

Newport-Mesa Unified School District
Special Education Parent Handbook



Newport-Mesa
Unified School District

2985 Bear Street
Costa Mesa, California 92626

September 2025

Letter to Parents

Dear Parents:

You are an important member of your child's educational team. As a parent, you have valuable knowledge of your child which is important to the planning process. You are an equal partner on the educational team, and school staff desire to work closely with you building positive school relationships. Developed and nurtured early, these relationships lead to a strong network of support for your child's success.

We at the Newport-Mesa Unified School District encourage you to visit the classroom to see your child's program. Communicate often with the teacher as your child's skills and behaviors change. Attend teacher conferences and, if unable to keep designated appointments, notify staff as soon as possible. Attend PTA, Community Advisory Committee (CAC) training, and other school functions.

You play an important role in the education of your child. Share your views in a positive manner and expect the staff to maintain open communication with you in return. The planning and implementation of your child's educational program will be greatly enhanced by your involvement.

This handbook was created to help you understand the special education process. It is our hope that it will assist you to become an active and informed participant in your child's education.

Sincerely,

Newport-Mesa Unified School District

Table of Contents

Letter to Parents	1
Legal Rights and Protections	3
Referral and Identification	4
Special Education Eligibility Categories	7
Individualized Education Program (IEP)	8
The Program and Service Options	11
Who Is Available to Help a Parent?	13
Resolving Differences	14
Resolving Differences: Due Process	15
Common Acronyms and Dictionary of Special Education Terms	16
Resources	21

Note: This Parent Handbook does not apply to those NMUSD students attending a public charter within NMUSD's boundaries. Each charter maintains sole responsibility for the provision of special education and compliance with the IDEA for its students. If your student attends one of these charters, please contact the charter school directly for special education assistance.

Legal Rights and Protections

Rights under IDEA:

The reauthorization of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) in 2004 continues to guarantee these four basic rights of all children with disabilities, among others:

1. Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
 - Children with disabilities are entitled to a public education, appropriate to their needs, at no cost to their families.
2. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
 - Children with disabilities must be educated with students who do not have disabilities as much as possible and as close to home as possible.
3. Supplementary Aids and Services (Related or Designated Instruction and Services)
 - Children with disabilities must be provided the supportive services which are required to assist them to benefit educationally from their instructional program.
4. Assessment
 - An assessment must be completed to determine the child's needs. This may be done only with the parent's informed written consent.

Protections under IDEA:

In order to assure that these rights are received, this law also includes two protections:

1. Individualized Education Program (IEP)
 - This program must be written at least annually for all children with disabilities. It is prepared by a team comprised of knowledgeable school personnel and the parents.
2. Due Process
 - Due process rights extend to parents of students with disabilities and school districts who may initiate a hearing pertaining to a student's identification, evaluation or placement, or the provision of FAPE. Further, due process provides a formal mechanism for the resolution of disagreements.

Notification of Procedural Safeguards:

NMUSD will ensure that children with disabilities and their parents are provided with procedural safeguards throughout the assessment and IEP process. Parents are provided a copy of the procedural safeguards once a year, upon initial referral or request for evaluation, upon the first filing of a complaint in a school year, as part of certain disciplinary procedures, and upon parent request. (20 U.S.C. Section 1415(d).)

Referral and Identification

NMUSD provides for the systematic identification and assessment of those students suspected of having an IDEA disability condition and who may require special education and related services by reason of that disability. At any time a referral for identification of a student with a possible disability may come from the following: parent/legal guardian, Student Success Team (SST), community agency, teacher, administrator, or physician. Identification procedures consider those students whose needs cannot be met with modification to the regular education program.

Child Find:

Newport-Mesa Unified School District provides ongoing opportunities for parents to have their children screened for disabilities. This child find screening procedure is scheduled through Newport-Mesa Unified School District at (949) 515-6771.

In order to provide special services, the following process has been established to conform to federal and state regulations.

