



PARENT HANDBOOK: A Resource for Parents of Individuals with Exceptional Needs



Community Advisory Committee (CAC) –
San Luis Obispo County
Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA)

8005 Morro Rd., Atascadero, CA 93422
(805) 782-7301 / 4th Edition
Revised September 2010, September 2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS and DEDICATION

The Parent Handbook was compiled by members of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) of San Luis Obispo County, many of whom are parents of children with special needs:

Contact the SELPA or your district for your CAC representative

Assistance and support have come from the San Luis Obispo County Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA).

Some of the materials contained in this handbook are from parent handbooks from the Whittier Area Cooperative Special Education Program, Sacramento City Unified School District, Atascadero Unified School District, Long Beach Unified School District, and San Benito County SELPA, as well as previous publications of the San Luis Obispo County SELPA.



This handbook is dedicated to parents who must meet the challenge of the active participation in their child's education.

It is our goal that this handbook will be an effective tool in the parents' partnership with the school as they jointly develop and implement the educational program for their child.

**“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, intelligent people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that has.”
(Margaret Mead)**



TABLE of CONTENTS

Acknowledgments and Dedication	i
Foreword: What is it Really? A “Welcome to Holland”	1
Understanding Yourself as a Parent	2
What is the Community Advisory Committee (CAC)?	6
What is a SELPA?	7
Member LEAs	8
What is Special Education	9
IDEA 2004	10
INTERVENTION, REFERRAL, ASSESSMENT AND PLACEMENT PROCESS	11
The Referral Process	12
The Assessment	13
The Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting	16
The Eligibility Determination	16
Writing the IEP	17
Deciding on Placement	19
The Annual Review	20
Why is the IEP Reviewed	20
When is the IEP Reviewed	20
IEP PROCESS AND TIMELINE	21
PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROCESS	22
Prepare for IEP Meetings	23
Creating a Program for a Child.....	24
Keep Good Records!.....	25
Be Involved in Selecting the Placement	26
Consider Your Child’s Eventual Transition from School to Work.....	27
I Still Need Someone to Talk to.....	29

APPENDICES:

Appendix "A" - Important Names and Telephone Numbers	30
Appendix "B" - Glossary: The ABC's of Special Education	31
Appendix "C" - Notice of Procedural Safeguards	38
Appendix "D" - Resources	56

WHAT IS IT REALLY? A "WELCOME TO HOLLAND"

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability - - to try and help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this...

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous trip - - to Italy. You buy a bunch of guide books and make your wonderful plans: the Coliseum, Michelangelo's David, the gondolas of Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."

"Holland?" you say. "What do you mean Holland? I signed up for Italy. I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."

But there's a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland, and you must stay.

The important thing is they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place.

So, you must go out and buy new guidebooks. And you must learn a new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But, after you have been there for awhile and catch your breath, you look around and begin to notice that Holland has windmills. Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy, and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say, "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

And the pain of that will never, ever, ever go away, because the loss of that dream is a very significant loss.

But if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to go to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, very lovely things about Holland.

- Emily Kingsley

UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF AS A PARENT OF A CHILD WITH DISABILITIES

Written by Alan Hilton, Ed.D.

Dr. Hilton developed and refined the model discussed below as a parent of a child with medical and educational disabilities.

The identification of a child as having a disability can be a traumatic event to parents. Parents report that their lives change from that point on both financially and emotionally. Although emotional feelings vary in intensity, onset, and impact they relate to grieving. The following terms have been used to help parents and professionals understand the impact of these feelings. These include: Loss of the perfect child; loss of dreams; and the chronic sorrow syndrome. Such descriptors indicate role loss plays and the ongoing nature of these feelings. Included in the group of feelings that most parents experience during their dealing with a child with disabilities include:

1. guilt
2. anger
3. disappointment
4. withdrawal
5. sadness
6. denial
7. depression
8. helplessness
9. ambivalence
10. burden

This list is in no order nor is it implied that there is an order. Those feelings are just some of the feelings parents of children with disabilities experience at different times in the process. Further, it appears that age of child or adolescent at identification and severity of disability do not impact the impact of these emotions. However, there are a number of factors that do seem to mediate these reactions. The factors may be grouped into (1) the parent's personal strengths including religion, socioeconomic status, personal experiences and attitudes; and (2) level of support from others within the family and the community including parent groups, counselors, educators, and social groups.

Pioneering work by Dr. Kubler-Ross in the 1960's on grieving led to a model which to some extent is still used today to help professionals and parents understand the impact of having a child with disabilities. Kubler-Ross presented a set of stages that were sequential and that the parent worked through to ultimately reaching resolution. Over time, weaknesses with a stage theory to understand grief have been identified and even Kubler-Ross has modified her early work to deal with the variability found in parent reactions. The literature and research is clear that parents go through a process at different rates, they return to specific feelings, stress plays a role in feelings re-emerging, resolution is not reached but rather the feelings continue for a lifetime, and acceptance is never completely reached. Although the concepts of stages have shortcomings, it continues to present in our culture, forty-years after its inception. As a parent of a child with disabilities, when the linear stage model was presented to me, I had difficulty applying it to the different feelings I was experiencing and the total process I was involved in.

With the shortcomings of earlier models for understanding grief and the need for a model that dealt with the need to deal with issues of stress, support and personal strength a newer multidimensional model was explored. The model below came out of my experiences and is designed to address the issues noted above. The model is present in a graphic manner to aid in understanding, but the graphics are just an aide not actually the model which is explained below. #

The Model

Instead of a linear stages model, the process of understanding yourself as a parent is circular in nature. One way to represent this graphically is by using concentric circles. The inner circle represents the individual parent's understandings, skills, and strengths, including personality factors such as personal philosophy about disabilities, internal ability to handle stress, and feelings concerning personal control. These factors are influenced by previous experiences such as exposure to persons with disabilities, religion, upbringing, and education. The size of this inner circle is determined by the level or extent at which these factors are in place within the individual.

On the outer circle, the parent's feelings associated with loss are located. These feelings form a circle or ring that is accessible to the individual. The variety of feelings available (i.e., experienced) is limited only by the individual. The literature is robust with the most commonly experienced feelings. Because resolution is never reached, this feeling is omitted, whereas adaptation and adjustment are not placed on the circumference of the outer circle but are goals for the parent, which are below.

Initial Identification

It is important to recognize that individual parents possess a set of skills, understandings, and strengths that are in place at the time their child is identified as having a disability. In terms of the model, this is the center circle. The emotions or feelings brought on by identification of a child as having a disability are displayed on the outer circle. At the initial identification of the child as having a disability, the outer circle is relatively small in diameter. The visual representation of this state is provided in Figure 1.

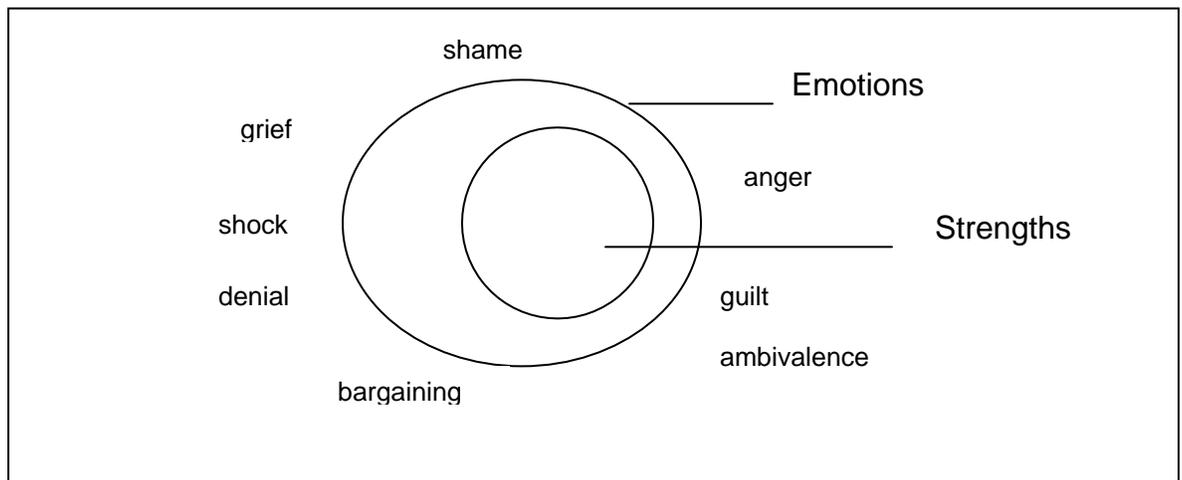


Figure 1. Initial Identification

The feelings that are determined by the parent's personal emotional makeup are close to each other and to the center circle. Each of the feelings is readily accessible. In fact, parents often report that they are deluged with emotion. This occurs in some cases to the extent of causing the individual to be inhibited from action. The period of time that such an emotional impact lasts varies based on a number of factors determined in part by past experience, starting probably in early childhood, and the person's current state of mental and physical health.

The Coping/Adaptation Process

As personal strengths and support systems in a parent's life come into play, access to the feelings related to loss becomes less rapid. In terms of the model, the circle's circumference becomes larger. It then takes longer for a person to access the feelings. The outer circle shown in figure 2 represents such a state.

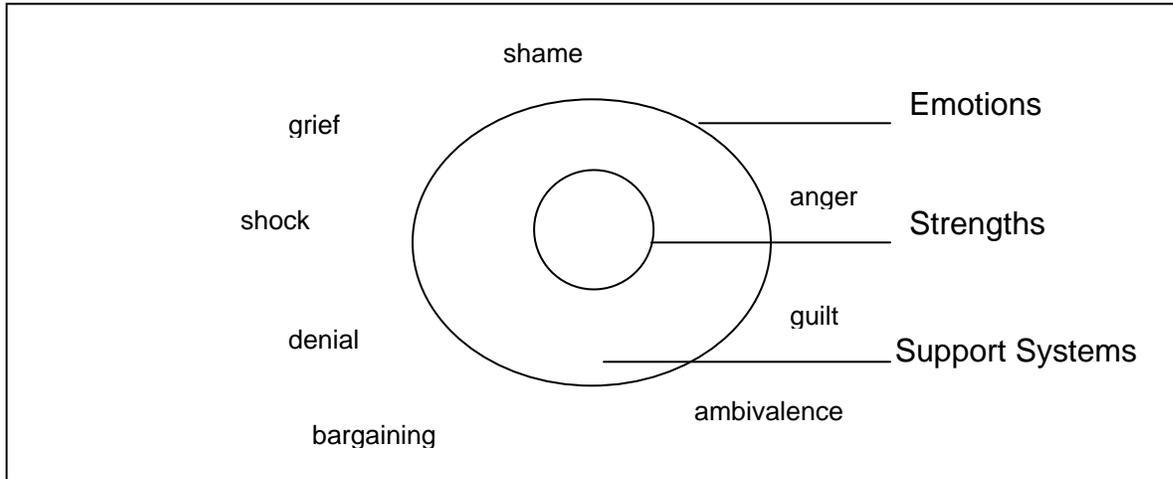


Figure 2. Coping/adaptation

With time, the development of support systems, the use of personal strengths, and the growth of understanding by the parent, the outside circle continues to expand. More and more a parent is able to adapt, order, and systematize his or her life.

The diameter of the circle varies, depending on what experience, support, and understanding parents have obtained and their personalities. Examples of such support and understanding include grandparents providing babysitting, or a state agency providing respite care, or the gathering of information concerning the etiology of the child's disability. The diameter of the outside circle will change depending upon how the person is adapting to the feeling associated with loss and the reduction or addition of stress.

The Impact of Stress

Parents of children with disabilities, like all parents, experience stressful feelings related to family, employment, health, and financial difficulties. Additionally, however, they feel stress relating to parenting a child with disabilities, including increased demands from providing care, finding child care, and conflicts with professionals. Stress from the environment plays a definite role as a parent experiences the grieving process. It has also been noted that there are predictable periodic times of stress that occur within families containing children with developmental disabilities. In relation to the model, stress enhances an individual's access to feelings. This effect seems to be manifested in two manners. The first is that stress can undo many of the effects of support, understanding, and adjustment. In this case, for a period of time, the parent returns to a state in which a variety of feelings, such as lack of control, emotional instability, and emotional devastation, rapidly enter his or her life. Usually this state of emotional deluge is transient and the parent returns to a state of emotional stability similar to that prior to the onset of the stress. In other words, support systems and the individual coping skills reduce the impact of the stress. In terms of the graphic, the circle returns to a state similar to Figure 1.

The second manner in which a parent may be affected by stress is that the inner circle becomes offset within the outer circle. That is, the parent under stress gravitates toward a certain feeling or groups of feelings. In this example the parent under stress, becomes angry. Figure 3 demonstrates the movement of the inner circle toward one side of the outer circle, indicating that the feelings located on that side of the circle, are more accessible to the parent.

