



Unpacking IEPs MTSD Special Education Parent Night

Developed by Erica Pawlo in conjunction with MTSD
Special Services Staff as part of the NJEXCEL
requirements for administrative certification

Fall 2025



AGENDA

The Why

Evaluations/Eligibility

IEP Components

IEP Meetings

Resources

Who are we? MTSD Special Services

Director of Special Services

Michele Deremer

Supervisors of Special Services

Emily Keyes (PreK-2)

Regina Dunich (3-6)

Daryl Schwenck (7-12)

Case Managers

School Psychologists

Social Workers

LDT-Cs

Related Services

Speech-Language Pathologists

Occupational Therapists

Physical Therapists

BCBAs/Behaviorists

Teacher of the Blind/Deaf

Why are we here?

- Provide information about the IEP process
 - Increase parent's ability to be involved in IEP meetings
 - Prevent future confusion about IEPs
 - Avoid "parents vs. school" situations at meetings
 - District strategic goal to enhance communication
-

The bottom line

One team, one goal: support our students

Evaluations

When: Occur when students are referred to the Child Study Team or are due for a re-evaluation (every 3 years)

Eval types:
Psychological,
Educational, Social
History, Speech,
Physical Therapy,
Occupational
Therapy, Functional
Behavior, AAC,
Neurodevelopmental,
Assistive Tech,
Psychiatric

Process:

1. Planning meeting
2. Consent
3. Evaluations occur
4. Reports sent 10 days prior to meeting
5. Eligibility meeting

Why: To determine if the student has a disability which adversely affects their learning, present levels of functioning, what supports are needed, and to inform goals.

Parent involvement in evaluations may include:

- Sharing updates at the Planning meeting
- Expressing concerns to be assessed
- Requesting a type of evaluation
- Providing information about functional and/or academic progress
- Reviewing evaluation reports
- Asking questions at the Eligibility meeting (ex: How does this score impact functioning in the classroom? What should we do to address this weakness?)

Eligibility

ALL 3 criteria must be met for eligibility under N.J.A.C. 61:14

Identified Disability

Significant,
adverse impact

Need for special
education

Based on 14 categories and criteria listed in the NJ Special Education Code

Ex: Communication Impairment, Autism, Intellectual Disability, Emotional Regulation, Multiple, Deaf/Blind, Other Health Impairment, Preschool, Specific Learning Disability)

A substantial impact to academic and/or functional performance.

Assessments, teacher and parent input, grades, absences, conduct, observations and more are considered here.

Student requires specialized instruction and/or modifications to curriculum and instruction in order to access their education.

Ex: multisensory reading instruction, modified curriculum content, etc.

Parental roles in eligibility decisions may include:

- Providing information throughout the evaluation process (ex: strengths/weaknesses, medical diagnoses/documentation)
- Asking questions (ex: Why is my child eligible under one category but not another? What supports are available if they are or are not found eligible?)

Note: eligibility determinations are made collaboratively based on data and governed by the code. While parent input is considered, it may not always align with the eligibility determination made.

Eligibility

ALL 3 criteria must be met for eligibility under SLD

Identified Disability

Significant,
adverse impact

Based on 14
categories and
criteria listed in
the NJ Special
Education Code

Ex: Communication
Impairment, Autism,
Intellectual Disability,
Emotional Regulation,
Multiple, Deaf/Blind,
Other Health Impairment,
Preschool, Specific
Learning Disability)

A substantial
impact to
academic and/or
functional
performance

Assessments,
and parent input, grades,
absences, conduct,
observations and more
are considered here.

Q: How is a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) determined in MTSD?

A: By a 1.5 standard deviation discrepancy between cognitive and achievement scores. Diagnoses do not automatically mean eligibility under SLD.

Q: My student has ADHD or anxiety, do they qualify for an IEP?

A: It depends on whether or not it results in both a significant, adverse educational impact AND the need for special education.

Parental roles in eligibility
decisions may include:

Information

the evaluation

lengths/weaknesses,
/documentation)

ONS (ex: Why is my
one category but
t supports are
e or are not found

terminations

atively based

rned by the

nt input is

y not always

gibility

n made.

What is in an IEP?

Present Levels

- Summaries of evaluations
- Updates from teachers and related services
- Speak to the child's current performance and abilities

Parent Concerns

- Parent input about the proposed IEP programs, services, etc.
- Related to what was discussed at the IEP meeting

How Disability Affects

- States the child's area of disability and eligibility category for the IEP
- Explains how the disability impacts the child's learning and needs

Notice Requirements

- Documents what is discussed at IEP meetings, other options the CST considered, and other factors related to the proposed IEP

Needs

- Identified areas for improvement
- Based on the Present Levels (evaluations and teacher input)

Annual Goals

- What the child will work towards over the course of the IEP
- Based on the Needs
- Separated by subject area (math, speech, motor, etc.)

Programs & Services

- Classes (Programs) and therapies (Services) that help the child reach their Goals
- Typically for a specific subject (ex: reading) and amount of time

Modifications

- Supports to help the child reach their Goals
- Accommodations: tools or change how we learn
- Modifications - change expectations for what we are supposed to learn

What is in an IEP?

Present Levels

- Summaries of evaluations
- Updates from teachers and related services
- Speak to the child's current performance and abilities

Parent Concerns

- Parent input about the proposed IEP programs, services, etc.
- Related to what was discussed at the IEP meeting

Needs

- Identified areas for improvement
- Based on the Present Levels (evaluations and teacher input)

Annual Goals

- What the child will work towards over the course of the IEP
- Based on the Needs
- Separated by subject area (math, speech, motor, etc.)