Pre-Referral Interventions/Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS):

Students have the legal right to pre-referral interventions prior to Special Education assessment. When a concern is expressed about a particular student, a school site Student Success Team (SST) meeting is scheduled to discuss these concerns with school members who are knowledgeable of the student and his/or her needs. In accordance with Educational Code and where appropriate, interventions are implemented prior to referral for special education, and the student's individual progress is monitored. The Student Success Team tracks the student's progress, response to the interventions, and if necessary makes a referral for special education assessment.

Step 1: Pre- Referral

Parents are encouraged to participate in the Student Success Team (SST) process, discussed above, to ensure that their child is provided access to interventions within his/her classroom. If interventions have not proven successful and/or the student is suspected of having a disabling condition that may require special education and related services, the SST can recommend assessment for special education. A parent can also request a special education assessment by writing a letter to the school principal. In response, the Student Success Team may request that the parent meet with the Student Success Team to review prior interventions. With the parent's concurrence, the SST may also implement new interventions. When it is apparent that interventions have not proved successful and/or the student is suspected of having a disabling condition that may require special education and related services, an assessment plan will be provided for the parent's signature. The parent retains the right to request that the assessment be conducted without the SST review of interventions.

Step 2: Assessment

Upon receipt by the school of the signed approval for assessment from the parent, a case manager will be assigned who will consult with the parents. At this time, arrangements will be made to have the students'

strengths and possible needs evaluated. Not counting breaks in excess of 5 school days, the school has 60 days from receipt of the signed parent consent to conduct the assessment and hold the IEP meeting. Parents are equal members of the IEP team.

The following rules are only some of the rules that apply to initial evaluations/assessments and to assessments for revision of an IEP:

- Written parental consent must be obtained prior to assessment.
- The evaluation is by a multidisciplinary team in all areas related to the child's suspected disability so as to be sufficiently comprehensive,
- Testing instruments must be validated for the specific purpose used and given by trained personnel.
- The test procedures are designed to accurately measure a child's aptitude or achievement and assess specific areas of educational need. No single procedure or test is to be used for determining an appropriate educational program for a child.
- The assessments will be conducted in the child's primary language and/or other mode of communication. If this is not feasible, an interpreter may be used.
- The testing and evaluation materials will be selected and administered so as not to be racially, culturally, or sexually discriminatory.
- At any time, a parent can request records of their child's assessment reports and IEP records, to be provided within 5 business days. Parents can request that a copy of the written assessment (once completed) be provided before the IEP meeting so that parents can consider the results in planning for the meeting.
- If the parents disagree with the assessment, you may call an IEP team meeting to discuss the areas of the assessment with which you disagree. Your IEP team will attempt to collaborate and reach an agreement with you. You may also request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) if you disagree with a District assessment. An IEE meeting District criteria must be considered by the District. The District, upon request, must pay for the cost of the IEE unless it can show, through a due process hearing, that the District's assessment met the legal requirements.
- A complete reevaluation must be completed at least every three years and may be conducted more frequently, if agreed upon by the IEP team.

There are many types of educational assessments. Some examples are academic achievement, adapted physical education, health and developmental, social-emotional, hearing and vision screenings, intellectual development and psychological areas of processing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, sensory and fine motor, speech and language, and more.

Step 3: Individualized Education Program Team Meeting

During this meeting, assessment results are shared with the IEP team including parents. Eligibility is determined by the IEP team. A student may be eligible if the student meets one of the 13 disability handicapping conditions which results in an adverse educational impact requiring special education and related services. If it is determined by the IEP team that special education is needed for the student, an educational program is developed to meet the individual needs of the child.

Step 4: Appropriate Services

Once the special needs of your child have been identified, the next step is determining appropriate placement and services. You and the school team will consider the least restrictive environment where your student's needs can appropriately be met. Supplementary aids, accommodations, modifications, and special factors will also be considered by the IEP team in offering each student a FAPE.

Step 5: IEP Review

Your child's program must be reviewed at least once a year to determine how well the program is meeting his/her needs. You may request a review at any time by providing to your child's teacher, principal or school psychologist a written request. Additionally, you will receive reports on your child's progress toward his/her annual goals. These progress reports will follow the same schedule as general education students.