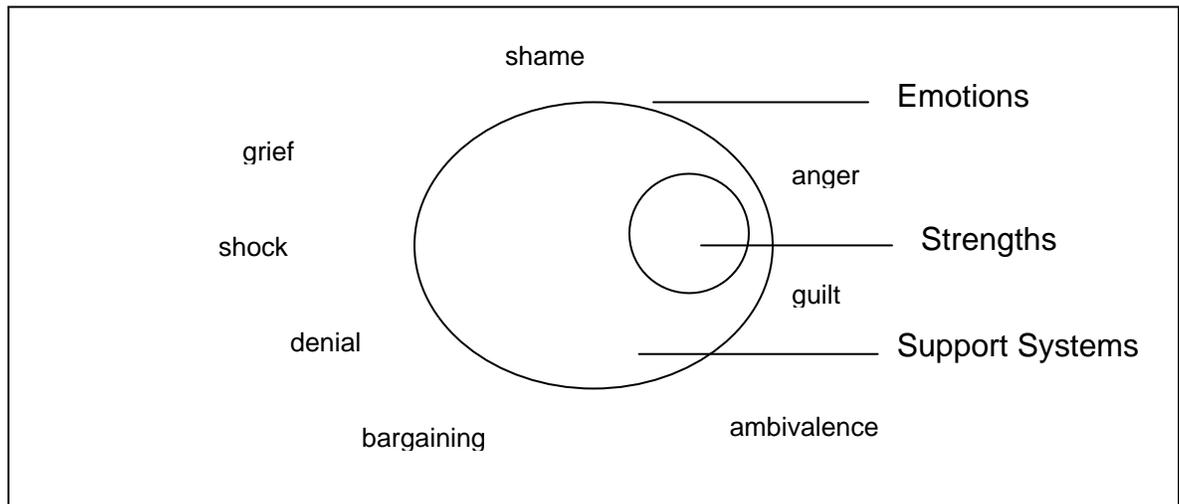


Figure 3. The impact of stress.

Assumption of this Model

There are some assumptions that are incorporated into this model that parents need to accept. These are listed below:

1. Grieving is an ongoing process.
2. Grief is experienced by parents and families for long periods of time, even a life time.
3. Grieving is a normal and healthy process which is expected in parents of children with disabilities.
4. The process of grieving although having similar components for all is completely unique for each individual who experiences it.
5. Grieving is not a static process but is affected by stress, time knowledge and support systems.
6. Because of the non-static nature of grief differing levels of support are necessary at different points in time in the process.
7. To truly be helpful, professionals must understand not only your strengths and weaknesses, but your support systems and your stressors.

A final note to aid in your understanding of yourself as a parent of a child with a disability is that your goal is to become independent and self sufficient when it comes to dealing with your personal stress and obtaining services for your child. Further, a key role professionals should play in your attempts to deal with the challenges presented by a child with disabilities is to enable you access supports and services that will lead to your greater independence and ability to access services.

Notes

* For a more complete discussion of this topic parents are directed to review two works:

Smith, T.E.C.; Murdick, N.L.; Gartin, B., & Hilton, A. (2005). Families and Children with Special Needs. Columbus, OH. Merrill Prentice Hall.

And

Hilton, A. (1998). A multidimensional model for understanding and working with parents of children who have developmental disabilities. In A. Hilton & R.P. Ringlaben (Eds.), Best and Promising Practices in Developmental Disabilities. Austin, TX: Pro Ed.

WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)?

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) of San Luis Obispo County is made up of parents of children in special education, both general and special education teachers, staff, and concerned community members, with one or more representatives from each school district. It must, according to California law, recommend priorities for county-wide special education services, participate in developing the Local Plan for Special Education, assist in parent education planning, develop disability awareness activities for the community, and assist in parent awareness regarding the importance of regular school attendance.

CAC meetings are open to the public.

The San Luis Obispo County SELPA's CAC meetings are usually held on the third Tuesday of the month from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the SELPA Office (unless otherwise noted), located at 8005 Morro Road, Atascadero, CA 93422.

The CAC wants people who are committed to the appropriate education of all children and who are willing to share a little time and energy by working in a positive way with others to support the provision of meaningful services to children and young adults. Members see effective education as a team effort and will work with a variety of other people, professional and non-professional.

Individuals interested in becoming a member (official appointment by a school board is required), or just finding out more about the CAC and the monthly meetings, contact the SELPA office by calling (805) 782-7301 or visit the website at www.sloselpa.org.

The mission of the CAC is to create an inclusive community where each person is valued. The CAC supports collaboration among individuals and agencies in order to honor the dignity and promote the aspirations of people with diverse abilities.

The goals of the CAC are:

1. To increase community awareness of the role of the CAC
2. To promote services and provide support to individuals with exceptionalities and their families
3. To provide a mechanism for parents to impact the local, state and national legislative process
4. To ensure quality educational programs for individuals with exceptionalities in San Luis Obispo County
5. To support other agencies, community groups and organizations with common goals

WHAT IS A SELPA?

In order to assure equal access to services and to maximize efficiency, Assembly Bill 1250 was passed in 1977. AB 1250 required all school districts and county offices of education to join together, as necessary, to form geographical regions of sufficient size and scope to provide for all special education service needs of children residing within their region boundaries. Each region was then required to submit to the State Department of Education a "local plan" describing how it would provide those special education services. These regions became known as Special Education Local Plan Areas, or "SELPA's." The SELPA governance structure in San Luis Obispo County includes all the school districts in the county and the County Office of Education, under comprehensive agreement, and currently serves over 4,000 students with special needs. A copy of the San Luis Obispo SELPA Local Plan can be found on the SELPA website at www.sloselpa.org.

Organizational plans vary according to the wishes of local areas; however, each SELPA must have an Administrative Unit which is the legal entity that receives funds and is responsible for seeing that every eligible child receives appropriate services. The San Luis Obispo County SELPA Governing Board is made up of ten district superintendents and the County Superintendent of Schools, and it determines the responsibilities of the SELPA office, which are described in the Local Plan. The SELPA serves as a liaison between California Department for Education Special Education Division and local school districts to:

- Ensure program availability for all children with exceptionalities
- Evaluate programs
- Coordinate programs
- Provide a management information system for student data
- Develop policies and procedures to govern special education practices
- Manage federal and state special education funding
- Expand community awareness
- Provide legal assistance and alternative dispute resolution
- Provide and coordinate personnel development
- Support the Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
- Manage low incidence equipment and services funds

The SELPA Governing Board approves all SELPA policies, budgets, contracts, administrative rules and regulations and establishes guidelines for other decisions that determine local practices for special education. All SELPAs in the state have the same basic goal: to deliver the appropriate special education programs and services to students with exceptionalities in the most effective, efficient and cost-effect manner practicable.

For more information, contact the SELPA at (805) 782-7301 or visit www.sloselpa.org.

**SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY
SPECIAL EDUCATION LOCAL PLAN AREA (SELPA)
and
MEMBER LEAS**

San Luis Obispo County SELPA	782-7301
Atascadero Unified School District	462-4230
Almond Acres Charter Academy	467-2095
Bellevue-Santa Fe Charter School	595-7169
Cayucos Elementary School District.....	995-3694
Coast Unified School District	927-3880
Lucia Mar Unified School District.....	474-3000 ext. 1150
Paso Robles Joint Unified School District.....	769-1000 ext. 30138
Pleasant Valley Elementary School District.....	467-3453
San Luis Coastal Unified School District.....	549-1220
San Luis Obispo County Office of Education.....	782-7321
San Miguel Joint Union School District.....	467-3216
Shandon Joint Unified School District.....	238-1782
Templeton Unified School District.....	434-4074

WHAT IS SPECIAL EDUCATION ?

Special Education under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* is an individualized education program designed to help children succeed. It is provided for children birth through 21 years, who qualify according to laws and regulations outlined by the state and federal governments.

Children receive special education instruction and services according to their specific disabilities and needs. Children are placed in special education programs only after resources of general education interventions have been implemented and found to be unsuccessful. Children are not eligible for special education if their needs can be accommodated within general education classrooms with modifications or with other general or categorical services provided by the LEA.

The term “children with disabilities” means those children evaluated in accordance with state and federal regulations as having:

- Specific learning disability
- Speech or language impairment
- Intellectual disability
- Emotional disturbance
- Multiple disability
- Hearing impairment
- Orthopedic impairment
- Other health impairment
- Autism
- Traumatic brain injury
- Deaf
- Deaf-blindness
- Established medical disability (3-5 years old, only)
- Visual impairment

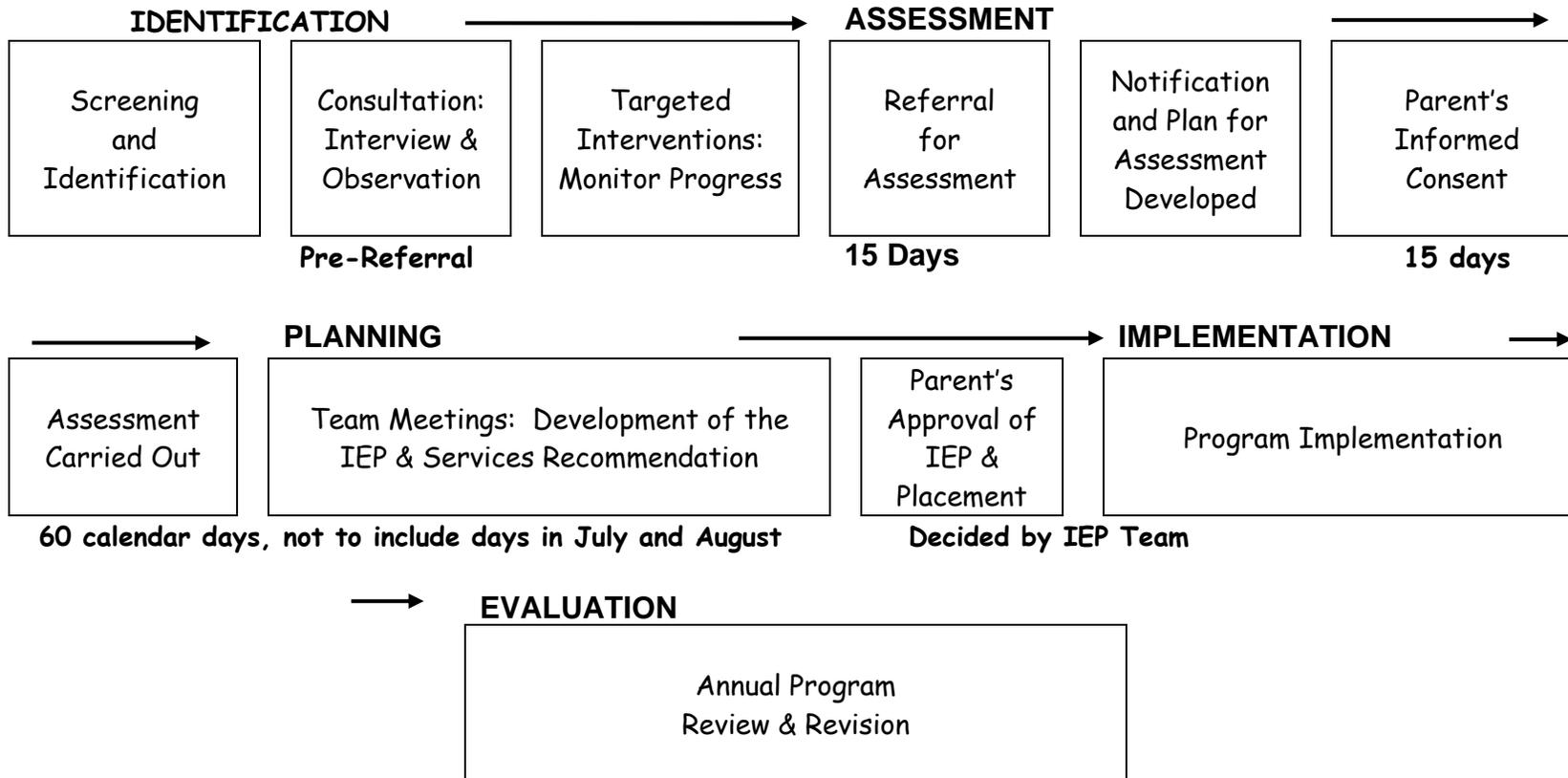
It is important to note that having a disability does not always mean a child requires special education. The disability must significantly impact a child’s ability to learn or show progress in general education, even with modifications.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT 2004

Some of the principles governing the education of students with disabilities include:

- Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
- Improved results through the general curriculum interventions
- Nondiscriminatory and linguistically appropriate evaluation
- High expectations for all students
- Least restrictive environment or educational opportunities with non-disabled peers
- Procedural due process
- Parental and student participation

THE INTERVENTION, REFERRAL, ASSESSMENT AND PLACEMENT PROCESS



THE REFERRAL PROCESS

You may have a child who has already been referred for assessment or you may be wondering if a referral would help solve your child's problems in school. Schools have a responsibility to seek out children with special needs and refer them for assessment. This is referred to as "child find" and is part of the federal law that governs SELPA policies and procedures for special education.

Before school professionals can make a referral for assessment, they must show they have tried to work with the child by making changes and introducing special assistance into the child's general program. The school must document their efforts by keeping a record of the changes and interventions implemented, the duration of the interventions and its outcome. This information and data is kept in the child's educational records. Refer to the chart on page 13 which outlines the process.

What is a Referral?

- A referral is a written request to have a child assessed to see if he or she is eligible for special education services.

Who Can Make a Referral?

- A referral can be made by a school professional - - such as a teacher, principal, service provider of the individual, psychologist, Student Study Team (SST) - - or it can be made by parents. If a school professional makes the referral, you will be notified and your help will be requested.

What Should I Do Before Making a Referral for My Child?

- First, talk to your child's teacher. Plan ways to try some different strategies in the classroom. By changing some little part of your child's school day, you may change the entire picture of his or her performance. If these strategies do not succeed in helping your child progress, the teacher will ask the SST to suggest other changes. If the problems persist over a period of time after interventions have been implemented, the SST may refer your child for an assessment. This time frame of trying new strategies and interventions is often referred to as Response to Intervention or RTI.
- If your child's problems continue and you suspect your child has a disability, you may also request a SST meeting.

How Do I Request a SST Meeting?

- Talk to your child's teacher or the school principal about scheduling a SST meeting. You may write a letter to the principal of your school requesting a SST meeting where you can discuss your concerns and determine if an assessment for special education is appropriate or if other interventions should be implemented.
- If your child is not yet in school, call your district office or the SELPA to find out how to address your concerns (see list of member LEA phone numbers above).

