may I become a member of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC)?

To join the NISER CAC, contact your district administrator or call the NISER office at 760-307-1658. The members of the CAC are appointed to two-year terms by the local school boards to represent the districts.

What is the purpose of the CAC?

The primary purpose of the CAC is to provide input on the Local Plan (the document that describes services in the region). CAC meetings may also include information and updates on the law; demonstrations; or information about special programs, budgets, resources, events, etc. When you come to a CAC meeting, you can ask questions, get information, express your opinions, and get to know the people who make decisions about special education.

Where do the CAC meetings take place, and how do I find out about them?

CAC meetings may take place at the SELPA Office, in a hosting member school district, or virtually. The location of the meetings will be indicated on the annual schedule and/or on the flyer distributed by the school districts. For more information, contact your district special education administrator or the NISER office at 760-307-1658, NIselpa@sdcoe.net, or the NISER website at www.sdcoe.net/niser.

What are some other resources for parents?

There are many parent groups and other informational services available. Please contact your local school district or SELPA. Additional resources are available on the NISER website at www.sdcoe.net/niser.

ACRONYMS

The following terms are often used by educational professionals. Frequently the acronyms are used instead of the entire term. This list is intended to provide a better understanding of what can otherwise seem like “Alphabet Soup.”

504	Section 504 of the Rehabilitations Act of 1973
AAC	Alternative Augmentative Communication
ABA	Applied Behavior Analysis
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADA	Average Daily Attendance
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
ALJ	Administrative Law Judge
APE	Adaptive Physical Education
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
ASL	American Sign Language
AT	Assistive Technology
BCBA	Board Certified Behavior Analyst
BIP	Behavioral Intervention Plan
CAASPP	California Assessment of Student Performance & Progress
CAC	Community Advisory Committee
CART	Communication Access Realtime Translation
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CCS	California Children’s Services
CDE	California Department of Education
CDS	Community Day School

CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DHH	Deaf and Hard of Hearing
DOJ	Department of Justice
DSM-5	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th Edition)
ED	Emotional Disturbance
EHA	Education for All Handicapped Children Act (predecessor to IDEA)
EL	English Learner
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESY	Extended School Year
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
FBA	Functional Behavioral Assessment
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
HHI	Home/Hospital Instruction
IA	Instructional Aide
IAES	Interim Alternative Educational Setting
ID	Intellectual Disability
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEE	Independent Educational Evaluation
IEP	Individualized Education Program
IFSP	Individualized Family Services Plan
IS	Independent Study
ISA	Individual Services Agreement
ISP	Individualized Service Plan
ITP	Individualized Transition Plan
IWEN	Individual with Exceptional Needs
LCI	Licensed Children's Institution

LEA	Local Education Agency
LEP	Limited English Proficient
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
MD	Manifestation Determination
NPA	Nonpublic Agency
NPS	Nonpublic School
O & M	Orientation and Mobility
OAH	Office of Administrative Hearings
OCD	Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
OCR	Office for Civil Rights
ODD	Oppositional Defiant Disorder
OHI	Other Health Impairment
OI	Orthopedic Impairment
OSEP	Office of Special Education Programs
OSERS	Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services
OT	Occupational Therapy
PDD	Pervasive Developmental Disorder
PWN	Prior Written Notice
RSP	Resource Specialist Program
RTI	Response to Intervention
SAI	Specialized Academic Instruction
SBE	State Board of Education
SEA	State Education Agency
SELPA	Special Education Local Plan Area
SLD	Specific Learning Disability
SLI	Speech or Language Impairment

SST	Student Study Team
SWD	Students with Disabilities
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
USC	United States Code
USDOE	United States Department of Education
VI	Visual Impairment

GLOSSARY

Accommodations: change in the delivery of the material that does not lower the level of achievement or performance expected of the student.

Adapted Physical Education (APE): physical education that may be adapted or modified to address the individual needs of children with disabilities who have gross motor delays.

Age Equivalent Score (AE): way of reporting test scores in which the score is equal to that of an average child of that age. For example, an age equivalent score of 3.7 means that the child did as well as an average child who is 3 years and 7 months old.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR): a program used by parents or guardians of students with disabilities, Local Education Agencies, and Special Education Local Plan Areas to resolve disputes at the local level.

Assessment: process of collecting data for the purpose of specifying and verifying problems and making decisions about students.

Assistive Technology: any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, and/or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability. May include low-tech (e.g., calculator, tape recorder, pencil grip, large pencil) or high-tech (e.g., closed circuit television, FM systems, augmentative communication devices, sound field systems, alternative computer access, specialized software) equipment.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): disorder characterized by distractibility, hyperactivity, impulsive behaviors, and significant difficulty remaining focused on tasks or activities.