Special Education Eligibility Categories

Children who meet specific state eligibility within the following categories may qualify for special education:

Autism (AUT)

Deaf-Blindness (DB)

Deafness (DEAF)

Emotional Disability (ED)

Hard of Hearing (HH)

Intellectual Disability (ID)

Multiple Disability (MD)

Orthopedic Impairment (OI)

Other Health Impairment (OHI)

Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

Speech or Language Impairment (SLI)

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Visual Impairment (VI)

Please note, there are specific diagnosis that sometimes fit within the specific categories above. For example, ADHD would/could fit into the OHI category above if it has a direct negative educational impact to the student.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

The purpose of the initial IEP Team meeting is to review the assessment and determine the child's eligibility. If the child is eligible, an IEP is developed and implemented upon the parent's written consent. The IEP is reviewed at least annually or sooner upon written request.

What is an IEP and what should be in the IEP document?

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) specifies the commitment of the school district to provide the services described, but it does not guarantee that the student will make the growth anticipated or described in the IEP.

The student has only one IEP in effect at any one time.

The student's IEP includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:

- the student's present levels of educational performance, both strengths and weaknesses
- the student's unique needs
- the student's annual goals and, when appropriate, short-term instructional objectives
- a statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services to be provided to the student
- the extent to which the student will participate in regular educational programs
- the date services will begin and how long they are expected to continue
- appropriate means to measure, on at least an annual basis, whether or not the educational goals and objectives (when appropriate) are being achieved
- a statement of how the child's parents will be regularly informed of progress at least as often as parents are informed of their non-disabled children's progress
- a statement of any individual accommodations and/or modifications needed in the administration of state or district-wide assessments and general curriculum

Vocational Education goals may be included in an IEP. These may include prevocational education, career awareness and development, work training programs and travel training. Preparing students with special needs for employment is the long-term goal of vocational education.

An Individual Transition Plan (ITP) is included with a student's IEP when the child is 16 (IEP in effect when the student turns 16) and updated annually thereafter. The ITP is designed to prepare students for further education, employment, and/or independent living.

Who makes up the IEP team?

- Parent/Legal Guardian
- Special education provider or teacher

- General Education Teacher
- District representative qualified to provide or supervise specially designed instruction and who is knowledgeable about general curriculum and the availability of resources within the District.
- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results reviewed
- Interpreter (if necessary)
- Student, when appropriate

Additional team members could be:

- Specialist (such as Speech/Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist)
- Psychologist
- Agency representative who provides service to the student
- Individual(s) with knowledge or special expertise about the child invited by parent or District

Steps the IEP Team should follow in developing the IEP:

- ✓ The IEP Team will review the findings of the assessment and establish the student's unique needs and present levels of performance in the areas of need. Parents should feel free to ask questions if they do not understand the test results and provide input.
- ✓ Annual goal(s) will be written to address identified educational needs. These goals will describe how the Team wants the student's competence to improve after instruction, usually over the period of one year. The goals should be specific, meaningful, observable, and measurable. The goals should be based on a particular activity and easy to understand. The goals should clearly state who will measure the results and how they will do it.
- ✓ The team will discuss service options and the least restrictive placement option that can allow implementation and appropriate progress towards the agreed-upon goals and objectives .
- ✓ Appropriate Designated Instruction and Services (DIS) are identified if the Team feels they are necessary to meet the student's goals.
- ✓ The parents must give written consent before the district may implement the IEP.
- ✓ Parents are provided with a copy of the IEP. Parents may request a copy be provided in their primary language.
- ✓ Parents may take the IEP forms home to review them before they sign; however, none of the services can start until the parent has signed permission on the IEP form.
- ✓ If parents choose not to attend the IEP Team meeting, the District will make and document their attempts to arrange for the parent's attendance. If parent attendance is refused, the other members of the IEP Team may meet to develop the program so as to ensure that the student is offered a FAPE. A copy of the completed IEP will be sent to the parent for review and approval.

Partial Implementation of the IEP

If after consenting to the initial provision of special education a parent does not agree with all the parts of a subsequent IEP, the parent may sign for only those portions of the program with which they agree. The portions agreed to will be implemented without delay. Areas of disagreement may become the basis for a

due process hearing. (Refer to "Resolving Differences" Section of this Handbook.) Parents have a right to write a statement of disagreement and include it with the IEP.