When Should I Consider a SST Meeting or Consideration for an Assessment?

If your child is having a *consistent pattern of serious difficulty in school work* and frequently shows one or more of the problems on the following list, to a marked degree, it is possible that he or she may need special education services:

- Seems to learn at a rate significantly slower than classmates
- Has a short attention span or is unable to pay attention
- Has difficulty transferring learned skills and ideas to new situations
- Seems unable to follow directions beyond one step
- Seems very clumsy or has difficulty moving or locating body in space
- Has an inadequate or distorted understanding of time relationships
- Makes little progress in one or more basic skill areas in spite of changes to the general program, or remedial instruction
- Reverses or confuses similar sounds, words, letters or numbers, beyond the developmental period when this is expected
- Achieving at a rate significantly below the grade level of development level of students who are the same age
- Uses immature language or speech patterns
- Seems overly quiet or appears withdrawn
- Has difficulty understanding abstract concepts
- Has poor memory for things seen or heard
- Has difficulty with pencil/paper tasks
- Seems easily frustrated or lacks patience

NOTE TO PARENTS:

IMPORTANT - - You have a right to see, review, and request a copy of your child's education records at any time.

If you would like copies of your child's records, consider making an appointment to review the file to determine what documents are important for you to have rather than making a request for the entire file. Though you may have copies of any document in the file, it may be more than you require as records, over time, become very lengthy. Duplicating an entire student record is costly and time consuming. Give some thought about what documents you actually need.

Your child's educational records must be maintained in a confidential manner.

You have a right to refer your child (from birth to high school graduation) for assessment if you believe your child has a disability that may require special education services.

THE ASSESSMENT

After a referral, the next step in determining whether a child does indeed have a disability and whether that child needs special education is called the assessment.

What is Assessment?

Assessment is a process in which information is gathered about your child in order to determine his or her educational needs.

What is a Notification and Plan for Assessment?

When the SST is unable to address the child's difficulties through general education interventions, an assessment may be requested. A *Notification and Plan for Assessment* is a one-page document that lists and defines the areas of particular concern for your child (such as ability to learn, speech and language ability, physical/motor ability, etc.) and specifies the tests and procedures to be used in these areas. Assessment generally also includes interviews, observations, a review of existing assessment data (i.e. district and state wide assessments) and review of academic records.

Who Develops the Notification and Plan for Assessment?

You are an important part of planning for your child's assessment. The school psychologist is usually the designated case manager who sees your child's case through, from the development of the initial *Notification and Plan for Assessment* to the IEP meeting. The case manager consults with you and the appropriate school personnel (special education specialists, teacher, administrator) and then incorporates their recommendations into your child's plan. The SST often develops the plan at the SST meeting.

Your child's case manager is responsible for seeing that you are involved in the planning and give consent for the assessment to take place. You will receive a copy of *Parental Right and Procedural Safeguards for Special Education* (Appendix C), which explains your rights under special education laws and regulations. The case manager will set up a parent conference, if needed, (which may be by phone) to go over the plan and parent rights in more detail and answer any questions you may have. If you have attended the SST meeting where an assessment was requested, the conference may be conducted at that time.

What Should I Bring Up in the Conference or at the SST Meeting?

Talk about your own observations of your child's behavior, strengths and weaknesses. Describe how your child handles a variety of situations. Fill in any gaps in your child's health history. Your personal knowledge and daily experiences with your child are important clues to the assessment team in capturing the full picture of your child's abilities and areas of difficulty.

- Your child cannot be formally assessed for special education without your full consent and understanding. An assessment for special education is an in depth assessment to determine if your child has a disability. Raise any questions you have as it's important you understand what the assessment will entail. The goal of the assessment is to determine if your child has a disability as defined by federal law, how your child learns, what skills should be strengthened or developed, and what special help your child may need.

The Notification and Plan for Assessment

When you receive the Notification and Plan for Assessment, it may be helpful to go through the following checklist:

- Do you have a thorough understanding of the areas in which your child is being assessed?
 - Do you need additional information about the tests to be used during the assessment?
 - Is the Notification and Plan for Assessment comprehensive? The plan must take into account your child's development and performance levels in several areas, as applicable (e.g., social, intellectual, language, and/or academic) as it relates to the suspected disability.
 - Did you sign a *Release of Information* so all relevant information such as medical reports and independent psychological assessments can be considered in the assessment results?
 - Will the assessment be given in your child's primary functional language?
 - Do the assessment tools take into account the nature of your child's suspected disability?
- If your answers to the above are generally positive, you are ready to sign the *Notification and Plan for Assessment* and return it to your child's school so that the assessment process can begin.

What Happens Next?

If you do not approve the plan, your child cannot be formally assessed. The school may, however, request a due process hearing to determine whether an assessment is in the best interest of your child. If you approve the *Notification and Plan for Assessment*, your child is assessed as provided in the plan.

When Will I Find Out the Results?

After the assessment is completed, and within 60 calendar days from the time the signed plan is received by the district, not counting days between regular school sessions or vacation in excess of 5 days, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting must be held to review the results. You may request that the written reports from the assessors or a compilation of the results will be available to you prior to the IEP meeting.

What Happens If I Do Not Agree with the Assessment Results?

If you disagree with the assessment results, you have the right to pursue an independent educational assessment of your child by a qualified specialist. The SELPA or the district special education director can explain this process.

IMPORTANT RIGHTS IN ASSESSMENT

- Any assessments given must be given in the language or method of communication your child knows best.
- If your child is deaf and communicates through sign language, he or she should have an interpreter during testing.
- Assessment must be individualized, designed to assess all areas of your child's suspected disability, given by qualified personnel and conducted in the child's primary language.
- If your child has impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills, the assessment must be administered to best ensure that the results reflect your child's aptitude, achievement level or other factors, and not the impairment - - unless the impairment itself is being measured.
- Assessment must be based on a multi-disciplinary evaluation. No single test can form the basis for identifying your child as an individual with a disability.
- Testing and assessment material and procedures must be selected and administered so as not to discriminate on the basis of race, culture, language or gender.
- No assessment of your child for possible placement in special education can be conducted without your written consent (or the written consent of your child if he or she is 18 years of age).
- The *Notification and Plan for Assessment* must be provided in your primary language, when feasible.
- Written notice of your rights must be provided in language easily understood by the general public and in your primary language or mode of communication, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.

THE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) MEETING

What is an IEP Meeting?

After your child has been assessed, a meeting is held to consider the assessment results. The assessment team will discuss whether your child is eligible for special education. If your child is eligible for special education, an IEP will be developed by the team to address your child's unique needs.

Am I Required to Be at the Meeting?

Yes, your participation is very important. The IEP team values your full participation. However, if you cannot attend, you may designate someone to represent you. This is another way the law guarantees your right to participate in decisions that determine what special education services and programs are most appropriate for your child. Every attempt will be made to arrange the meeting at a time when you can attend. You will receive a written *Notice of Meeting*, which will inform you of the proposed time, location, and who has been invited to the meeting.

Who Else Will Be at the IEP Meeting?

You will meet with the other members of the IEP team. They are school professionals who are knowledgeable about your child's suspected disability (a special education specialist, your child's general education teacher, a school psychologist, an administrative representative and whenever appropriate, the child). You have the right to ask a friend or an advocate to attend the meeting with you.

- Advocates are people who can give you practical information or emotional support. They can explain your rights and your child's programs and services. Advocates may be other parents, teachers or school staff, including community representatives of advocacy groups [such as the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) or Parents Helping Parents (PHP)]. CAC members are available to assist you and can be called upon to attend the IEP meeting. You may contact the SELPA if you would like help finding a CAC member to assist you at the IEP meeting.

What is My Role at the IEP Meeting?

Everyone at the meeting wants what is best for your child's education, but each one looks at your child from a slightly different perspective. You are your child's best advocate. Your role is to bring your unique knowledge and understanding about your child as no one knows your child better than you. Your full participation is critical to the process of developing a plan for your child's education.

What Happens at the IEP Meeting?

After you and the other team members introduce yourselves, the reasons for referring your child are reviewed and the assessment results are summarized. With this information before you, you then move to the two main tasks of an IEP team:

- To determine if your child is eligible for special education services; and
- If eligible, to develop an IEP that meets your child's unique needs related to the identified disability.

THE ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

After considering all the assessment results, the IEP team must reach agreement on the following questions:

- Does your child have an identified disabling condition specified by law? (Education Code law specifies eligibility criteria for each disability.)

- Is this disabling condition severe enough to require special services beyond modification of the general education program?
- Are your child's needs due primarily to the disability and NOT to: unfamiliarity with the English language, temporary physical disability, social maladjustment, limited school experience, excessive absence from school, or environmental, cultural or economic factors? (These are some of the reasons children may NOT qualify).

If your child is eligible for special education services, the IEP team will work together to write an IEP for your child. If your child is not eligible for special education, the school may still need to discuss what educational services are appropriate for your child. All children are entitled to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

What is a “Free and Appropriate Public Education” (FAPE)?

FAPE means that each child in the public school system is entitled to an education that is appropriate for them as an individual. Thus, it must be personalized. Just as we have a right to expect equal opportunity in the workplace, our children have the right to expect equal opportunity in the classroom. No child may be discriminated against on the basis of race, gender, nationality, language, handicap, learning style or any other characteristic. The district cannot guarantee equal success, but must guarantee equal opportunity FOR success.

Section 504 of the federal *Civil Rights Act* prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in any program that receives federal financial assistance. This legislation applies to all children in public schools in the nation, whether in special or general education classrooms, and is not the focus of this Parent Handbook. For more information about *Section 504*, contact your local school district.

As defined by state special education law, FAPE means that all students with IEPs must be provided with the opportunity to:

- Benefit from their education and meet standards established by state and federal law
- Make progress on their IEP goals
- Be educated with non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate
- Receive their education under public supervision at no cost to the parents
- Receive an education that conforms to the student's IEP

However, FAPE does NOT mean:

- Services will GUARANTTEE that students with IEPs will learn at the same rate as students without IEPs
- Services will MAXIMIZE the learning of students with IEPs

WRITING THE IEP

The second major responsibility of the team is to write an IEP for your child.

What is an IEP?

An IEP is a written statement about the special education services that will be provided for your child. Full parent participation in developing the IEP is required under IDEA. You must participate in the development and approve the IEP before your child receives special education services. Once you have given written consent for special education services, your child's program may begin. The district is not allowed to implement the IEP without your consent.

The following is a list of what the IEP should contain and some questions to ask yourself about it.

1. **Eligibility Statement:** This section must specify the primary disability area in special education law under which your child qualifies for special education services. The eligibility statement reflects your child's primary disability. Some children may also have a secondary disability. The eligibility should be outlined in your child's assessment report provided to you by the district.
2. **Present Levels of Educational Performance:** These sections should contain statements of what your child can and cannot do, based on assessment information. The statements should describe the way your child performs. (Example: *Mary can match basic colors.*) The IEP will address all areas of need related to your child's disability.
3. **Annual Long-Range Goals:** This section identifies skills and behaviors the teacher and your child will be working toward over the next year based on his or her needs.

Typical skill areas may include (as needed): academic skills, school behaviors, social and emotional development, language or speech development, motor skills and vocational readiness. Long range goals are based on an assessment of your child's present performance and reflect the team's best determination as to where your child will be performing in a year's time.

4. **Short-Term Instructional Objectives:** Short-term objectives may be written for each long-term goal. Not all children require short-term objectives. This is usually reserved for children with severe disabilities such as intellectual disability. However, this is an IEP team decision. Short-term instructional objectives describe the steps that must be accomplished to reach your child's annual goals. Objectives should be written in understandable language and for a given time period. (Example: *Mary will recognize and discriminate the colors red, yellow, blue and green, by December 1, in four out of five opportunities.*) The objective should be written in such a way that the special education staff can measure your child's progress.
5. **Evaluation Procedures and Review Date:** Your child's progress will be measured to determine whether the goals are met. The IEP will document how progress will be reported to you and when the team will meet again to revise and review the goals (it must be at least annually).

For all students, if your child will be changing programs or placement, the IEP will include provisions that will help your child make a successful transition. The IEP may include extended school year services if your child will lose skills so significantly they will be unable to relearn them in a reasonable amount of time. Most children do not require extended school year.

6. **Placement Recommendations:** This section indicates the type of services your child will receive [e.g., Specialized Academic Instruction or Related Services]. A statement will also be made about the extent to which your child will not participate in the general education program.

Once an eligibility and placement decision has been made at the IEP meeting, the parent may request a review of the specific placement alternatives available and make arrangements through the program facilitator for a classroom visitation.

7. **Designated Instructional Services (DIS)/Related Services:** This section identifies related services that may be required to meet the child's needs (e.g., speech therapy, adapted physical education, occupational therapy, etc.). This section contains the services to be provided, their frequency and duration, location, and their initiation date. A statement of the program modifications or supports provided for the student will also be included.
 - What services does your child need?
 - Who will provide them?
 - When will the services begin and end?