Q: When does an IEP start and end?

A: IEPs start 15 days after an IEP meeting (or with consent) and expire 364 days after the IEP meeting

Q: What can I add to the Parent Concerns section?

A: Your comments related to topics discussed at the IEP meeting. This should be completed before the end of the meeting.

• Type of subject
amount of time

are supposed to learn

Programming in MTSD

In a General Ed Classroom:

- **General Ed** (no special education teacher, subject specific)
- **In-class Resource** (co-teaching general and special education teachers, subject specific)

In a Special Education Classroom:

- **Pull-out Replacement** (small class, subject specific modified instruction)
- **Language Learning Disabilities** (small class, across subjects, language-infused and modified instruction)
- **Autism** (small class, across subjects, applied behavior analysis and 1:1 modified instruction)
- **Multiple Disabilities** (small class, across subjects, small group modified instruction)
- **Emotion Regulation Impairment** (small class, across subjects, modified instruction for behavior needs)

Programming in MTSD

In a General Ed Classroom:

- **General Ed** (no special education teacher, subject specific)
- **In-class Resource** (co-teaching general and special education teachers, subject specific)

In a Special Education

- **Pull-out Replacement** (modified instruction)
- **Language Learning** (subject specific, language)
- **Autism** (small group, analysis and synthesis)
- **Multiple Disabilities** (small group, modified instruction)
- **Emotion Regulation** (small group, modified instruction for behavior needs)

Q: What if my child doesn't want an IEP? What if they don't want to be in a special education class?

A: Speak to the case manager. We are trained in how to work with kids and can assist you with these types of situations.

Services and Supports in MTSD

Speech therapy
(individual and group)

Occupational and
physical therapy

Counseling
(individual and group)

Paraprofessionals
(individual and shared)

Assistive technology (ex:
read-aloud software; large print
materials; hearing system)

Behavior consultation
and intervention plans

Teacher of the Visually
Impaired or Deaf

Collaboration with
external resources

Alternative and
Augmentative
Communication (AAC)

Daily living and
vocational skills training

Special Transportation

Community Based
Instruction

IEPs

CST Responsibilities for IEP Development

- Collect data from teachers, parents, related services, assessments, etc. to guide IEP development
- Evaluate student progress towards prior IEP goals and formulate new ones
- Determine the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) based on data that can meet student needs and goals
- Provide information on appropriate programs, services, and resources
- Finalize the IEP and coordinate or implement program changes

Parent Involvement in IEP Development

- Provide input through regular communication with school staff
- Share updates and concerns related to the IEP programs and goals at - or in advance of - the meeting
- Review the data; request the case manager sends PLAAFPs 3 days in advance, if desired
- Provide input on goals, programs, services, modifications, & accommodations
- Share Parent Concerns related to the discussed IEP topics and programming during the IEP meeting

Types of IEP Meetings

Annual Review Meeting

Evaluation Planning

Eligibility Meeting

Conference (Non-IEP)

Discuss student performance

✓

✓

✓

✓

Update programs and services

✓

x

✓

x

Change eligibility

x

x

✓

x

Propose initial- or re-evaluations

x

✓

x

x

Discuss parent concerns related to student performance

✓

✓

✓

✓

but not necessarily the IEP

Types of IEP Meetings

Annual Review Meeting

Evaluation Planning

Discuss student performance

✓

✓

Update programs and services

✓

x

Change eligibility

x

Propose initial- or re-evaluations

x

✓

Discuss parent concerns related to student performance

✓

✓

but not necessarily the IEP

Q: What if we need to make changes and there is no meeting scheduled?

A: Parents can request an IEP meeting any time in the year. Some IEP changes can also be made with via written amendment. Contact the case manager to request and/or schedule.

Q: Can my child be attend their IEP meeting?

A: Yes! Their involvement can be tailored based on their age, topics, or developmental needs.

IEP Meeting Roles

CST Roles and Responsibilities

- **Advocate for your child**
- Facilitate conversation between teachers, related services, & parents
- Provide updates about progress towards IEP goals & recommendations for programs/services
- Review specifics of the IEP
- Create space for parent questions
- Provide copies of IEP draft, attendance sheets, consent forms, etc. to parents

Parent Roles and Responsibilities

- **Advocate for your child**
- Notify the case manager in advance if you are bringing anyone else (ex: advocate)
- Contribute to the discussion about your child's progress and needs
- Provide input about the proposed IEP
- Ask questions and share Parent Concerns (ex: How will this program meet my child's needs? How can we build my child's independence? What can I do at home to support? Are there resources that might be helpful related to this need?)
- Sign IEP consent, if applicable

Where can I find additional information? Click each image for the link!



Q: Who do I contact with questions?

A: The case manager is typically your first point of contact for anything IEP related. They can also communicate with others providers.



Where can I find additional information? Listed resources

- Span Parent Advocacy Network:
spanadvocacy.org
- NJ Special Ed Advocacy Guide:
disabilityrightsnj.org/wp-content/uploads/SPED-Advocacy-Guide_3-21.pdf
- 10 Key Procedural Safeguards in IDEA:
understood.org/en/articles/10-key-procedural-safeguards-in-idea
- NJ Parental Rights in Special Education:
www.nj.gov/education/specialed/parents/
- NJ Transition Toolkit:
www.nj.gov/education/specialed/parents/

Thank you!



Please complete this brief survey to
provide feedback on this presentation!

Survey URL:

<https://forms.gle/jUmnWyqsXnUxJnrX7>

Contacts:

Erica Pawlo epawlo@mtsd.us

Michele Deremer mderemer@mtsd.us