How to Prepare for Your Child's IEP Team Meeting

- ✓ Identify the purpose of the IEP Team meeting. Have a family conference to set some long-term and short-term goals for your child's education.
- ✓ Respond to the IEP Team meeting notification. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend the meeting. You may reschedule the meeting to a mutually agreeable alternate time/day.
- ✓ Locate important documents regarding your child (school and medical files) and make sure that they are up-to-date. (Refer to "Building Your Child's Home File" Section of this Handbook.) You have a right to request a copy of your child's school records to keep in your child's file at home.
- ✓ Write down questions, concerns and suggestions and go to the meeting with your plan.
- ✓ You may withdraw consent for special education services (remove your child from special education) at any time by submitting a written request to the school principal or special education representative. The District will then provide prior written notice regarding returning your child to the general education program and terminating eligibility.

What is Your Role during the IEP Team Meeting?

- ✓ Meet the team working with your child
- ✓ Listen
- ✓ Share your child's needs, strengths, and what motivates him/her
- ✓ Give input and feedback
- ✓ Ask questions
- ✓ Take notes
- ✓ Be a partner in the decision-making

Tips on Communicating in an IEP Team Meeting

- ✓ Have a positive attitude
- ✓ Remember that your child is the focus of the IEP Team process
- ✓ Remember that the team is there to make your child successful; you share a common goal
- ✓ Keep the lines of communication open
- ✓ Be fair and be willing to work as a team

What to expect of the IEP Team

- ✓ Come to the meeting with some ideas of strengths and weaknesses (if any)
- ✓ Listen to your input and respond to your concerns
- ✓ Collaborative approach to creating a plan for your child

The Program and Service Options

The Newport-Mesa Unified School District makes available a range of educational programs for students with disabilities. The student's IEP Team determines placement and services for the student based on the principle of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). LRE means that a student is to participate in as much of the general education program as is appropriate in view of his/her educational needs. In other words, the District will remove children from the general setting only when the nature or severity of the child's disability is such that the child's education in general education classes with supplementary aids and services cannot be satisfactorily achieved. Additionally, the child's program should be located as close to home as possible, meaning that the program options at the child's neighborhood school are considered first. All students will participate in nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities with non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate.

The following are Placement Options:

Early Start Program

This program is designed to provide early intervention services to infants and toddlers (birth to 18 months and 18 to 36 months old). The services emphasize child/parent training, home visits, and family involvement activities.

Preschool Program

Preschool-age children with special needs may be served in several ways:

- Designated instruction and services only
- Self Contained Class with access to peer models
- Self Contained Class with designated instruction and services with access to peer models

General Education Class Program

A student with disabilities may be placed in a general education classroom program when the IEP Team determines that his/her educational needs can be met in that setting with the use of supplementary aids and services.

Specialized Academic Instruction (SAI)

A student can receive SAI in any of these programs:

- General Education Classroom
- Mild to Moderate Programs

The responsibilities of the Mild to Moderate teachers include providing instruction, monitoring pupil progress, implementing and revising IEPs, coordinating services, and consulting with parents and staff. Specialized academic instruction may be provided in the general education classroom or in a mild/moderate setting, as deemed appropriate by the IEP Team.

Student's needs are met in the general education classroom with the use of supplementary aids and services and push-in/pull-out SAI.

- Self Contained Class (SCC)
Students in this program receive special education support for a majority of their day, usually in a self-contained class.
- Moderate to Severe, Self Contained Class (SCC)
A student may be eligible for moderate to severe/self contained class service when the IEP Team determines that his/her educational needs require a separate special education classroom for the majority of the student's day. These students may receive a modified curriculum and may participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities with their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate.
- County Moderate/Severe Self Contained Class (SCC)
- Home and Hospital
Newport-Mesa Unified School District may provide specialized academic instruction for a student residing in a local hospital located in the District's boundaries, or may provide home teaching when a student is unable to attend school for medical or any other significant reason as determined by the IEP Team.
- Nonpublic, Nonsectarian School
This placement is considered when a student's unique needs cannot be met within the public-school programs. Nonpublic school programs are typically located outside of District boundaries at segregated facilities without access to typical peers and may include residential treatment programs.