8. **Transition:** All students age 16-21 must have necessary transition services identified in the IEP. The Individual Transition Plan (ITP) includes a statement on the course of study needed (for example, a functional skills curriculum or course work leading to a high school diploma). The ITP also includes specific activities in the areas of instruction, the community, and post secondary goals. Your child's preferences will be considered when the team determines these activities. Other agencies, such as the Tri-Counties Regional Center or Department of Rehabilitation may also be included in the meeting.
9. **State and District Wide Assessments:** How will your child participate in state and district wide assessments? Will individual modifications in administration of these assessments be needed for your child?
10. **Transportation:** Depending on your child's disability, a continuum of transportation services may be offered, including: regular school bus transportation from a neighborhood pick-up station and door-to-door services. The IEP team is responsible for determining whether a child requires specialized transportation services as a related service. In making this determination, the IEP team considers the nature and severity of the disability and the concept of least restrictive environment (LRE) (see the next page). Transportation is written into the IEP only when the IEP determines that a student requires such a service in order to benefit
11. **Signature Lines:** Signatures from all present at the IEP meeting are required to confirm their attendance. Any parental disagreement with the findings is discussed on an attachment to the IEP, and is noted in the "I agree to all parts of the IEP except ..." section. If you do not agree, you have the option to meet with the district special education director, request a facilitated IEP, pursue an alternative dispute panel, or exercise your due process procedural rights.

NOTE TO PARENTS:

- Don't hesitate to suggest changes you think will improve the IEP. After all, you know your child best. If no current special education options adequately meet your child's identified needs, the case manager will work with other specialists to try to develop a creative solution. Remember, special education is a service, not a place. It is the responsibility of the IEP to design a program that meets the needs of your child.

RIGHTS:

- You have the right to request an interpreter for the IEP meeting
- You have the right to present an independent assessment of your child before the meeting and to have that assessment considered when the IEP is written
- You have the right to have your child participate in the IEP meeting when it is appropriate
- You must provide written consent to the IEP before special education and related services can begin for your child
- You have the right to revoke your consent for special education services at anytime

DECIDING ON PLACEMENT

Before your child is placed in special education, the IEP team identifies the options that will best meet his or her needs. Then the team decides how, or in what combination, these options will be offered to provide the LRE for your child.

What Does "LRE" Mean?

LRE stands for Least Restrictive Environment and is a basic principle of special education. The LRE is the school environment that is the most age-appropriate and normalized setting that can meet a student's unique needs.

LRE is both a guiding principle and a goal. It is an ongoing decision-making process based on a collaborative determination and examination of the individual's needs. The process allows the educational placement of the individual to be designed specifically for that individual, considering and

using the full array of program options, in a setting where services can be provided effectively and equitably, and where maximum integration with non-disabled peers is provided.

For most children, this means a general education classroom and school site.

For some children, this may mean a general education classroom with modifications and extra assistance (each school site offers their own programs to help children succeed). For information about what is available at **your** school site, contact your child's teacher, principal, or your school SST.

For fewer children, this may mean a Special Day Class (SDC) at your child's neighborhood school or at another school in the community.

And, for a very few children, this may mean a special education classroom at a school somewhere within the county, or even a special school or residential placement at some distance away.

The intent of the "Least Restrictive Environment" principle is to educate all students in the most normal setting possible.

THE ANNUAL REVIEW

Why is the IEP Reviewed?

The IEP is reviewed each year to see what progress your child has made toward the goals established in his or her original IEP. A new IEP is written at this meeting to modify the existing goals, establish new ones, and consider any appropriate changes in placement. The review meeting follows much the same pattern as the original IEP meeting. You will be asked to help decide if the plan is working or needs to be revised based on what you have learned from classroom observations, school conferences, and assessment information.

When is the IEP Reviewed?

Once a child is receiving special education services, the IEP is reviewed at least once a year. At this time, program placement, related services, and your child's goals and progress are examined and evaluated. Changes are made as appropriate and a new IEP is developed for the following year. If it is determined that your child is no longer eligible for, or in need of, special education services or instruction, a transition program may be designed to assist with a program change (depending on the student's needs). In addition to the annual review, you may request a review at any time to consider changes in the IEP.

If your child remains in special education, every three years, the team will determine whether re-assessed by a multi-disciplinary team is necessary to develop an IEP and if eligibility for special education services needs to be reconsidered. You will be a part of the planning for this assessment.

Individualized Educational Program (IEP)

Process and Timeline

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Pre-referral

- An educational problem is identified by parents, teachers, or other specialists, and interventions are tried
- Specialists consult, interview & observe the situation
- The SST, which usually includes the parent, meets to problem solve (for school-age children)

ASSESSMENT

- If prior interventions do not resolve the problem, an assessment referral is made
(15 days)
- The Notification and Plan for Assessment is developed
(15 days)
- Parent Rights, Notification and Plan for Assessment and procedures are reviewed with parent. Written consent is obtained

PLANNING

60 calendar days (not to include days when school is out of session) are from the date signed assessment is received to the IEP meeting date

- The IEP team meets to determine whether the child is eligible
- If child is eligible, other recommendations may be made
- Parent's written approval of IEP and Placement is obtained

IMPLEMENTATION

2-3 days, immediately

- Student is placed and program is implemented as soon as possible as agreed upon by the IEP team

REVIEW

- Program is revised at least annually or sooner if needed

EVALUATION

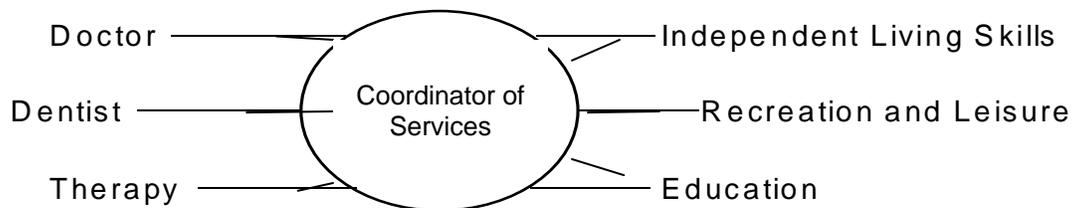
- Re-evaluation of eligibility may occur every three years if conditions warrant reassessment for continuing services

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROCESS

PARENTS SHARE MANY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Coordinate your child's records: keep an up-to-date file of all relevant records.
2. Initiate school conferences early in the year or whenever needed to help your child succeed.
3. Share specific information about your child and help develop appropriate IEP goals.
4. Join parent organizations and learn more about your child's disability.
5. Attend school board meetings, parent group meetings, and parent advisory committees.
6. Give positive reinforcement messages to teachers and other professionals. This can be accomplished through writing notes and letters or by making calls.
7. Keep informed about current legislation and special education funding issues.

Another example of parent involvement is having the parent serve as the coordinator for their child's services:



There are a variety of skills that will serve to make you, the parent, an effective advocate for your child. Here are a few:

- Develop positive and effective communication skills
- Keep good records
- Participate in school activities
- Know your child's rights and your responsibilities under special education
- Work with professionals as a fellow team member
- Learn pro-active behavior management techniques
- Seek out community resources
- Meet and support other parents who are raising children with disabilities
- Seek local solutions through the SELPA when difficult disagreements arise

PREPARE FOR IEP MEETINGS

Meaningful parent participation is key to a successful IEP meeting. To ensure meaningful participation in the IEP process, it is highly recommended that parents prepare for the IEP meeting. The following suggestions are offered.

Before the Meeting

- Keep an organized home file of educational, medical, and other pertinent records.
- Obtain and review appropriate student records from the district.
- Obtain and review appropriate records from outside agencies.
- Bring any records you feel might be helpful.
- Make a list identifying the strengths and needs of your child.
- Bring one idea for a goal you would like your child to master.
- If you are uneasy about the meeting, invite a second person to go with you.
- Write down any questions you may wish to ask or comments you may wish to make at the meeting.
- Review questions on the following page.

At the Meeting

- Be sure you have a thorough understanding of the assessment results.
- If you do not understand something being discussed at the meeting, ask questions until issues are clear.
- Be prepared to review possible program alternatives if placement is a question.
- Be prepared to discuss methods and materials that have been effective with your child, as well as those that have not.
- Take notes.
- If possible, make arrangements through the school district to observe a prospective placement site (e.g., a resource specialist program, learning center, or special day class - - whatever program) that may be suitable for your child.
- Participating in the development of your child's IEP should be viewed as the first step of your involvement in your child's educational program. In order to keep in touch with your child's educational progress, you should maintain regular contact with your child's teacher and the other professionals involved in his or her program. It is a good idea to observe your child in the classroom on occasion.
- Provide input to the development of goals either in advance of the meeting or as they are written at the IEP meeting.

After the Meeting

- Review your notes. If any areas are unclear, ask specialists for further explanation.
- Share meeting information with your spouse or with any other individuals who have regular contact with your child.
- Tell your child about any program changes as this will help him or her to prepare for any transitions.
- Keep the school informed about any changes in your child, or in your home, that might affect his or her classroom program.
- If new questions come to mind, call your child's case manager or special education director.

CREATING A PROGRAM FOR A CHILD

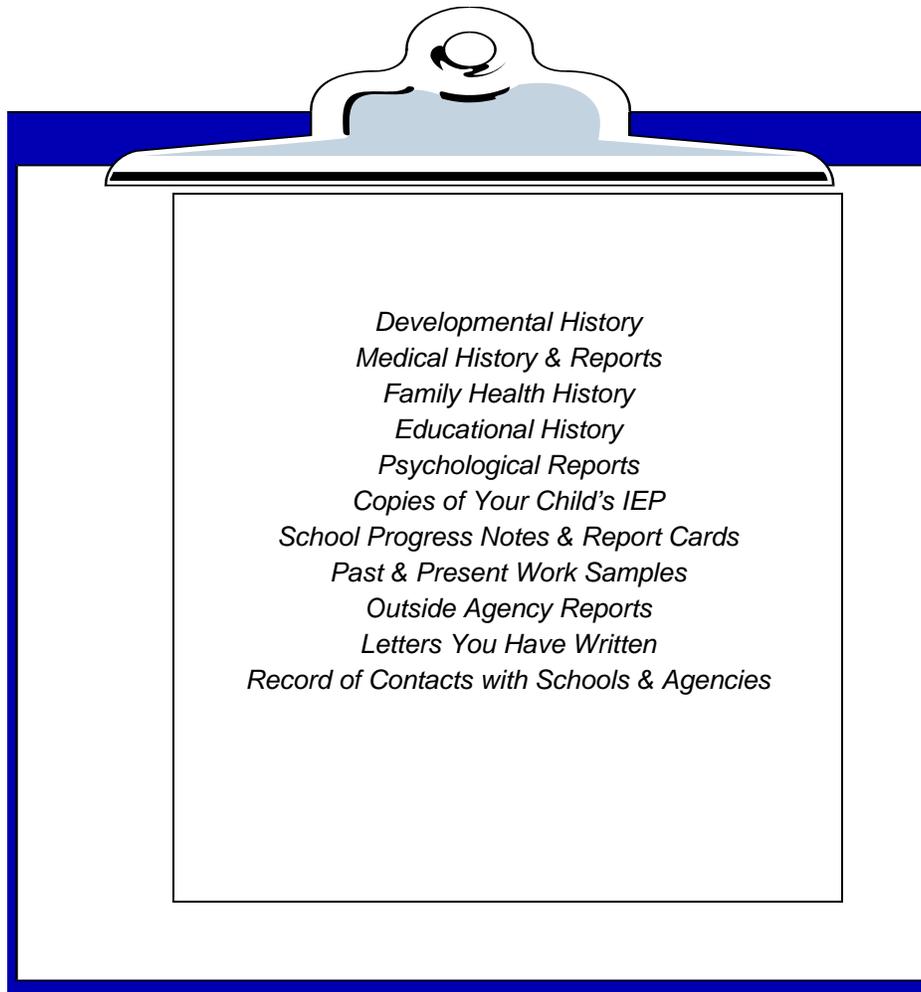
Consider the following questions when creating a program for your child (not all of them may apply):

1. Do I understand where my child presently functions in relation to each goal?
2. Are written goals clear/understandable?
3. Are written goals reasonable and realistic?
4. Can I answer each of the following questions for each goal:
 - What is to be done?
 - When will it be done?
 - Who will do it?
 - How will it be measured?
 - How will I know when the goal is met?
5. Does it appear that the individual needs of my child are reflected in these goals?
6. Did I provide input to the development of the goals?
7. Are the written goals the ones I feel are most important?
8. Is the staff working with my child in agreement with the written goals?
9. Have related services and supplementary aids that my child may need been considered?
10. If any of these services are written into the IEP, is the beginning date and estimated duration of the services specified?
11. Has a date been set to review my child's progress?
12. Have other major agencies or persons who provide services to my child (e.g., Tri-Counties Regional Center, CCS etc.) been notified of the team meeting, if I feel such notification is appropriate?
13. Have I signed release forms and requested that copies of my child's IEP be mailed to other persons or agencies who serve my child?
14. Has some effort been made by members of the school team to coordinate the school plan with other outside agencies providing service to my child?
15. Have the professionals developed a communication plan to make sure that instruction is coordinated and not duplicated for my child?
16. Have all appropriate school placement alternatives been considered (local school, school district, county, or other regional programs)?
17. Have I visited the classroom that is being recommended for my child?
18. Does the recommended placement allow my child the greatest interaction possible with children in general classrooms? Or with children who have less special needs than my child?
19. Do I feel my child might learn more in a different classroom or type of program? Why?
20. Do I agree with my child's special education identification? evaluation? placement?
21. Is the educational programming (IEP) being carried out?

KEEP GOOD RECORDS!

As the parent of a child with special needs, you will gather a tremendous amount of information about your child from various professionals and service agencies. Each time you seek services for your child, you will be asked to supply this information.

As the primary decision-maker, observer, and advocate for your child, it is to your benefit to keep accurate, up-to-date records. Here's a way to keep your information organized. Purchase loose-leaf binders with tabbed dividers. Suggested sections for your notebook may include:



You may want to take your notebook with you when you go to your child's school for an IEP meeting, or when you visit a new agency or service provider.

So remember...keep your notebook up-to-date!

