

INTRODUCTION

State and Federal law ensures that "...all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education [FAPE] ... designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living." [Public Law (PL) 108-446, entitled The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004), Section 601(d)(1)(a)].

"Special education' means specifically designed instruction, at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique needs of individuals with exceptional needs, whose educational needs cannot be met with modification of the regular instruction program, and related services, at no cost to the parent, that may be needed to assist those individuals to benefit from specially designed instruction" [20 U.S.C. Sec. 1401(29); 34 C.F.R. Sec. 300.38; California Education Code Article 2, Section 56031].

The 14 school districts within the North Coastal Consortium for Special Education (NCCSE) have joined together as a Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) to provide special education services for all eligible children residing in the school districts of Bonsall, Cardiff, Carlsbad Unified, Del Mar Union, Encinitas Union, Fallbrook Union Elementary, Fallbrook Union High, Oceanside Unified, Rancho Santa Fe, San Dieguito Union High, San Marcos Unified, Solana Beach, Vallecitos and Vista Unified.

CHILD FIND

The NCCSE SELPA ensures that children with suspected disabilities who reside within the NCCSE district boundaries are identified, located, and evaluated to determine their eligibility for special education services.

Assessment and special education services are available for eligible children from birth through 21 years of age.

IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL

Identification of a child (birth through 21) with a possible qualifying disability may come from a:

- Parent
- Teacher
- Doctor
- Community Agency
- Student Study or Guidance Team
- Concerned individual

Referrals may also come from the student.

Referrals may be made by contacting the special education department of the child's local school district.

ASSESSMENT

Within 15 days of referral, an evaluation plan is developed that identifies specific areas of suspected disability to be assessed.

After written parental consent to the evaluation plan is received, the assessments will be conducted by a multi-disciplinary team of specialists with parent input. No single assessment is used as the sole criterion for determining appropriate educational services.

PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

A copy of procedural safeguards is given to you when you sign the evaluation plan. The school district will answer any questions you may have at this time.

INITIAL INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) MEETING

Within 60 calendar days from the date that a parent signs the evaluation plan, a meeting is held to review the results of the assessments. (Days between school terms and days of school vacation of more than five school days are not counted.)

If you and the other members of the IEP team agree that your child meets the eligibility criteria and requires special education services, an individualized education program (IEP) will be developed.

PREPARING FOR THE IEP MEETING

Parent participation is one key to developing appropriate special education services for your child. The following are some tips on how parents and legal guardians can best participate:

- **BEFORE THE MEETING.** Before the meeting, you may want to discuss any questions or suggestions you have regarding your child's educational goals, health, transportation, and schedules, and your knowledge of your child's needs and strengths with the IEP team leader. You may want to invite other individuals who know your child to attend the meeting with you. You may also want to encourage your child's participation in his or her education decision making from an early age.

- **DON'T BE RELUCTANT TO ASK QUESTIONS.** If the other IEP team members use terms that you are not familiar with, be sure to ask for an explanation.

THE IEP

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed if it is determined that your child is eligible for special education services. The IEP team includes the parent(s) or legal guardian(s), the student as appropriate, a special education teacher, a general education teacher if your child does or may participate in the general education curriculum, an administrator who is authorized to approve services, and others as appropriate. The written IEP document will include:

1. A summary of your child's present levels of performance, including his or her strengths and needs.
2. A statement of the suggested goals for your child.
3. A list of special education services which are recommended for your child.
4. The starting date and anticipated duration of special education services.

An IEP meeting will be held at least once a year to review the IEP document. However, you may request a review of the IEP at any time and a meeting will be held within 30 days of your request.

PARENT CONSENT

Parent consent is required before the IEP can be put into effect. If you disagree with parts of the IEP, you may consent to those parts with which you do agree so that your child may begin to receive those specific services. You may take the IEP home and think about it if you wish before signing it.