Designated Instructional Services/Related Services

Support services are provided when they are required to assist a student with special needs to benefit educationally from his/her instructional program. Support services may include:

- Speech and Language
- Audiological services
- Psychological services, educationally-related mental health services, & Counseling services
- Physical and occupational therapy
- Adapted physical education
- Orientation and mobility services
- Specialized vision services
- Specialized deaf and hard-of-hearing services
- Health and nursing - specialized physical healthcare services
- Assistive technology services
- Braille transcription
- Career awareness

Who Is Available to Help a Parent?

Your Child's Teacher and/or Case Manager

- Your child's teacher and/or case manager is the first person to ask for help. Your child's teacher can advise you on your child's progress, the skills being taught, give advice on how to improve study habits and skills, and suggest at home learning experiences. The teacher can refer you to other professionals when necessary.

Your School Principal

- The school principal is the educational and policy leader of your school. Check with this person on matters of school-wide operation or policy, to seek information, to make a suggestion or resolve a problem.

Your School District's Program Coordinator and Director of Special Education

- The Newport-Mesa Unified School District Program Coordinator and Director of Special Education will answer questions concerning services available for students with exceptional needs. They can advise you of community resources and activities for your child.

Your Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

- The CAC is composed of parents of children with special needs enrolled in Newport-Mesa Unified School District, teachers, and other school district personnel. The CAC is available to offer advice to parents new to the system and to school administration on ways to meet the needs of special needs children. The intent of this collaborative group of parents, educators, and community representatives is to articulate and promote issues that are important to students with disabilities and their families.

Your Child's Physician, Pediatrician, or Health Center

- Your child's physician, pediatrician, or health center can provide you with valuable non-educational information and refer you to other professionals, agencies and organizations.

Your Local Library

- Your local library may provide a listing of organizations or groups in or near your community offering support for you and your special child.

Resolving Differences

During the course of the special education process, you and the school district might disagree about some aspect of your child's education. Listed below are some things you can do:

Information Meeting or Conference

- If you have a concern with the school, make an appointment with the person most closely connected with the area of concern. For example, if you are concerned about a situation in the classroom, meet with the teacher.

IEP Team Review

- If you believe that your child's IEP is no longer appropriate for your child, you may request another IEP Team meeting at any time.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

- The ADR services aim to provide parents a continuum of dispute resolution processes and practices to engage in different levels of intervention- prevention, disagreement, and conflict.

Independent Educational Evaluation

- If you do not agree with the school district's evaluation of your child, you may request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) at the district's expense. The district may, however, choose to initiate a due process hearing to show that its assessment is appropriate. If the decision resulting from the hearing is that the district's assessment is appropriate, the parent still has the right to obtain an independent assessment, but not at public expense.

Uniform Complaint Procedure

- If you suspect a school of noncompliance with state laws or regulations, and the matter cannot be resolved informally, you may file a complaint in writing with the school district's Superintendent using the district's uniform complaint procedures.

Resolving Differences: Due Process

Mediation and Due Process Hearing

- If you have a conflict with a school district that cannot be resolved informally, you may request an impartial due process hearing. Issues which may be considered at a due process hearing are identification, evaluation, or education placement of the child, or the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to the child. Either you or the school district can submit a written request to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction or California Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) for a due process hearing. A copy of the request must be provided to the other party at the time the request is initiated.

If the parent files for the hearing, the district must convene a meeting within 15 days of notice of the complaint in order to attempt to resolve the matter. The parties may agree in writing to waive the resolution meeting or agree to use formal mediation through OAH. If the district has not resolved the complaint within 30 days of receipt of the complaint, the due process hearing may occur. Pending the hearing decision, an enrolled student attending a District program has the right to remain in the then-current educational placement of the child, or, if applying for initial admission to public school, shall, with the consent of the parents, be placed in the public school program until all such proceedings have been completed.