Auditory Processing: full range of mental activity involved in reacting to auditory stimuli, especially speech sounds, and in considering their meanings in relation to past experience and to their future use.

Augmentative Communication: form of assistive technology that enables a child to convey his/her message. Examples may include simple communication board (with objects or pictures), electronic communication board, sign language, and/or computerized voices.

Autism (AUT): developmental disorder that affects multiple aspects of the child's functioning: 1) delays in communication skills, 2) impairment in social interaction skills, and 3) behavioral symptoms involving either repetitive behaviors or a restricted range of interests in activities.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP): written document that is developed when the student exhibits a serious behavior problem that significantly interferes with the implementation of the goals on the IEP. A BIP is written after a functional analysis assessment (FAA) is conducted.

Behavior Modification: systematic use of the principles of learning, including rewards and punishment, to increase desired behaviors and decrease undesired behaviors.

Behavior Emergency Report (BER): a BER is completed if an Intervention is used on a student with an individualized Education Program (IEP) within one school day.

Benchmark: describes the amount of progress the student is expected to make within a specified time frame.

California Alternate Assessment (CAA): the summative California Alternate Assessments (CAAs) for English language arts/literacy (ELA), mathematics, and science are administered to eligible students. The CAAs are for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and whose individualized education program (IEP) team has designated the use of an alternate assessment on statewide summative assessments. Eligible students are those whose disability prevents them from taking the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for ELA and mathematics and the California Science Test.

California Assessment for Student Performance and Progress (CASPP): testing and reporting program in California, required by law since 1997. CASPP is an achievement test administered annually to students in public schools grades 2-11 to test progress toward California standards.

California Children's Services (CCS): state agency that provides occupational and physical therapy to eligible students with physical disabilities.

Cerebral Palsy (CP): condition caused by damage to the motor control centers of the brain before birth, during the birth process, or after birth.

Children with Disabilities: children identified through the IEP process as having one of the following handicapping conditions: mental retardation, hard of hearing, deafness, speech or language impairment, visual impairment, emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, established medical disability, specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, multiple disabilities, autism, and/or traumatic brain injury.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC): committee comprised of parents of children with disabilities, school staff, and community members that provides input into the operation of special education programs, assists parents, and supports activities on behalf of children with disabilities.

Compliance: requirement to follow all state and federal laws. An allegation of "noncompliance" will generally result in an investigation by the CA Department of Education.

Core Curriculum: standard district adopted curriculum offered to all students.

County Mental Health (CMH): state agency that provides counseling and/or other mental health services to students whose emotional needs extend beyond the school counseling options.

Deaf: hearing impairment so significant that one is unable to usefully perceive sounds in the environment with or without the use of a hearing aid.

Deaf-Blindness: hearing and visual impairments that exist together, the combination of which causes severe communication, developmental, and educational problems.

Directionality: awareness of the two sides of the body and the ability to identify them as left and right, and to project this correctly into the outside world, as in knowing which is the right hand of a person facing you.

Due Process Hearing: legal hearing, facilitated by an administrative law judge, when either the parent(s) or school district has filed a due process complaint to the CA Department of Education. Due process hearings occur when there is disagreement related to the identification, assessment, educational placement, and/or provision of FAPE to a student.

Dyslexia: developmental reading disability, presumably congenital and perhaps hereditary, that may vary in degree from mild to severe; a broad term meaning the inability to read.

Educational Benefit: student is making progress toward meeting his/her goals.

Emotional Disturbance (ED): student must exhibit one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree, which adversely affects educational performance: 1) an inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; 2) inability to build or maintain satisfactory relationships with peers and adults; 3) inappropriate behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; 4) a general pervasive mood of unhappiness/depression; or 5) a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC): is the required state test for English language proficiency (ELP) that must be given to students whose primary language is a language other than English.

English Learner (EL): student who is in the process of acquiring/learning English and has a first language other than English. Other terms include Limited English Proficient (LEP), English Language Learner (ELL), English as a Second Language (ESL), and Non-English Proficient (NEP).

Established Medical Disability (0-5 years only; CA definition only): disabling medical condition or congenital syndrome that the IEP team determines has a high predictability of requiring special education services. This disability is not in federal law.

Evaluation: comprehensive assessment by a team of specialists to determine how a student is functioning in all areas of his/her suspected disability.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): federal law that requires all students be assessed each year in order to show adequate yearly progress. Schools must test at least 95% of various subgroups of students. The goal of the law is to bring all students to a proficient level in reading, math, and science by 2014. School districts and states must provide detailed report cards to the public about progress toward this goal. States must also provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities or limited English proficiency.