If you are unable to reach agreement on some components of the IEP, you have other procedural safeguards which will be explained to you by school district personnel. Families are encouraged to access the free mediation process, named Resolutions for Student Success (RSS), to help resolve disagreements regarding their child's special education services. The RSS coordinator is an employee of the Exceptional Family Resource Center (EFRC), a local resource center staffed by parents who have children with disabilities, and may be reached by calling 1-800-977-7008.

CONTINUUM OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Special education services are offered in a variety of educational settings, determined by each child's IEP team. Special education services may be offered as follows:

- General education with specially designed accommodations and/or modifications.
- General education with services from special education specialists and supports and/or related services. Related Services are supportive services the student requires in order to benefit from his special education services. Related services include, but are not limited to: language and speech development and remediation, occupational therapy, audiological services, orientation and mobility instruction, adapted physical education, assistive technology.
- Instruction in settings other than general education where specially designed instruction may occur (for example, learning centers or self-contained classrooms).
- Intensive instruction in settings other than general education, such as regional classes for students with emotional challenges or with severe disabilities. Services may be provided within or outside of your child's school district of residence.
- Instruction in the home, hospital, or other institution.

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE)

NCCSE recognizes the importance of the intent to educate each child in their least restrictive environment, as set forth in state and federal legislation: “To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and separate classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature and severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.”

[20 United States Code (U.S.C.) Sec.1412(a)(5)(A).]

ACRONYMS

APE	=	Adapted Physical Education
AUT	=	Autism
CAC	=	Community Advisory Committee
CCS	=	California Children Services
CCSS	=	Common Core State Standards
DB	=	Deaf-Blindness
DHH	=	Deaf and/or Hard of Hearing
EFRC	=	Exceptional Family Resource Center
EMD	=	Established Medical Disability
FAPE	=	Free Appropriate Public Education
HOPE	=	Hope Infant Family Support Program (for children birth through three years)
ID	=	Intellectual Disability
IDEA	=	Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (PL 108-446)
IEP	=	Individualized Education Program
IFSP	=	Individual Family Service Plan (for children birth through three years)
LRE	=	Least Restrictive Environment
LSH	=	Language, Speech and Hearing
MD	=	Multiple Disabilities
NCCSE	=	North Coastal Consortium for Special Education
NPS	=	Nonpublic School
OI	=	Orthopedic Impairment
OHI	=	Other Health Impairment
OT	=	Occupational Therapy
PT	=	Physical Therapy
RSS	=	Resolutions for Student Success
Rtl	=	Response to Intervention
SDRC	=	San Diego Regional Center
SEAS	=	Social Emotional Academic Support
SELPA	=	Special Education Local Plan Area
SLI	=	Speech Language Impairment
SLD	=	Specific Learning Disability
SST	=	Student Study Team (also called Student Success Team)

TBI = Traumatic Brain Injury
VI = Visual Impairment

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The North Coastal Consortium for Special Education (NCCSE) Community Advisory Committee (CAC) advises the superintendents of the 14 NCCSE member school districts regarding special education services. Its existence and activities are mandated by the State of California. NCCSE CAC representatives are parents and staff from the NCCSE member school districts, as well as staff from local agencies, community members, and students. By law, the majority of members must be parents, and the majority of parents must have a child who qualifies for special education services within a NCCSE member district. Each district appoints one to three parent representatives and one staff representative as voting members of the committee.

You are invited!

If your child receives special education services in any of the school districts which are a part of NCCSE, you are invited to attend the Community Advisory Committee meetings held throughout the year. Each meeting includes both a business portion and a discussion of a special education related topic. Meeting dates and topics, as well as an opportunity to sign up for email notices of meetings and other special education related events are available on line at www.nccse.org.

All are welcome!

Parents who have attended CAC meetings report that they have found opportunities to:

- Connect with other parents, as well as with teachers and special education administrators,
- Learn about educational and community resources for their child and family,
- Participate in shaping the committee's activities, including annual priority reports to the superintendents, parent workshops, and an awards ceremony, and
- Develop and expand their leadership skills.

For more information on CAC meetings and other parent workshops, or to sign up for e-mail notification of meetings visit the NCCSE website at www.nccse.org.