BE INVOLVED IN SELECTING THE PLACEMENT

It is the IEP team's responsibility to recommend a placement in the least restrictive setting that will meet your child's needs and that will serve your child at a site closest to your neighborhood school.

If the IEP team recommends placement for your child in a special education class or program, you may wish to schedule a visit to that program prior to finalizing placement. Some programs may need to be revised to meet the needs of your child. Any program for your child needs your input. The following guidelines may be used as your checklist when you visit the class to observe it in action:

Class Environment

- Is the classroom atmosphere cheerful and relaxed?
- Is there purposeful activity going on?
- Does the teaching staff give you a feeling of interest and enthusiasm for the children?
- Are there a variety of instructional arrangements (One-to-one, large group, small group instruction)
- Are different methods and materials used with individual students or groups of students in the class?
- How large is the class?
- Are activities such as music, art, drama and group discussions, integrated into the routine, just as they would be in a school day for general education students?
- Does the curriculum include learning the skills of daily living (e.g., handling money, cooking, shopping, using public transportation)? Teenagers may require vocational education coordinated with job placement.
- Is there an effort made to strengthen human "getting along" abilities? For the adolescent, needs grow in complexity and a well-rounded program for the older children should encompass these needs.
- Do opportunities exist to build satisfying social relationships, to gain confidence, and move toward self-reliance and independence?
- Does the school offer ways for its special needs students to mix with the general student population in joint pursuit of common interests?

Does My Child Fit This Program

- Try to picture your child in the program. Would your child fit in? Be realistic.
- Imagine the setting from your child's perspective.
- If your child requires specific kinds of services, such as speech, occupational therapy, or adapted physical education, are these provided by the program? When and where?
- Is special equipment required for your child available at the school?

Professional Qualifications

- Learn about the training and experience of the staff, especially those responsible for supervision of your child.
- Are there aides and/or other helpers (para-professionals, students, volunteers) who can free the teacher to give individual help or offer assistance in providing special activities and meeting emergencies? If so, find out how supervision is maintained and evaluated.
- How often does the professional (e.g., teacher, speech therapist, adapted physical education specialist, etc.) see your child?
- In what way do these professionals influence the classroom activity?
- Find out about opportunities offered by the school for its staff to receive in-service training.

Parent Involvement

- What methods (e.g., volunteer or aide) does the school use to involve parents?
- Is there a parent group (e.g., PTA, PTO) associated with the program?

- If there is a parent group and how often does it meet?
 - Does the parent group have opportunities to discuss educational needs, contribute meaningfully to school programs, and talk candidly about problems?
 - Does the parent group meet with the school staff?
- Is there a parent advisory committee?
 - What other lines of communication are there between parents and professionals associated with the program?
 - Talk with other parents whose children have been enrolled in the program. Remember, however, that each individual reacts differently, so keep your own perspective.

CONSIDER YOUR CHILD'S EVENTUAL TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK AND INDEPENDENCE

GUIDELINES FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The following guidelines have been used by many families who are interested in actively participating in the vocational training and school-to-work transition of their son or daughter. Of course, there are many more suggestions than those provided here.

If you are the parent(s) of an ELEMENTARY-AGE child, you can:

1. Become aware of your child's eventual need to enter the world of work. Speak positively about working and supporting oneself.
2. Point out workers to your child when you go out in the community. Discuss what the worker is doing and encourage your child to think about what job he or she might like.
3. Give your child specific responsibilities around the house. Insist that he or she perform all duties thoroughly and on time. Give your child an allowance for completing duties.
4. Talk with your child's teachers about how you can support classroom work-related concepts such as money, employer-employee relationships, staying on-task, moving from one area to another, and keeping a work station clean.
5. Emphasize physical fitness and appropriate use of free or play time.
6. Encourage your child to dress and groom appropriately.
7. Find out about the services available to adults with special needs in your community. Also, learn about the "state of the art" vocational and residential options available in other areas and compare these to options in your locale.

If you are the parent(s) of a MIDDLE SCHOOL-AGE child, you can:

1. Actively support the school's efforts to provide volunteer opportunities at community-based sites.
2. Make sure your child's IEP addresses specific pre-vocational, social, and community access skills that will be taught in a variety of settings.
3. Be aware of the employment training opportunities available in the upper grades.
4. Inquire whether job training in the community is available in the high school program your child will enter.
5. Find work outside the home for your child to do during vacations, weekends, and after school.
6. Continue to work with your child on appearance, health maintenance, and physical fitness.
7. Teach your child to budget money and use banking facilities by providing a small allowance or payment for performing certain jobs.
8. Continue to discuss the importance and benefits of working and earning wages.

9. Get your child involved in community-based leisure activities that teach him or her to use public transportation systems.
10. Familiarize yourself with state and federal regulations concerning education and employment of persons with special needs.

If you are the parent(s) of a HIGH SCHOOL-AGE child, you can:

1. Make sure that your 16-year old (or older) son or daughter has a formal Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) that specifies transition skills and residential options, and that includes deadlines for the achievement of both goals. Persons responsible should be part of this ITP.
2. See that the IEP team includes human services professionals, the student, and the student's family, to develop the ITP part of the formal IEP process. The professionals on the team could be the social and vocational education teachers, the rehabilitation counselor, the developmental disabilities case manager, and others.
3. Encourage the school to find, place, and train your child in a full or part-time job that pays a wage while he or she is still in school.
4. If job placement has not previously been arranged, ask about and/or explore some sort of volunteer service program for your child before he or she graduates. (This could be part of the ITP.)
5. Continue to work with the student on matters of appearance and grooming, physical fitness, budgeting, completing chores, staying on schedule, and using community-based agencies and facilities.
6. See that educators are formally communicating with local vocational rehabilitation agency representatives and residential care managers.
7. Start meeting with adult service providers to sort out what options your child should be able to access.
8. Refer to the SELPA Manual: *Moving On; Transition to Adult Services for Parents and Students* for a complete guide to transition from school to independence.

From: *Transition From School to Work* (Brooks Publishing)
Wehman, Moon, Everson, Wood & Barcus



“I still need someone to talk to . . . “

Sometimes we can go through the IEP process and still feel as if we have questions and concerns. As a general principle, when questions arise regarding your child’s education, it is always best to start with individuals who work directly with your child, and work up through the layers of supervision until the problem is resolved. Not only will this approach avoid creating unnecessary additional problems, but it will usually solve the problem more quickly.

1. Discuss the problem with your child’s classroom teacher and/or other school staff members who are aware of your child’s needs.
2. Talk to the school principal or your case manager (usually your child’s special education teacher).
3. Request a review of the Individualized Education Program (IEP).
4. Contact your district’s Community Advisory Committee representative.
5. Talk to your Director of Special Education.
6. Request the assistance or intervention of a district or SELPA Program Specialist.
7. Talk to the SELPA director to request alternative dispute resolution, such as a Facilitated IEP.
8. If you are unable to reach an agreement after trying the steps above, talk with the SELPA director about the process of filing for an impartial due process hearing.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Important Names and Telephone Numbers

Your School Site Telephone Number: _____

Special Education Teacher: _____

School Psychologist: _____

District Program Specialist:

Principal: _____

CAC Representative: _____

Director of Special Education: _____

SELPA Program Specialist: _____

SELPA Director: _____

Parents Helping Parents: _____

Appendix B

GLOSSARY: THE ABC'S OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Education has a language all its own with seemingly endless acronyms and terminology. We have attempted here to give you a key to this specialized language. We know this glossary is not all-inclusive, but we hope it will provide you with some basic special education vocabulary and aid you in being a knowledgeable member of the IEP team.

Adapted Physical Education (APE): A program for students who, because of their disabilities, cannot participate effectively in general P.E. and require specialized physical education services. The program focuses on gross motor skills (whole body and arm/leg movements) and may be delivered in collaboration with the general P.E. program.

Adaptive Behavior: This term refers to behaviors and skills that are needed in order to function independently throughout life. They are sometimes referred to as “life skills” and include everything from being able to walk, feed, and toilet oneself, to being able to obtain gainful employment, manage money, and develop close relationships.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR): A problem solving method that brings disputing people or parties together, guided by a neutral facilitator to reach a confidential, mutually satisfying agreement. ADR may include the entire IEP team or select members for settling differences. This process enables families and districts to address disputes at the local level without the necessity of Due Process.

Aphasia: A total or partial loss of the power of using or understanding words.

Assessment: The process by which data is gathered and evaluated regarding a child. It may include tests, observations, interviews, records review, developmental histories, and medical records, as appropriate.

Audiological Services: Includes identifying children with hearing loss and providing services that will help children with hearing losses improve their strengths and abilities.

Auditory Processing: The ability to understand, remember, and use information that is heard, both as words and as other non-verbal sounds.

Autism: A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, which adversely affects educational performance.

Behavior Disorder: A behavior which causes a child to have difficulty learning or getting along with others; the causes of this disorder may vary greatly. Children with behaviorally-based disorders do NOT qualify for special education services in the State of California.

CCS: California Children Services, a private, non-profit agency that provides physical and occupational therapy and other services to children who are medically eligible.

Cerebral Palsy: A motor impairment caused by brain damage, which is usually inflicted during the prenatal or birth process. It can involve a wide variety of symptoms including ataxia, athetosis,

rigidity, spasticity, and tremor. Cerebral Palsy ranges from mild to severe, and is neither curable nor does it become progressively worse.

Communicatively Disabled: Difficulty understanding or using language to the extent that it interferes with learning, including pupils who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, aphasic, severely language-impaired, or communication disorders.

Community Advisory Committee for Special Education (CAC): A group of individuals made up of parents and professionals, with a majority of parents, mandated by law, who work in partnership with the SELPA members regarding the needs and advocacy of children with disabilities.

Community-Based Instruction: A form of instruction in which IEP goals are met in a natural environment within the community. For example, math, travel, and social skills may all be developed through a trip to the grocery store.

Compliance Complaint: The specific issue and/or resolution process involved when there is an alleged violation by the public educational agency of any federal or state law or regulation governing special education.

Deaf: (Also referred to as “hearing impaired” with mild, moderate, and severe designations.) A sensory deficiency which prevents a person from receiving the stimulus of sound in all or most of its forms. A person who is considered deaf (or severely hearing impaired) is not able to use his or her hearing to understand speech, even with a hearing aid, though other sounds may be perceived. A student is considered hearing impaired if their impairment, even with correction, adversely affects their educational performance.

Designated Instructional Services (DIS): Also known as “related services,” designated instructional services are specialized instruction and/or support services identified through an assessment and written on an IEP as necessary for a child to benefit from his or her educational program. These services may include: speech/language remediation, Braille transcription, adapted physical education, occupational therapy, mobility services, counseling.

Down Syndrome: Individuals with a genetic disorder affecting many areas of intellectual and/or physical abilities, generally including some level of intellectual disability and communication delay with stronger social and daily living skills.

Due Process: The legal procedures set up to resolve disagreements between parents and school districts over some part of a child’s special education program when issues cannot be resolved through Alternative Dispute Resolution. (see Fair Hearing).

Dyslexia: Inability to read. Another name for a learning disability in the area of reading which usually includes difficulties learning, remembering, or using letter sound knowledge that frequently manifest themselves as letter reversals during reading or writing tasks.

ELL or EL: English Language Learner.

Emotionally Disturbed (ED): An individual diagnosed as having an emotional problem of such significance that it interferes markedly with learning; the problem must have continued over a long period of time, to a marked degree, and in a variety of settings. Note: The term does NOT

include children who are socially maladjusted unless it is determined that they are also and primarily seriously emotionally disturbed.

Extended School Year (ESY): An extension of the school year beyond the regular school term for individuals with special needs. When the student's disability leads to significant skill loss when school is not in session **and** the student is not able to recoup skills in a reasonable amount of time a student may require ESY. The requirement for ESY is determined by the IEP team.

Facilitated IEP: A facilitated IEP has all the components of a mandated IEP meeting with some additional features. A neutral third party, the facilitator, who utilizes essential mediation skills to help the team collaborate to reach a consensus, manages the meeting. This process allows IEP team members to improve and build positive relationships while focusing on the needs of the child in the IEP process.

Fair Hearing: A formal due process hearing called by parents or school district personnel. Issues which may be considered under the fair hearing procedures are limited to disputes regarding FAPE, identification, assessment, individualized education program, and placement of individuals with exceptional needs. It is conducted similarly to a court of law with rules of evidence, legal representation, and the right to subpoena and cross-examine witnesses.

Fine-Motor: The small muscle groups used in activities such as writing and cutting.

Gross-Motor: The large muscle groups that are used in activities such as walking and running.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A written document, mandated by law and developed by a team (including the parent), that defines a child's current levels of educational performance and specifies: annual goals (short-term objectives as needed), type of educational instruction and related services, amount of participation in general education programs, date(s) special education service begins and is projected to end, and the annual evaluation procedures and review date for updating the IEP. When appropriate, the IEP contains additional items (see section entitled, "Writing the IEP" in this handbook).

Individualized Program Plan (IPP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP): An annually-reviewed record of program and service needs provided by the Tri-Counties Regional Center (e.g., respite care, behavior management training, etc.). The IFSP is written for individuals from birth through age two.

Individualize Transition Plan (ITP): Federal law requires that transition services language is included for all special education students ages 16 and older. The term transition services means a set of coordinated activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities. Services include post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education. The coordinated set of activities is based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests. Activities include instruction, community experiences, the development of adult and other post-school living objectives and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and a functional vocational evaluation.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): The federal legislation that guarantees a free and appropriate public education for all children with exceptional needs.

Individuals with Exceptional Needs (IWENs): Individuals from infancy through age twenty-one, who are identified by an individualized education program team as having disabilities that require instruction and/or services which cannot be provided with modification of the general school program.