Due Process Hearing Rights Include the Following:

- The right to be accompanied and advised by counsel and by individuals with special knowledge or training with respect to the needs of a child with disabilities.
- The right to present evidence and confront, cross-examine, and compel the attendance of witnesses.
- The right to written, or, at the option of the parents, electronic verbatim record of a hearing.
- The right to written, or, at the option of the parents, electronic finding of fact and decisions.
- The right to an open or closed hearing.

If either party disagrees with the decision of the hearing officer, the party may appeal to a court of competent jurisdiction.

Common Acronyms and Dictionary of Special Education Terms

ABA

Applied Behavioral Analysis

ADA

Americans with Disabilities Act

AT device & AT services

Assistive Technology device & Assistive Technology services

Accommodation

Generally, an adaptation that enables a student with a disability to participate in educational programming with greater ease and effectiveness by assisting him or her to participate in the activity to the extent possible, as if he or she were nondisabled.

Adaptive Behavior

Behavior that displays an age-appropriate level of self-sufficiency and social responsibility: domains of adaptive behavior include: a) independent functioning, b) physical development, c) economic activity, d) language development, e) numbers and time, f) vocational activity, g) self-direction, h) responsibility, and i) socialization.

Adapted Physical Education (APE)

Specially designed physical education program tailored to the needs of students who require developmental or corrective instruction.

Age of Majority

When a child turns eighteen, he/she is legally considered an adult and is afforded all educational rights previously held by the parent.

Assessment/Evaluation

Broader than testing and typically includes gathering and integrating information to determine a student's current level of emotional, behavioral, academic and intellectual functioning, resulting in educational needs and strategies for remediation to promote effective treatment programming. Parent permission is required.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

A pervasive developmental disorder characterized by deficits in social interaction, communication, and unusual repetitive behavior.

Baseline

The beginning point for measurement, prior to intervention or treatment, necessary to determine in order to measure effectiveness of the intervention or treatment.

Behavioral Intervention

The systematic implementation of procedures that result in lasting positive changes in the individual's behavior.

CAC

Community Advisory Committee: A committee whose membership includes parents of school children (a majority must be parents of exceptional students); school personnel; and representatives of public, community, and private agencies. The CAC advises school administrators and local school boards regarding the Local Plan for Special Education, assists districts with parent education, and promotes public awareness and understanding of individuals with exceptional needs.

CAA

California Alternative Assessment

DIS

Designated Instruction Services (Related Services): Services designated on a student's IEP, provided by a specialist, which are not normally provided by general and special education teachers. These may include (but are not limited to): language and speech development, audiological services, mobility instruction, adapted physical education, specialized instruction for the visually impaired, counseling, psychological services, and health services.

FAPE

Free Appropriate Public Education: Entitles a public-school child with a disability to an educational program and related services that meets his/her unique educational needs at no cost to the parents; based on the child's IEP; under public supervision and meets state standards.

General Education

As distinguished from special education, an established curriculum of academic subjects offered in essentially the same fashion for all children and youth. The term frequently is used interchangeably with regular education.

Generalization

Ability to apply a skill or behavior learned in one setting to another setting or ability to apply a learned skill or behavior in similar situations.

Health Assessment

In connection with school health services, the collection and analysis of information about the health situation of a student with a disability to determine his or her need for health-related supportive services.

IDEA

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: Federal law that provides for special education and related services to eligible children with disabilities.

IEP Team Meeting

The meeting in which an Individualized Education Program is developed for a student with special needs.

IEP Team

A committee of parent, special education teacher, general education teacher, administrator or designee and student, if appropriate. The Team may include psychologist, nurse and specialists who conduct and review assessments. The purpose of the committee/team is to review the assessment results, determine eligibility, determine the content of the IEP, and make program placement recommendations.

IFSP

Individualized Family Service Plan: the process of providing early intervention services for children with special needs under the age of three and their families. Family-based needs are identified, and a written plan is developed with periodic review.

Impulsivity

An approach to problem-solving associated with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); responding abruptly without consideration of consequences or alternatives.

Inclusive Schooling

Including students with disabilities in general education classes for most of their school day.

Informed Consent

Generally, consent given after full disclosure of all the information a reasonable person would require to make an intelligent decision.

IPP

Individual Program Planning: An annual-reviewed record of program and service needs provided by the Regional Center.

