

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

For Your Child...

A Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is required for all children with disabilities who are between the ages of 3 through the end of the school year in which they turn 22 and who have not yet graduated from high school. Students with disabilities may attend school until receipt of a high school diploma or the day before their 22nd birthday, with provisions to finish the current school year.

Special education and related services must begin on the child's third (3rd) birthday for children, if found eligible, who were served in an early intervention program or who were referred before their third (3rd) birthday. While it is not mandated that the school district provide direct services to children birth through the age of 2, the school district must identify, locate, and evaluate children of this age with known or suspected disabilities. When these children are identified by the local school district, a referral must be made, within 2 days, to the local Child Family Connections (CFC) office.

If your child is having trouble in school, you should contact the teacher or principal to discuss your concerns. Some school districts have teams consisting of school personnel that review student problems and suggest academic and/or behavioral strategies in an attempt to change or improve student performance. If your child does not demonstrate improvement you should contact your school principal or child's teacher to initiate a referral for your child.

ELIGIBILITY CATEGORIES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

- Autism
- Deaf-Blindness
- Developmental Delay
- Emotional Disability
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Impairment
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impaired
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech and/or Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment and Blindness

PARENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN BRIEF

❖ **Access to Records**

A local district must permit a parent to inspect and review any educational records relating to his/her student which are collected, maintained or used by the district.

❖ **Confidentiality**

Your child's school records should be kept confidential. This means that they can be read or used only by school staff members who have a good reason for seeing them. School records cannot be shown or sent to people outside the school without your written consent, except in cases of emergencies, by court order, or otherwise required by law.

❖ **Prior Notice to Parents**

The local district is required to provide the parent of a student with a disability with prior written notice:

1. When the district proposes to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student or the provision of a free, appropriate education to a student; or
2. When the district refuses to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student or the provision of a free, appropriate public education to a student.

❖ **Parent Consent**

The local district must obtain parental consent using state-mandated forms before conducting an initial case study evaluation, any reevaluations, and prior to the initial placement of a student with a disability in special education.

❖ **Case Study Evaluation**

If a case study referral is appropriate, parental consent must be obtained to proceed with the evaluation. If you disagree with the district's decision to evaluate your child and you do not give written consent, the district may not conduct the evaluation. Once you have given consent for a case study evaluation, the local school district has sixty (60) school days to complete the evaluation, hold a conference to determine if your child has an educational disability and develop an IEP.

❖ **Independent Education Evaluation**

The parent of a student with a disability has the right to obtain an independent educational evaluation of the student at public expense if they disagree with the evaluation provided by the local district. If this request is denied, the school district must initiate a due process hearing to demonstrate that an evaluation is appropriate.

❖ **Least Restrictive Environment**

Your child must be educated in the least restrictive environment. They should be placed in the educational program which is appropriate to their needs and is least restrictive of their interaction with typically developing peers.

❖ **Conflict Resolution & Mediation**

Complaints with respect to any matter relating to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student or the provision of a free, appropriate public education of a student should be referred to the local district.

❖ **Impartial Due Process Hearing**

A parent or local district may initiate a due process hearing regarding the district's proposal or refusal to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student or the provision of a free, appropriate public education. A request for a due process hearing cannot be denied for any reason.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS

Contact your local School District or the Director of Special Education, Kim Kessler, at 618-455-3396. The South Eastern Special Education Central Office is located at 500 S. Scott Ave., Newton, IL 62448.