Informed Consent: From Federal Regulations 121a.500, which specifies that the parent has been fully informed of all information for which his or her consent is sought. The parent understands, and agrees in writing, to the carrying out of all activities. The parent understands that the granting of consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time.

Intellectual Disability: Significantly low intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental growth period.

Interim Placement: Placement of an Individual with Exceptional Needs transferring from another district outside of the county with an IEP into a comparable special education program for a period not to exceed 30 calendar days before an evaluation, as to the appropriateness of the placement, is completed, and a meeting of the IEP team is held.

Language Delay: A delay in the development of a child's ability to use or understand language. A speech delay is a delay that is more specific to the child's ability to produce correct speech sounds.

Learning Disability: A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken and/or written language, in combination with a severe (defined by educational statute) discrepancy between intellectual ability and academic achievement. This may manifest itself by an impaired ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations.

Local Plan: The model for the delivery of programs and services that will be provided by school districts within a SELPA to meet the educational needs of eligible individuals with exceptional needs. The SELPA must revise the plan as needed to develop reflect new legislative requirements and changes in policies and procedures at the local level. The districts, school boards, and the CAC advise the SELPA members regarding the development of the Local Plan. Major changes to the SELPA Local Plan must be approved by the California Department of Education, Special Education Division.

Mainstreaming: A term referring to the time during which a special education student participates in general education activities, either academic or non-academic (e.g., math, reading, art, physical education, etc.).

Mediation Conference: If both parties involved in a due process hearing agree, a mediation conference can be held. This conference would precede a fair hearing in order to resolve an issue at a less formal level. A mediation can also be conducted through Alternative Dispute Resolution.

Mobility Services: (See "Orientation and Mobility Instruction.")

Multi-Disciplinary: Of, related to, or using a combination of several disciplines for a common purpose (i.e., an approach to coordinating multiple services for a child, to performing an assessment, to developing an IEP, etc.). "Discipline" refers to areas of expertise (i.e., the discipline of *teaching*, of *speech therapy*, of *medicine*, or of *psychology*).

Neurological: Having to do with the nervous system, including the brain. When this term is used to describe a disorder, it usually implies that the disorder is assumed to be based in the anatomy and/or physiology of the brain that was present at birth.

Non-Public School (NPS): A private, non-sectarian, state-approved school. Placements are made in a NPS by the IEP team if a child's needs cannot be served by the general or special education program offered within a public school setting.

Notice: A written notice in English, or in the primary language of the concerned individual, sent by mail or delivered in person.

Occupational Therapist (OT): An accredited specialist whose function is to provide consultation, assessment, and/or instruction to help students with special needs improve, develop or restore impaired fine-motor skills, motor planning, postural stability, and sensorimotor integration.

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Instruction: Training for an individual with visual impairments to know how to move through space, including how to access transportation services.

Orthopedically Impaired (OI): Students with specific orthopedic problems which adversely affect their educational performance. These disabilities include, but are not limited to: congenital anomalies, cerebral palsy, asthma, diabetes, tracheotomies, and colostomies.

Other Health Impaired (OHI): A student who has limited strength, vitality, or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems which adversely affect his or her educational performance and are not temporary in nature. Examples of some health problems which may qualify a child for special education services are: a heart condition, cancer, severe asthma, epilepsy, and diabetes, etc. Generally, the district nurse is involved in these students' assessments.

Parent Educational Surrogate: This is defined in federal and state law as a volunteer position which encompasses the following duties: may represent an individual with exceptional needs in matters relating to identification, assessment, instructional planning and development, educational placement, reviewing and revising the individualized education program, and in other matters relating to the provision of a free and appropriate education to the individual. This position is appointed by the parent (if available) or by the SELPA, and is filled by specially-trained individuals.

Perseveration: Continuing a behavior or response when it is no longer appropriate; difficulty in switching tasks or thoughts from one another.

Placement: The specific system of delivery or location that meets the child's individual needs as identified in the IEP such as a separate class or extra assistance within the general education classroom.

Program Specialist: A credentialed specialist whose function is to plan, implement, and evaluate programs and curricula, and to provide consultation and staff development to teachers, administrators, and others involved with special education students.

Reading Comprehension: The ability to understand what is read, usually tested by having students read written passages and answer questions about them.

Referral: The formal request to assess and to determine whether a child may need special education services. A referral may be made by a parent, teacher, medical personnel, or anyone with specific knowledge of the child.

Related Services: Also known as “DIS,” related services are specialized instruction and/or support services identified through an assessment and written on an IEP as necessary for a child to benefit from his or her educational program. These services may include: speech/language remediation, Braille transcription, adapted physical education, occupational therapy, mobility services, counseling.

Resource Parents: Parents of special needs students who have been trained in special education regulations and procedures as well as communications skills and conflict resolution. They provide volunteer parent-to-parent support for special education issues.

Resource Specialist Program (RSP): A special education service that provides specialized academic instruction to students who require additional support to make progress in the general education program.

School (Educational) Psychologist: A credentialed specialist whose function is to provide psychological services to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and other staff, as needed, but whose primary function is to provide consultation and assessment regarding the educational needs of students who are suspected of having a disability and are not benefiting from general education interventions.

Section 504: Section of the federal civil rights law which provides a means to address individual needs of students in general education classrooms.

SELPA (Special Education Local Plan Area): All school districts are organized within a multi-district comprehensive plan. Currently, the 10 school districts in San Luis Obispo County and the County Office of Education make up the special education services unit in the San Luis Obispo County Plan for Special Education.

Sequential Reasoning: The ability to mentally assemble a sequence of language patterns or thoughts [i.e., letters in spelling, steps in arithmetic problems, or acts fulfilling an act (e.g., arranging things left to right, putting paper in a typewriter, or repeating a series of digits, etc.)] in order to understand them, remember them, and use them to solve problems.

Severely Disabled/Handicapped (SH): Individuals who need intensive instruction and training support.

Simultaneous Reasoning: The ability to mentally integrate thoughts, ideas, pictures, or diagrams into a whole in order to understand them, remember them, and use them to solve problems.

Special Day Class (SDC): Classes which provide services to pupils with more intensive needs than can be met by the general school program and resource specialist program. Pupils receive special education support for a majority of the school day.

Special Education: Instruction or educational services that are required in order to help children with special needs receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

Special Education Teacher: A credentialed specialist whose function is to provide special education services to children with special needs, whether through consultation, collaboration, team teaching, small group instruction, or individual teaching, as needed, to help students learn.

Speech and Language Specialist: A credentialed specialist whose function is to help children learn to speak and use language, as well as remediate voice and stuttering disorders, whether through consultation, collaboration, team teaching, small group instruction, or individual instruction, as needed, to help students learn.

Standard Deviation: How much a particular score varies from another particular score (if they are comparable) or from the mean (or average) score achieved by a whole group of test takers.

Student Study Team (SST): A multi-disciplinary team designed to help educators make modifications within the general education program of a student who is not succeeding in class. SSTs consist of general and special education teachers, specialists, school principals and others who meet on a regular basis to problem-solve about ways to help particular students. The parent of the student is an important SST member and is generally invited to attend, share information, and participate in the problem-solving process. A SST meeting can be highly effective in preventing the need to evaluate whether a child has a disability and needs special education services. There are many reasons other than a disability for why students don't progress in school. The SST ensures that all resources of the school system are utilized to help children succeed in school prior to a referral for special education.

Visual-Motor Skills: The ability to coordinate vision with body movements; it is commonly referred to as eye-hand coordination.

Visual Perception: How well a person identifies, organizes, and interprets data received through the eye.

Visual Processing: The ability to understand, remember, and use information that is seen, both what is physically, as well as mentally, "seen."

Visually Impaired (VI): A student is considered visually impaired if their visual impairment, even with correction, adversely affects their educational performance. This includes blind and low-vision students.

Word-Attack Skills (or Letter-Word Identification): The ability to analyze words by using letter/sound relationships (phonics) accurately, even if the words themselves have no meaning, as in when teachers use "nonsense words" (e.g., fid, lisk, nop) to test students' phonics knowledge.

Appendix C

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY SPECIAL EDUCATION LOCAL PLAN AREA (SELPA) (805) 782-7301



- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Atascadero
805-462-4230 | <input type="checkbox"/> Cayucos Elementary
805-995-3694 | <input type="checkbox"/> Coast
805-927-7148 | <input type="checkbox"/> Lucia Mar
805-474-3000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Paso Robles
805-769-1000 | County Office of Education
805-782-7321 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pleasant Valley
805-467-3453 | <input type="checkbox"/> San Luis Coastal
805-549-1218 | <input type="checkbox"/> San Miguel
805-467-3216 | <input type="checkbox"/> Shandon
805-238-1782 | <input type="checkbox"/> Templeton
805-434-5853 | |

Special Education Rights of Parents and Children

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B,
and the California Education Code

Notice of Procedural Safeguards

Note: The term school district is used throughout this document to describe any public education agency responsible for providing your child's special education program. The term assessment is used to mean evaluation or testing. Federal and state laws are cited throughout this notice using English abbreviations, which are explained in a glossary on the last page of this notification.

What is the Notice of Procedural Safeguards?

This information provides you as parents, legal guardians, and surrogate parents of children with disabilities from three (3) years of age through age twenty-one (21) and students who have reached age eighteen (18), the age of majority, with an overview of your educational rights or procedural safeguards.

The Notice of Procedural Safeguards is required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and must be provided to you one time per year and:

- When you ask for a copy;
- The first time your child is referred for a special education assessment;
- Each time you are given an assessment plan to evaluate your child;
- Upon receipt of the first state or due process complaint in a school year; and
- When the decision is made to make a removal that constitutes a change of placement.

(20 USC 1415[d]; 34 CFR 300.504; Education Code (EC) 56301[d] [2], EC 56321, and 56341.1[g] [1])

What is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act?

IDEA is a federal law that requires school districts to provide a "free appropriate public education" (FAPE) to eligible children with disabilities. A free appropriate public education means that special education and related services are to be provided as described in an individualized education program (IEP) and under public supervision to your child at no cost to you.

May I participate in decisions about my child's education?

You must be given opportunities to participate in any decision-making meeting regarding your child's special education program. You have the right to participate in IEP team meetings about the identification (eligibility), assessment, or educational placement of your child and other matters relating to your child's FAPE. (20 *USC* 1414[d] [1]B-[d][1][D]; 34 *CFR* 300.321; *EC* 56341[b], 56343[c])

You have the right to participate in the development of the IEP and to record electronically the proceedings of the IEP team meetings on an audiotape recorder. To exercise this right, you must provide the district with written notice at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. Districts have this same right.

Your rights include information about the availability of FAPE, including all program options, and all available alternative programs, both public and nonpublic. (20 *USC* 1401[3], 1412[a][3]; 34 *CFR* 300.111; *EC* 56301, 56341.1[g][1] and 56506)

Where can I get more help?

When you have a concern about your child's education, it is important that you contact your child's teacher or administrator to talk about your child and any problems you see. Staff in your school district or special education local plan area (SELPA) can answer questions about your child's education, your rights, and procedural safeguards. Also, when you have a concern, this informal conversation often solves the problem and helps to maintain open communication. Additional resources are listed at the end of this document to help you understand the procedural safeguards.

Notice, Consent, Assessment, Surrogate Parent Appointment, and Access to Records

Prior Written Notice

When is a notice needed?

This notice must be given when the school district proposes or refuses to initiate a change in the identification, assessment, or educational placement of your child with special needs or the provision of a free appropriate public education. (20 *USC* 1415[b][3] and (4), 1415[c][1], 1414[b][1]; 34 *CFR* 300.503; *EC* 56329, and 56506[a])

The school district must inform you about proposed evaluations of your child in a written notice or an assessment plan within fifteen (15) days of your written request for evaluation. The notice must be understandable and in your native language or other mode of communication, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so. (34 *CFR* 300.304; *EC* 56321)

What will the notice tell me?

The Prior Written Notice must include the following:

1. A description of the actions proposed or refused by the school district;
 2. An explanation of why the action was proposed or refused;
 3. A description of each assessment procedure, record, or report the agency used as a basis for the action proposed or refused;
 4. A statement that parents of a child with a disability have protection under the procedural safeguards;
 5. Sources for parents to contact to obtain assistance in understanding the provisions of this part;
 6. A description of other options that the IEP team considered and the reasons those options were rejected; and
 7. A description of any other factors relevant to the action proposed or refused.
- (20 *USC* 1415[b][3] and [4], 1415[c][1], 1414[b][1]; 34 *CFR* 300.503)

Parental Consent

When is my approval required for assessment?

You have the right to refer your child for special education services. You must give informed, written consent before your child's first special education assessment can proceed. The parent has at least fifteen (15) days from the receipt of the proposed assessment plan to arrive at a decision. The assessment may begin immediately upon receipt of the consent and must be completed and an IEP developed within sixty (60) days of your consent.

When is my approval required for services?

You must give informed, written consent before your school district can provide your child with special education and related services.

What are the procedures when a parent does not provide consent?

If you do not provide consent for an initial assessment or fail to respond to a request to provide the consent, the school district may pursue the initial assessment by utilizing due process procedures.

If you refuse to consent to the initiation of services, the school district must not provide special education and related services and shall not seek to provide services through due process procedures.

If you refuse all services in the IEP after having consented to those services in the past, the school district must file a request for mediation or a due process hearing.

If you consent in writing to the special education and related services for your child but do not consent to all of the components of the IEP, those components of the program to which you have consented must be implemented without delay.

If the school district determines that the proposed special education program component to which you do not consent is necessary to provide a free appropriate public education to your child, a due process hearing must be initiated. If a due process hearing is held, the hearing decision shall be final and binding.