ITP

Individual Transition Plan: A plan designed to facilitate a secondary student's passage from school to work, adult training, and community participation with appropriate support services. The ITP must be in place by age 16.

LEA

Local Educational Agency (such as a school district)

Learning Modalities

The three pathways through which students typically learn: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic

LRE

Least Restrictive Environment: Generally, the appropriate placement for a child with a disability that most closely approximates where the child, if nondisabled, would be educated; not necessarily the regular education classroom and not synonymous with inclusion or mainstreaming. Placement in separate classes

occurs when the nature of the disability is such that education in regular classes cannot meet the child's needs.

Local Plan

A plan developed by school districts and counties, and submitted for State approval, which assures and provides for delivery of special education services to all eligible individuals with special needs living within the geographic boundaries covered by the plan.

Low Incidence

Students with disabilities in the areas of hearing, vision, hearing and vision, and orthopedic disabilities.

Mainstreaming

Not a formal term, but common jargon in the educational community typically accepted as meaning the placement of a child with a disability alongside nondisabled children in the regular education setting for a percentage of the school day.

Manifestation Determination

The evaluation of the relationship between a student's disability and act of misconduct that must be undertaken when a district proposes to take specified serious disciplinary actions resulting in a change of placement.

Modifications

Changes in the delivery, content, or instructional level of a subject or test that results in altered expectations and creates a different standard for children with disabilities than for those without disabilities.

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

A leveled system of academic and behavioral supports for all students.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)

NCLB was designed around four essential components: accountability for results; an emphasis on scientific research; expanded parental options; and expanded local control and flexibility.

Orientation and Mobility (O&M)

A related service for students with visual impairments to train them to know where their bodies are in space and how to move through space.

PECS

Picture Exchange Communication System

Positive Reinforcement

A principle used in behavior modification in which a student is motivated to perform a desired target behavior by his or her receipt of a reward after performing the desired behavior.

Related Services

Services designated on a student's IEP (also referred to as Designated Instruction and Services or DIS Services), provided by a specialist, which are not normally provided by general and special education teachers. These may include (but are not limited to): language and speech development, audiological services, mobility instruction, adapted physical education, specialized instruction for the visually impaired, counseling, psychological services, and health services.

Response to Intervention (RTI)

A system of interventions implemented by school sites prior to a referral to special education. The RTI model provides appropriate interventions before a child falls behind academically. The RTI interventions are monitored regularly for progress and adapted as needed. According to IDEA 2004, districts may use RTI as part of the eligibility determination process for special education. The RTI structure and content falls within general education.

Screening

The first step in the assessment process; a fast, efficient way to identify students who may need further testing.

SCC

Self Contained Class: Self-contained special education classes to which students are assigned, because their instructional plan requires more intensive instruction than can be met within a general education setting.

SELPA

Special Education Local Plan Area: A single district (such as Newport-Mesa Unified School District/SELPA) that provides comprehensive special education services and resources. A SELPA can also take in several districts to provide special education services to a given geographical area.

SOP

Summary of Performance: Provided to students upon leaving public education at the end of high school or young adult programming.

SST

Student Success/Study Team: A process which is used to focus on providing accommodations and interventions for a student within the regular education program before a referral is made for special education instruction. The team may consist of the parent, student, principal, teacher, and psychologist.

Reevaluation

Federal and State laws mandate special education students are assessed no later than every three years to determine current needs and continued eligibility. This information is provided by a multidisciplinary team and is presented to the IEP Team, including parents, for consideration.

Resources

Procedural Safeguards Link:

<https://web.nmusd.us/departments/special-services/special-education>

The sources to contact to obtain assistance in understanding the provisions for your parent rights and procedural safeguards are:

Juliana Sauvao
Director, Special Education Resolution/SELPA
Newport-Mesa Unified School District/SELPA
2985 Bear Street
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

California Department of Education
P.O. Box 944272
Sacramento, CA 94244-2720

Office of Administrative Hearings
Attn: Special Education Division
2349 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 200
Sacramento, CA 95833-4231
Phone: (916) 263-0880
Fax: (916) 376-6319
SEFilings@dgs.ca.gov