Expressive Language Skills: skills required to produce language for communicating with other people. Speaking and writing are expressive language skills.

Figure-Ground Perception: ability to pay attention to one part of what you are looking at (for example, this ink) in relation to the rest of the "field" (for example, this paper).

Fine-Motor Coordination: development and control of small muscles such as those used to cut, hold a pencil, etc.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): as stated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), FAPE stands for Free Appropriate Public Education for all eligible students with disabilities. The key word is “appropriate” and means that the student is making educational progress.

Functional Analysis Assessment (FAA): systemic collection of data that results in determining the function (what the child wants/needs or is trying to avoid/protest) of a child’s behavior.

General Education Class Placement: type of program placement in which children without disabilities are educated.

Goal (Instructional Goal, Annual Goal): measurable statement of what is expected of a student to make progress.

Grade Equivalent Score (GE): way of reporting test scores in which the score is equal to that of an average child of that grade level. For example, a grade equivalent score of 3.7 means that the child did as well as an average child who is in the seventh month of third grade.

Gross Motor Coordination: development and awareness of large muscle activity; coordination of large muscles in a purposeful manner such as walking and jumping.

Guardian: person who is permanently or temporarily appointed by a court to act in place of a parent.

Hard of Hearing Impairment (HH): whether permanent or fluctuating, a hearing impairment impairs the processing of linguistic information through hearing, even with amplification, and adversely affects educational performance. Processing linguistic information includes speech and language reception and speech and language discrimination.

Hyperactivity: description of a physical or mental condition causing constant, excessive movement.

Impulsivity: acting impulsively, without considering the outcome(s) of the action.

Inclusion: the process of bringing a child with a disability into the general education classroom.

Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE): evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the public school.

Individual Transition Plan (ITP): a plan developed as part of the IEP that includes measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to education, training and/or employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills. The ITP also includes transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals. An ITP must be included in the IEP beginning no later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child is 16.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised at least yearly by a team.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): federal law that governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to children with disabilities. It addresses the educational needs of children with disabilities.

Intellectual Disability/Intellectually Disabled (ID): significantly below average intellectual ability existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior, in all settings, and manifested during the developmental period.

Intelligence Quotient (IQ): measure of cognitive (mental) ability or ability to learn. IQ suggests a child's potential for academic success.

Laterality: refers to the two sides of the body and the ability to identify them as left or right correctly.

Learning Disability: See Specific Learning Disability (SLD).

Learning Handicapped (LH): type of special education program/teacher certification serving children with non-severe disabilities, such as those with learning disabilities, mild mental retardation, etc.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): program placement that is the most "normal" that a particular child can work in and benefit from.

Local Education Agency (LEA): local school district.

Mainstreaming: placing children with disabilities in a general education classroom for part of a day.

Manifestation Determination Review (MDR): is a process to review all relevant information and the relationship between the child's disability and the behavior. Consequences for problem behaviors should not discriminate against a child based on his disability.

Mediation: optional step in the due process procedure in which a state-appointed facilitator works with both parties to develop a mutually acceptable compromise.

Modification: change in the delivery of material that alters the level of achievement or performance expected of the student.

Multiple Disabilities (MD): children who have two or more handicapping conditions.

Multidisciplinary: use of a combination of several disciplines (e.g., health, education, social services) to determine the needs of a child.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS): individualized, comprehensive assessment and intervention process that utilizes a problem-solving framework to identify and address student academic difficulties using effective, efficient, research-based instruction.

Neurological Examination: assessment of sensory and motor responses, especially reflexes, to determine whether the nervous system is impaired.

Nonpublic School (NPS): non-public elementary or secondary school that is accredited, licensed, or otherwise operates in accordance with state law.

North Inland Special Education Region (NISER): one of six SELPAs in San Diego County.

Objective (Short-Term Objective, Instructional Objective, Behavioral Objective): clear statement of what is expected of an individual. It should include the conditions under which the behavior is to occur, a description of the behavior, and how the behavior is to be measured. Additionally, an objective states the discrete subskills of the goal that must be mastered to meet the goal.

Occupational Therapy (OT): activities focusing on fine motor skills, visual motor integration, visual processing, visual memory, and visual perceptual abilities that assist in improving physical development, social development, and sensory integration.

Other Health Impairment (OHI): limited strength, vitality, or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems.