In the case of reevaluations, the school district must document reasonable measures to obtain your consent. If you fail to respond, the school district may proceed with the reevaluation without your consent. (20 USC 1414[a][1][D] and 1414[c]; 34 CFR 300.300; EC 56506[e], 56321[c] and [d], and 56346)

Revoking your consent for all special education and related services

Can I revoke my consent for special education?

Yes. You have the right to revoke your consent for your child to receive all special education and related services. You can revoke your consent for placement in special education at any time. The school district does not have any procedure or right to deny your revocation of consent.

The district may ask you for the reason that you revoked your consent but you are not required to give a response to the district's question. You cannot be required to attend any meetings to discuss your revocation.

The district cannot file for a due process hearing or request mediation to dispute your revoking your consent. The district is also protected by law from any later allegations that it failed to offer your child FAPE because you revoked your consent.

How do I revoke my consent?

You must revoke your consent in writing. The written revocation of your consent may be given to your child's special education teacher, your school administrator, or the district's special education administrator.

What happens after I revoke my consent?

If you submit a written statement revoking your consent, the district will give you a Prior Written Notice to let you know that the district received your written revocation of consent for your child to be provided all special education and related services. The Prior Written Notice will tell you the date that all special education and related services will cease. The district is required to give you this notice before it can cease providing services to your child.

What happens after all services cease?

On the date that all services cease, your child is no longer a student with disabilities under state and federal special education law. Your child will be a general education student. Your child will no longer be protected by these procedural safeguards except for those in respect to referral, assessment, and

identification. The modifications and accommodations, if any, which were offered by your child's IEP will no longer be guaranteed. The protections and safeguards related to discipline, statewide and districtwide testing programs, graduation, and other educational areas guaranteed to students with disabilities will no longer be available to your child.

The school and classroom that your child is in as a general education student may be affected by the revocation if the placement in the school or classroom was made by your child's IEP team.

Is my revocation of consent retroactive?

No. Your revocation of your consent is effective on the date that services cease as stated in the Prior Written Notice sent to you by the district.

What happens to my child's education records?

If you revoke your consent for your child to receive special education and related services, your child's records are not changed. The district is not required to amend your child's educational records regarding the special education status or services of your child prior to your revoking consent. You do have rights to review your child's records and to request that they be amended to correct any inaccuracies.

What if I want my child in special education later?

Your child can be referred again for assessment to determine if your child is eligible for special education. You cannot reinstate your consent once you have revoked it in writing.

If your child is re-referred, the timelines and other procedures for an initial referral are in force.

Surrogate Parent Appointment

What if a parent cannot be identified or located?

School districts must ensure that an individual is assigned to act as a surrogate parent for the parents of a child with a disability when a parent cannot be identified and the school district cannot discover the whereabouts of a parent.

A surrogate parent may also be appointed if the child is an unaccompanied homeless youth, an adjudicated dependent or ward of the court under the state Welfare and Institution Code, and is referred to special education or already has an IEP. (20 USC 1415[b][2] ; 34 CFR 300.519; EC 56050; GC 7579.5 and 7579.6)

Nondiscriminatory Assessment

How is my child assessed for special education services?

You have the right to have your child assessed in all areas of suspected disability. Materials and procedures used for assessment and placement must not be racially, culturally, or sexually discriminatory.

Assessment materials must be provided and the test administered in your child's native language or mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to so provide or administer.

No single procedure can be the sole criterion for determining eligibility and developing FAPE for your child. (20 USC 1414[b][1]-[3], 1412[a][6][B]; 34 CFR 300.304; EC 56001[j] and 56320)

Independent Educational Assessments

May my child be tested independently at the district's expense?

If you disagree with the results of the assessment conducted by the school district, you have the right to ask for and obtain an independent educational assessment for your child from a person qualified to conduct the assessment at public expense.

The parent is entitled to only one independent educational evaluation at public expense each time the public agency conducts an evaluation with which the parent disagrees.

The school district must respond to your request for an independent educational assessment and provide you information about where to obtain an independent educational assessment.

If the school district believes that the district's assessment is appropriate and disagrees that an independent assessment is necessary, the school district must request a due process hearing to prove that its assessment was appropriate. If the district prevails, you still have the right to an independent assessment but not at public expense. The IEP team must consider independent assessments.

District assessment procedures allow in-class observation of students. If the school district observes your child in his or her classroom during an assessment, or if the school district would have been allowed to observe your child, an individual conducting an independent educational assessment must also be allowed to observe your child in the classroom.

If the school district proposes a new school setting for your child and an independent educational assessment is being conducted, the independent assessor must be allowed to first observe the proposed new setting. (20 USC 1415[b][1] and [d][2][A]; 34 CFR 300.502; EC 56329[b] and [c])

Access to Educational Records

May I examine my child's educational records?

You have a right to inspect and review all of your child's education records without unnecessary delay, including prior to a meeting about your child's IEP or before a due process hearing. The school district must provide you access to records and copies, if requested, within five (5) business days after the request has been made orally or in writing. (*EC* 49060, 56043[n], 56501[b][3], and 56504)

After the mandatory three year period for retaining test protocols has expired, the district may proceed with destruction of test protocols. No test protocols will be destroyed prior to the IEP team coming to a full agreement regarding the assessment, if there is pending litigation based on the current assessment, or if an Independent Educational Evaluation has been requested by the parent/guardian due to lack of agreement about the assessment results.

Regardless of whether the IEP team determines that new standardized assessment is required to determine eligibility, the prior test protocols shall be retained in the student records for a period of not less than three years.

The LEA shall maintain in perpetuity a log of any and all documents destroyed. If the parent/guardian does not want the test protocols destroyed, parents shall provide written notification to the district and copies shall be provided to the parent/guardian.

Any test protocols kept in paper form may be kept in alternative forms such as but not limited to photographic, microfilm, and electronic imaging technology. (*EC* 35254; 34 *CFR* 300.624; *EC* 35254; 5 *CCR* 432 c Section 16027)

How Disputes Are Resolved

Due Process Hearing

When is a due process hearing available?

You have the right to request an impartial due process hearing regarding the identification, assessment, and educational placement of your child or the provision of FAPE. The request for a due process hearing must be filed within two years from the date you knew or should have known about the alleged action that forms the basis of the due process complaint. (20 *USC* 1415[b][6]; 34 *CFR* 300.507; *EC* 56501 and 56505[!])

Mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution

May I request mediation or an alternative way to resolve the dispute?

A request for mediation may be made either before or after a request for a due process hearing is made.

You may ask the school district to resolve disputes through mediation or alternative dispute resolution (ADR), which is less adversarial than a due process hearing. ADR and mediation are voluntary methods of resolving a dispute and may not be used to delay your right to a due process hearing.

What is a prehearing mediation conference?

You may seek resolution through mediation prior to filing a request for a due process hearing. The conference is an informal proceeding conducted in a nonadversarial manner to resolve issues relating to the identification, assessment, or educational placement of a child or to a FAPE.

At the prehearing mediation conference, the parent or the school district may be accompanied and advised by nonattorney representatives and may consult with an attorney prior to or following the conference. However, requesting or participating in a prehearing mediation conference is not a prerequisite to requesting a due process hearing.

All requests for a prehearing mediation conference shall be filed with the Superintendent. The party initiating a prehearing mediation conference by filing a written request with the Superintendent shall provide the other party to the mediation with a copy of the request at the same time the request is filed.

The prehearing mediation conference shall be scheduled within fifteen (15) days of receipt by the Superintendent of the request for mediation and shall be completed within thirty (30) days after receipt of the request for mediation unless both parties agree to extend the time. If a resolution is reached, the parties shall execute a legally binding written agreement that sets forth the resolution. All discussions during the mediation process shall be confidential. All prehearing mediation conferences shall be scheduled in a timely manner and held at a time and place reasonably convenient to the parties. If the issues fail to be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, the party who requested the mediation conference has the option of filing for a due process hearing. (*EC 56500.3 and 56503*)

Due Process Rights

What are my due process rights?

You have a right to:

1. Have a fair and impartial administrative hearing at the state level before a person who is knowledgeable of the laws governing special education and administrative hearings (20 *USC* 1415[f][1][A], 1415[f][3][A]-[D]; 34 *CFR* 300.511; *EC* 56501[b][4]);
2. Be accompanied and advised by an attorney and/or individuals who have knowledge about children with disabilities (*EC* 56505 [e][1]);
3. Present evidence, written arguments, and oral arguments (*EC* 56505[e][2]);

4. Confront, cross-examine, and require witnesses to be present (*EC 56505[e][3]*);
5. Receive a written or, at the option of the parent, an electronic verbatim record of the hearing, including findings of fact and decisions (*EC 56505[e][4]*);
6. Have your child present at the hearing (*EC 56501[c][1]*);
7. Have the hearing be open or closed to the public (*EC 56501[c][2]*);
8. Receive a copy of all documents, including assessments completed by that date and recommendations, and a list of witnesses and their general area of testimony within five (5) business days before a hearing (*EC 56505[e][7]* and *56043[v]*);
9. Be informed by the other parties of the issues and their proposed resolution of the issues at least ten (10) calendar days prior to the hearing (*EC 56505[e][6]*);
10. Have an interpreter provided (*CCR 3082[d]*);
11. Request an extension of the hearing timeline (*EC 56505[f][3]*);
12. Have a mediation conference at any point during the due process hearing (*EC 56501[b][2]*); and
13. Receive notice from the other party at least ten days prior to the hearing that the other party intends to be represented by an attorney (*EC 56507[a]*). (20 *USC 1415[e]*; 34 *CFR 300.506, 300.508, 300.512 and 300.515*)

Filing a Written Due Process Complaint

How do I request a due process hearing?

You need to file a written request for a due process hearing. You or your representative needs to submit the following information in your request:

Name of the child;

1. Address of the residence of the child;
2. Name of the school the child is attending;
3. In the case of a homeless child, available contact information for the child and the name of the school the child is attending; and
4. A description of the nature of the problem, including facts relating to the problem(s) and a proposed resolution of the problem(s).

Federal and state laws require that either party filing for a due process hearing must provide a copy of the written request to the other party. (20 *USC 1415[b][7], 1415[c][2]*; 34 *CFR 300.508*; *EC 56502[c][1]*)

Prior to filing for a due process hearing, the school district shall be provided the opportunity to resolve the matter by convening a resolution session, which is a meeting between the parents and the relevant members of the IEP team who have specific knowledge of the facts identified in the due process hearing request. (20 *USC 1415[f][1][B]*; 34 *CFR 300.510*)

What does a resolution session include?

Resolution sessions shall be convened within fifteen (15) days of receiving notice of the parents' due process hearing request. The sessions shall include a representative of the school district who has decision-making authority and not include an attorney of the school district unless the parent is accompanied by an attorney. The parent of the child may discuss the due process hearing issue and the facts that form the basis of the due process hearing request.

The resolution session is not required if the parent and the school district agree in writing to waive the meeting. If the school district has not resolved the due process hearing issue within thirty (30) days, the due process hearing may occur. If a resolution is reached, the parties shall execute a legally binding agreement. (20 *USC* 1415[f][1][B]; 34 *CFR* 300.510)

Does my child's placement change during the proceedings?

The child involved in any administrative or judicial proceeding must remain in the current educational placement unless you and the school district agree on another arrangement. If you are applying for initial admission of your child to a public school, your child will be placed in a public school program with your consent until all proceedings are completed. (20 *USC* 1415[j]; 34 *CFR* 300.518; *EC* 56505[d])

May the decision be appealed?

The hearing decision is final and binding on both parties. Either party may appeal the hearing decision by filing a civil action in state or federal court within 90 days of the final decision. (20 *USC* 1415[i][2] and [3][A], 1415[i]; 34 *CFR* 300.516; *EC* 56505[h] and [k], *EC* 56043[w])

Who pays for my attorneys' fees?

In any action or proceeding regarding the due process hearing, the court, in its discretion, may award reasonable attorneys' fees as part of the costs to you as parent of a child with a disability if you are the prevailing party in the hearing. Reasonable attorneys' fees may also be made following the conclusion of the administrative hearing, with the agreement of the parties. (20 *USC* 1415[i][3][B]-[G]; 34 *CFR* 300.517; *EC* 56507[b])

Fees may be reduced if any of the following conditions prevail:

1. The court finds that you unreasonably delayed the final resolution of the controversy;
2. The attorneys' hourly fees exceed the prevailing rate in the community for similar services by attorneys of reasonably comparable skill, reputation, and experience;
3. The time spent and legal services provided were excessive; or
4. Your attorney did not provide to the school district the appropriate information in the due process request notice.

Attorneys' fees will not be reduced, however, if the court finds that the State or the school district unreasonably delayed the final resolution of the action or

proceeding or that there was a violation of this section of law. (20 USC 1415[i][3][B]-[G]; 34 CFR 300.517)

Attorneys' fees relating to any meeting of the IEP team may not be awarded unless an IEP team meeting is convened as a result of a due process hearing proceeding or judicial action. Attorneys' fees may also be denied if you reject a reasonable settlement offer made by the district/public agency ten (10) days before the hearing begins and the hearing decision is not more favorable than the offer of settlement. (20 USC 1415[i][3][B]-[G]; 34 CFR 300.517)

To obtain more information or to file for mediation or a due process hearing, contact:

Office of Administrative Hearings
Attention: Special Education Division
2349 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 200
Sacramento, CA 95833-4231
(916) 263-0880
FAX (916) 263-0890

School Discipline and Placement Procedures for Students with Disabilities

School Discipline and Alternative Interim Educational Settings

May my child be suspended or expelled?

