EmpowerED
Pickerington

Resource Series for Special Education Support

*Family Role in the Special Education Process*

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# Welcome to Student Services

**Mission**

*Our mission is to provide a safe and inclusive learning environment where all students have the opportunity to succeed.*

**Purpose**

*To provide educators and families with information about the Whole Child by pursuing and completing evaluations to develop plans to help ensure that students are able to receive a free and appropriate education, regardless of their disability.*

# District Goals: We will…

- Cultivate **Academic Excellence** by engaging all students in relevant and rich learning experiences that prepare them for career, college, and life.
- Provide **Modern Facilities** that are physically safe and offer diverse opportunities to all students.
- Ensure **Operating Efficiency** to be financially accountable to our community, maximize resources, and ensure that we are lean and efficient.
- Be **Pillars of our Community** by relentlessly pursuing opportunities to engage with all residents.

# Why Parents and Families Matter?

- Parents are equal partners in the special education process.
- Your insights and advocacy directly affect your child's success.
- The **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** ensures your participation at every stage.

# Key Portions of IDEA

- Free Appropriate Public Education (**FAPE**)
- Least Restrictive Environment (**LRE**)
- Individualized Education Program (**IEP**)
- Parental Participation and Procedural Safeguards

# Step 1: Identification and Referral

- Parents can **request an evaluation** in writing or verbally.
  a. It is best to follow up a verbal request with a written request
- Share your child's strengths, challenges, and medical/developmental history.
- Early identification leads to better support and outcomes.

# Step 2: Evaluation and Eligibility

- Schools need **parent consent** to evaluate.
  a. Parent consent = *informed consent*.

- Parent input is valued and included throughout the data gathering stages
- Parents participate in the **eligibility meeting**.

- What if I disagree with the evaluation?
  a. Voice your disagreement with the team.
     i. Share specifics about what you disagree with
  b. How can we collaborate to find a mutually agreeable solution?

# Step 3: IEP Development

- Parents are equal IEP team members.
- Contribute to:
  a. Goals and objectives
  b. Accommodations and modifications
  c. Services and supports
- Provide real-life insights about your child's needs.
  a. Key Insights:
     i. Strengths & Talents of your child
     ii. What is motivating for your child?
     iii. How does your child handle changes or stress?
     iv. What is your vision for your child's future, both long-term and within the next year?

# Step 4: Placement Decisions

- Parents help determine the **least restrictive environment (LRE)**.

- Ask questions about how and where services will be provided.
  a. Easy, open communication to fully understand the placement

- Changes to placement need your consent

# Step 5: Ongoing Monitoring

- Review progress reports regularly.
- Request an IEP meeting anytime if your child's needs change.
- Keep communication open with teachers and service providers.
    a. The earlier we know about something, the sooner we can collaborate to find a solution

# Step 6: Procedural Safeguards

- Rights include:
  a. Access to educational records
  b. Prior written notice
  c. Conflict resolution solutions
- These safeguards protect your child's right to FAPE.
- District will share safeguards document annually

# Step 7: Transition Planning

- Begins at age 14
- Parents help plan goals for:
  a. Postsecondary education or training
  b. Employment
  c. Independent living
- Encourage your child's self-advocacy.

# Tips for Effective Participation

- Prepare questions before meetings.
- Bring notes and supporting documents.
- Keep the school based team updated about developments with your child
- Focus on solutions
- Celebrate your child’s progress!

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A Resource Series for Special Education Support

*Focus - Supporting Every Learner, Supporting Every Family, Every Day*