Orthopedic Impairment (OI): impairment caused by a congenital anomaly, disease, and/or another cause that adversely affects a student's educational performance (e.g., cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, clubfoot, bone tuberculosis, amputations).

Perceptual-Motor Ability: coordination of body movements with the senses of sight, hearing, and touch.

Perseveration: continuing or repeating an activity (such as finger patting) to excess.

Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD): class of neurological disorders that have impairments in social interaction, imaginative activity, verbal and nonverbal communication skills, and a limited number of interests and activities that tend to be repetitive. There are five types of PDD: Autistic Disorder, Rett's Disorder, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder, Asperger's Disorder, and Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified.

Physical Therapy (PT): exercises and activities to help condition large muscle groups and restore strength and movement in order to improve gross motor skills.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS): is an evidence-based three-tiered framework for improving and integrating all of the data, systems, and practices affecting student outcomes every day. It is a way to support everyone – especially students with disabilities – to create the kinds of schools where all students are successful.

Psycho-Motor Ability: refers to muscle responses including development of fine motor, small muscles (cutting, etc.), and large muscles (walking, jumping, etc.).

Reading Comprehension: ability to understand what one has read.

Receptive Language: receiving and understanding spoken or written communication. The receptive language skills are listening and reading.

Regional Center: state agency which provides supportive services to developmentally disabled children, adults, and their families.

Related Service: services required for a child with a disability to benefit from special education (e.g., speech therapy, adapted physical education, counseling, occupational therapy, and transportation).

Residential School: placement option in which children, usually with severe handicapping conditions, receive their education away from their home environment in an educational facility that has dormitory or cottage living facilities. Some placements provide for return home on holidays and weekends. Other placements may be on a more permanent basis.

Resource Specialist Program (RSP): type of instructional setting in which a child receives intensive instruction in specific areas (e.g., math, reading, written language) for part of the school day. It may be implemented on a pull-out and/or consultative model. Recently, it is referred to as specialized academic instruction (SAI).

Restorative Practices: a positive step in helping all students learn to resolve disagreements, take ownership of their behavior, and engage in acts of empathy and forgiveness.

Severely Handicapped (SH): type of special education program serving students with severe disabilities, such as emotional disturbance, moderate-severe mental retardation, multiple disabilities, etc.

Special Day Class (SDC): type of special education placement in which a child receives most (or all) of his/her instruction in a class made up of children with similar disabilities. Recently, it is referred to as specialized academic instruction (SAI).

Special Education: specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, whose educational needs cannot be met with accommodations and/or modifications of the general education setting.

Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA): school district or group of school districts in a given geographical area in CA that coordinate the administration and delivery of special education services.

Specialized Academic Instruction (SAI): broad range of services from supplementing the general education program to providing intensive services for students with more severe disabilities. Services may occur in either individual or small group settings, as a component of an Integrated School Based Services program, and/or as consultative or collaborative services within the general education settings. Districts may choose to provide SAI through a Resource Specialist Program (RSP) or Special Day Class (SDC) setting.

Specific Learning Disability (SLD): disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written. These problems cannot be a result of visual, hearing, or physical disabilities; mental retardation; emotional disturbance; or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage and must adversely impact the child's educational progress to a statistically significant degree. The disorder may manifest itself in imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations and as a discrepancy between ability and academic achievement.

Speech or Language Impairment (SLI): children who have difficulty understanding or expressing their thoughts due to difficulty with articulation, voice, fluency, and/or language.

Standards-Based Tests in Spanish (STS): multiple-choice tests that are required for Spanish-speaking English learners.

Student Study Team (SST): process for implementing accommodations and/or modifications in the general education setting to address a child's needs. It is generally implemented prior to a referral for special education services. SST may also be called Student Assistance Team (SAT), Student Guidance Committee (SGC), Child Study Team, etc.

Surrogate Parent: trained person who "stands-in" for a child's real parent(s) and has educational signing rights. Either by virtue of voluntary or court-appointed status, the surrogate parent assumes all rights, duties, and responsibilities of the child's parent(s).

Tactile: sense of touch.

Task Analysis: breaking down a complex task (such as an instructional objective) into simpler, smaller parts.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Visual-Perceptual Ability: processing information which encompasses the ability to interpret or organize information coming in through the eye.

Visual-Perceptual-Motor Ability: ability to interpret and integrate information obtained through the eyes in such a way that a motor act can be performed based upon that information.

Visual Processing: full range of mental activity involved in reacting to visual stimuli or how visual information is processed in the brain and how the child uses his/her eyes to gain information.

Visual Impairment (VI): impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

Vocational Skills: skill or trade to be pursued as a career.