School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether a change in placement is appropriate for a child with a disability who violates a code of student conduct from his or her setting to:

- An appropriate interim alternative education setting, another setting, or suspension for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days; and
- Additional removals of not more than ten (10) consecutive school days in the same school year for separate incidents of misconduct

What occurs after a removal of more than ten (10) days?

After a child with a disability has been removed from his or her current placement for ten (10) school days in the same school year, during any subsequent days of removal the public agency must provide services to enable the child to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP. Also, a child will receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services and modifications, which are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur.

If a child exceeds ten (10) days in such a placement, an IEP team meeting must be held to determine whether the child's misconduct is caused by the disability. This IEP team meeting must take place immediately, if possible, or within ten (10) days of the school district's decision to take this type of disciplinary action.

As a parent you will be invited to participate as a member of this IEP team. The school district may be required to develop an assessment plan to address the misconduct or, if your child has a behavior intervention plan, review and modify the plan as necessary.

What happens if the IEP team determines that the misconduct is not caused by the disability?

If the IEP team concludes that the misconduct was not a manifestation of the child's disability, the school district may take disciplinary action, such as expulsion, in the same manner as it would for a child without a disability. (20 USC 1415[k][1] and [7]; 34 CFR 300.530)

If you disagree with the IEP team's decision, you may request an expedited due process hearing, which must occur within twenty (20) school days of the date on which you requested the hearing. (20 USC 1415[k][2]; 34 CFR 300.531[c])

Regardless of the setting the school district must continue to provide FAPE for your child. Alternative educational settings must allow the child to continue to participate in the general curriculum and ensure continuation of services and modifications detailed in the IEP. (34 CFR 300.530; EC 48915.5[b])

State Special Schools

The State Special Schools provide services to students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind at each of its three facilities: the California Schools for the Deaf in Fremont and Riverside and at the California School for the Blind in Fremont. Residential and day school programs are offered to students from infancy to age 21 at both State Schools for the Deaf and from ages five through 21 at the California School for the Blind. The State Special Schools also offer assessment services and technical assistance. For more information about the State Special Schools, please visit the California Department of Education Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ss/> or ask for more information from the members of your child's IEP team.

Children Attending Private School

May students who are parentally placed in private schools participate in publicly funded special education programs?

Children who are enrolled by their parents in private schools may participate in publicly funded special education programs. The school district must consult with private schools and with parents to determine the services that will be offered to private school students. Although school districts have a clear responsibility to

offer FAPE to students with disabilities, those children, when placed by their parent in private schools, do not have the right to receive some or all of the special education and related services necessary to provide FAPE. (20 USC 1415[a][10][A]; 34 CFR 300.137 and 300.138; EC 56173)

If a parent of an individual with exceptional needs who previously received special education and related services under the authority of the school district enrolls the child in a private elementary school or secondary school without the consent of or referral by the local educational agency, the school district is not required to provide special education if the district has made FAPE available. A court or a due process hearing officer may require the school district to reimburse the parent or guardian for the cost of special education and the private school only if the court or due process hearing officer finds that the school district had not made FAPE available to the child in a timely manner prior to that enrollment in the private elementary school or secondary school and that the private placement is appropriate. (20 USC 1412[a][10][C]; 34 CFR 300.148; EC 56175)

When may reimbursement be reduced or denied?

The court or hearing officer may reduce or deny reimbursement if you did not make your child available for an assessment upon notice from the school district before removing your child from public school. You may also be denied reimbursement if you did not inform the school district that you were rejecting the special education placement proposed by the school district, including stating your concerns and intent to enroll your child in a private school at public expense.

Your notice to the school district must be given either:

- At the most recent IEP team meeting you attended before removing your child from the public school; or
- In writing to the school district at least ten (10) business days (including holidays) before removing your child from the public school. (20 USC 1412[a][10][C]; 34 CFR 300.148; EC 56176)

When may reimbursement not be reduced or denied?

A court or hearing officer must not reduce or deny reimbursement to you if you failed to provide written notice to the school district for any of the following reasons:

- The school prevented you from providing notice;
- You had not received a copy of this Notice of Procedural Safeguards or otherwise been informed of the requirement to notify the district;
- Providing notice would likely have resulted in physical harm to your child;
- Illiteracy and inability to write in English prevented you from providing notice; or
- Providing notice would likely have resulted in serious emotional harm to your child. (20 USC 1412[a][10][C]; 34 CFR 300.148; EC 56177)

State Complaint Procedures

When may I file a state compliance complaint?

You may file a state compliance complaint when you believe that a school district has violated federal or state special education laws or regulations. Your written complaint must specify at least one alleged violation of federal and state special education laws. The violation must have occurred not more than one year prior to the date the complaint is received by the California Department of Education (CDE). When filing a complaint, you must forward a copy of the complaint to the school district at the same time you file a state compliance complaint with the CDE. (34 *CFR* 300.151-153; 5 *CCR* 4600)

Complaints alleging violations of federal and state special education laws or regulations may be mailed to:

California Department of Education
Special Education Division
Procedural Safeguards Referral Service
1430 N Street, Suite 2401
Sacramento, CA 95814

For complaints involving issues **not** covered by federal or state special education laws or regulations, consult your district's uniform complaint procedures.

To obtain more information about dispute resolution, including how to file a complaint, contact the CDE, Special Education Division, Procedural Safeguards Referral Service, by telephone at 800-926-0648; by fax at 916-327-3704; or by visiting the Department's Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se>.

Special Education Resources

Family Empowerment Centers, Parent Training Centers, and California Community Parent Resource Centers

Northern California

Rowell Family Empowerment Center
3830 Rancho Road
Redding, CA 96002
530-226-5129
877-227-3471
888-263-1311 Paradise
<http://www.rfenc.org/>
Serving Far Northern California

Plumas Rural Services, Inc.
586 Jackson Street
Quincy, CA 95971
530-283-1136
<http://www.plumasruralservices.org/>

Matrix
94 Galli Drive, Suite C
Novato, CA 94949
415-884-3535
800-578-2592
<http://www.matrixparents.org/>

Family SOUP
1650 Sierra Avenue, Suite 106
Yuba City, CA 95993
530-751-1925
<http://www.familysoup.org/>
Serving Sutter, Yuba, and Colusa counties

Support for Families of Children with
Disabilities
2601 Mission Street, No. 606
San Francisco, CA 94110
415-282-7494
<http://www.supportforfamilies.org/>
Serving San Francisco

Parents Helping Parents of Santa Clara
3041 Olcott Street
Santa Clara, CA 95054
408-727-5775
408-727-7655 TDD
<http://www.php.com/>

DREDF/Foster Children with Disabilities
Resource Center
2212 Sixth Street
Berkeley, CA 94710
510-644-2555 (TDD Available)
800-348-4232
<http://www.dredf.org/>

Central California

Special Parents Information Network
P.O. Box 2367
Santa Cruz, CA 95063
831-722-2800 Watsonville
831-423-7713 Santa Cruz
831-638-1967 Hollister
<http://www.spinisc.org/>

Exceptional Parents Unlimited
4440 N. First Street
Fresno, CA 93726
559-229-2000
<http://www.exceptionalparents.org/>

H.E.A.R.T.S. Connection
3101 N. Sillect Avenue, Suite 115
Bakersfield, CA 93308
800-210-7633
<http://www.heartsfrc.org/>

Southern California

Westside Family Resource Center
5901 Green Valley Circle, No. 320
Culver City, CA 90230
310-258-4063
<http://www.wfrec.org/>

Family Focus Empowerment Center
California State University, Northridge
College of Education, Room E109
18111 Nordhoff Street
Northridge, CA 91330
818-677-6854
818-677-5574
<http://www.csunfamilyfocus.com/>

Team of Advocates for Special Kids
(TASK)
100 West Cerritos Avenue
Anaheim, CA 92805
714-533-8275
<http://www.taskca.org/>

The Parents' Place
1500 S. Hyacinth Avenue, Suite B
West Covina, CA 91791
626-919-1091
800-422-2022
<http://www.parentsplacefrc.com/>

Exceptional Family Resource Center
9245 Sky Park Court, Suite 130
San Diego, CA 92123
619-594-7416
<http://www.efrconline.org/>
Serving San Diego and Imperial Counties

Team of Advocates for Special Kids
(TASK), San Diego
4550 Kearny Villa Road, Suite 102
San Diego, CA 92123
858-874-2386
<http://www.taskca.org/>
*Serving Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa
Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Orange,
Imperial, San Bernardino, Riverside,
Mono, and Inyo counties*

Loving Your Disabled Child
3407 Seventh Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90018
323-373-0323
<http://www.lydc.org/>
Serving most of Los Angeles County

Parents of Watts
10828 Lou Dillon Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90059
323-566-7556
Serving most of Los Angeles County

Chinese Parents Association for the
Disabled
P.O. Box 2884
San Gabriel, CA 91778
626-307-3837
<http://www.cpad.org/>

Fiesta Educativa
163 S. Avenue 24, Suite 201
Los Angeles, CA 90031
323-221-6696
<http://www.fiestaeducativa.org/>

Vietnamese Parents of Disabled Children
Association, Inc.
7526 Syracuse Avenue
Stanton, CA 90680
714-527-9216
<http://www.vpdca.org/>
Serving Los Angeles and Orange counties

Other Resources

Department of Developmental Services
Early Start/Family Resource Center/Networks
<http://www.dds.ca.gov/EarlyStart/ESFamResource.cfm>

National Dissemination Center for Children
with Disabilities
(800) 695-0285
<http://nichcy.org/>

Protection and Advocacy, Inc.
800-776-5746
<http://www.pai-ca.org/>

California Services for Technical Assistance and Training
707-206-0533
<http://www.calstat.org/>

Resources in Special Education (RiSE)
Lending Library
408-727-5775, ext. 110

APPENDIX D

Special Education Resources

For agencies and organizations specific to your own and your child's needs, please contact

<p>Behavioral Health, Drug and Alcohol Services, Mental Health (805) 781-4753</p>	<p>CAPSLO www.capslo.org</p>
<p>CASA – The C.A.A.R.E. Center (805) 541-6542</p>	<p>CASA 75 Higuera, Suite 180 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 (805) 541-6542 www.casenet.org or www.slocasa.org</p>
<p>California Children's Services 2156 Sierra Way P.O. Box 1489 San Luis Obispo, CA 93406 (805) 781-5527 www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/ccs</p>	<p>Central Coast Assistive Technology Center 3450 Broad St., Suite 111 P.O. Box 4310 San Luis Obispo, CA 93403 (805) 549-7420 www.ccatc.org</p>
<p>Central Coast Autism Spectrum Center 889 Murray St., Suite 200 San Luis Obispo, CA 93405 (805) 763-1100 www.autismspectrumcenter.com</p>	<p>Community Advisory Committee (CAC) www.sloselpa.org/CAC.htm</p>
<p>Department of Mental Health, San Luis Obispo (800) 838-1381 www.slocounty.ca.gov/health/mentalhealthservices</p>	<p>Diagnostic Center, Central 1818 W. Ashlan Ave. Fresno, CA 93705 (559) 243-4047 www.dcc-cde.ca.gov</p>
<p>SLO CAP (EOC) 1030 Southwood Dr. San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 (805) 544-4355 www.eocslo.org</p>	<p>Team of Advocates for Special Kids (TASK) <i>San Diego</i> 4550 Kearny Villa Road, Suite 102 San Diego, CA 92123 858-874-2386 www.taskca.org</p>
<p>Foster Youth Services 3350 Education Dr. San Luis Obispo, CA 93405 (805) 782-7209 http://fys.slocoe.org</p>	<p>Parents Helping Parents <i>San Luis Obispo</i> 3450 Broad St., #111 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 (805) 543-3277 www.php.com</p>

<p>San Luis Obispo COE Hwy 1 at Education Dr. San Luis Obispo, CA 93405 (805) 543-7732 www.slocoe.org</p>	<p>Tri-Counties Regional Center <i>Atascadero</i> Hotel Park 6005 Capistrano, Suite E Atascadero, CA 93422 (805) 461-7402 www.tri-counties.org</p>
<p>San Luis Obispo County SELPA 8005 Morro Rd. Atascadero, CA 93422 (805) 782-7301 www.sloselpa.org</p>	<p>Autism Society of California P.O. Box 1355 Glendora, CA 91740 (800) 869-7069 www.autismsocietyca.org</p>
<p>Calif. Dept. of Education 1430 N. St. Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 319-0800 www.cde.ca.gov</p>	<p>Tri-Counties Regional Center <i>San Luis Obispo</i> 3450 Broad St., Suite 111 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 (805) 543-2833 www.tri-counties.org</p>
<p>Chinese Parents Association for the Disabled P.O. Box 2884 San Gabriel, CA 91778 626-307-3837 www.cpad.org</p>	<p>California Services for Technical Assistance and Training 707-206-0533 www.calstat.org</p>
<p>Department of Developmental Services Early Start/Family Resource Center/Networks www.dds.ca.gov/EarlyStart/home.cfm</p>	<p>Council for Exceptional Children 1110 North Glebe Road, Suite 300 Arlington, VA 22201-5704 (888) 232-7733 www.cec.sped.org</p>
<p>IDEA Parent Guide National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) 381 Park Ave. South, Suite 1401 New York, NY 10016 (212) 545-7510 (888) 575-7373 www.nclld.org</p>	<p>United Cerebral Palsy of San Luis Obispo 3620 Sacramento Dr., Suite 201 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 (805) 541-8751 www.ucp-slo.org</p>
<p>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) http://idea.ed.gov</p>	<p>Office of Administrative Hearings Special Education Unit 1102 Q St., 4th Floor Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 323-6876 www.oah.dgs.ca.gov</p>