

A Resource Guide for Families of Students with Special Education Needs

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SPECIAL EDUCATION ELIGIBILITY

Children who exhibit learning problems and meet specific eligibility criteria may qualify for special education under one of the following areas:

Autism	Orthopedic Impairment
Deaf/Blindness	Other Health Impairment
Deafness	Specific Learning Disability Language
Emotional Disability	or Speech Disorder Traumatic Brain
Hearing Impairment	Injury
Intellectual Disability	Visual Impairment, including
Multiple Disabilities	Blindness

Eligible children may exhibit a variety of learning problems. For a complete description of the eligibility criteria, go to the Sutter County SELPA Web site, <https://sutterselpa.org/>, Educator Resources - look under Sutter County SELPA Procedural Guidelines for Assessment Guidelines.

If a student does not meet the special education eligibility requirement (i.e., the student's disability did not significantly affect the student's ability to learn), a student *may* qualify for services or accommodations under Section 504. Students who qualify under Section 504 are not required to have a written IEP document; however, there may have a written 504 Plan.

Congress passed Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act in 1973. It is a civil rights statute designed to prevent discrimination against individuals with disabilities. It states that no qualified individual with a disability in the United States supported by federal funds can be excluded from, denied benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any such program or activity.

Who is considered to be qualified?

- All students with disabilities who are entitled to attend school under state law
- Parents with a disability
- An employee with a disability who can, with or without reasonable accommodation, meet the essential requirements of a job

Who is an "Individual with a Disability"? A person who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits a major life activity;
- Has a record or history of having such an impairment; or
- Is regarded as having such impairment.

What are considered "Major Life Activities"?

Major life activities include seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, breathing, learning, working, caring for oneself, and performing manual tasks.

What are some examples of disabling conditions?

Some conditions that entitle a student for a 504 Plan may include: intellectual disability, learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, AIDS, cancer, alcohol addiction, attention deficit disorder, diabetes, asthma, physical disabilities, behavior disorders, etc., so long as they substantially limit a major life activity.

Samples of services and accommodations which are considered reasonable under Section 504:

- Adaptations in regular education programs
- Repeating and simplifying instructions for in-class and homework assignments
- Supplementing verbal instructions with visual instructions
- Using behavioral management techniques
- Adjusting class schedules
- Modifying test delivery
- Using computer aided instruction or other audio-visual equipment/technology
- Selecting modified textbooks or workbooks
- Use of NCR paper or photocopying for note taking
- Regular administration of medication or non-certified nursing procedures
- Arrangements for consultation and special resources such as reducing class size and use of one-on-one tutorials

What are the Procedural Safeguards of Section 504?

Parents of students who have a disability must be provided with notice of their rights prior to conducting an evaluation, making identification, or making a significant change in the student's placement. Parents and employees have a right to file a grievance with the local educational agency (LEA). Every LEA must have a Section 504 Compliance Officer. Parents are also entitled to file a request for a due process hearing.

SPECIAL EDUCATION 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.

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 your child's 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 child's school requesting an 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 LEA office or the SELPA to find out how to address your concerns (see list of member LEA phone numbers below).

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 onestep
- Seems very clumsy or has difficulty moving or locating body in space
- Has an inadequate or distorted understanding of time relationships
- 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
- 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

Requesting a Copy of Your Child's Education Record

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.

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 to determine the child's educational needs.

What is a Notification and Plan for Assessment?

When the SST process is not able to address your child's difficulties through general education interventions, an assessment may be requested. An Assessment Plan is a one or two 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., LEA and state wide assessments), and academic records.

Who Develops Assessment Plan?

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 assessment plan to the individualized education program (IEP) team meeting. The case manager consults with you and the appropriate school personnel (e.g., special education specialists, teacher, administrator) and then incorporates recommendations into your child's plan.

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*, 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 assessment 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. Testing 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 and state law, how your child learns, what skills should be strengthened or developed, and what special help your child may need.

Assessment Plan

When you receive the assessment plan, 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 assessment plan comprehensive? The plan must take into account your child's development and performance level 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 assessment plan 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 assessment plan, 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 assessment plan is received by the LEA, not counting days between regular school sessions or vacation in excess of five days, an IEP team meeting must be convened to review the results. You may request that the written report 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 LEA or SELPA administrator 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, your child 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 your child is 18 years of age).
- The assessment plan 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 IEP TEAM MEETING

What is an IEP Team 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 (i.e., special education specialist, your child's general education teacher, school psychologist, administrative representative, 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 Parents Helping Parents (PHP). You may contact the SELPA if you would like help finding a individual to assist you at the IEP team meeting.

What is My Role at the IEP Team 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.

ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

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

- Does your child have an identified disabling condition specified by law? (California *Education Code* 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 for special education)

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 FAPE?

FAPE means that each child in the public school system is entitled to an education that is appropriate 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 LEA 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 guidance document. For more information about Section 504, contact your LEA.

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 guarantee 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 LEA 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 LEA.
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. (For 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 need. 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 disabilities. 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. (For 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 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. **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). 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.
 - a. What services does your child need?
 - b. Who will provide them?
 - c. When will the services begin and end?
8. **Transition:** All students aged 16-21 years 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 IEP team meeting.
9. **State and LEA Wide Assessments:** How will your child participate in state and local 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 curb-to-curb 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). Transportation is written into the IEP only when the IEP team determines that a student requires such a service to benefit from your child's education.

11. Signatures: Typically, all IEP team participants confirm their attendance by signing the IEP. Parents may sign in consent to the IEP. 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 LEA administrator, request a facilitated IEP, pursue an alternative dispute panel, or exercise your due process procedural rights. 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.

Parent Rights

- You have the right to request an interpreter for the IEP meeting
- You have the right to present an independent assessment report 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 your child's 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 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.

The intent of the LRE principle is to educate all students in the most typical setting possible.

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 team 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 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 need. 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 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, and 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 assessment plan is developed (15 days).
- Parent rights, assessment plan, 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 individualized education program (IEP) team meeting date

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

IMPLEMENTATION

Two to three days or as soon as possible

- 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.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICE OPTIONS

Least Restrictive

General Education Class

General Education Class with Supplemental Services and Aids

General Education Class with Related Services

General Education Class with Consult and/or Collaboration from the Special Education Staff

General Education Class with Specialized Academic Instruction (in-class support model)

General Education Class with Specialized Academic Instruction (pull-out model)

Separate Classroom with Specialized Academic Instruction for most Instruction (Mild/Moderate)

Separate Classroom with Specialized Academic Instruction (Moderate/Severe)

State Special School

Referral Non-Public School Alternative Education Home/Hospital

Instruction in Non-Classroom Setting

Most Restrictive

PARENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIES

Parents Share in Many Responsibilities

- Coordinate your child's records; keep an up-to-date file of all relevant records.
- Initiate school conferences early in the year or whenever needed to help your child succeed.
- Share specific information about your child and help develop appropriate IEP goals.
- Join parent organizations and learn more about your child's disability.
- Attend school board meetings, parent group meetings, and parent advisory committees.
- Give positive reinforcement messages to teachers and other professionals. This can be accomplished through writing notes and letters or by making calls.
- 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 proactive 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

Education/Agency Resources

ALTA Regional Services

(916) 978-6400

<https://www.altaregional.org/>

American Diabetes Association

(800) 342-2383

www.diabetes.org

Autism Society of America

(800) 3AUTISM (328-8476)

www.autism-society.org

Braille Institute

(800) 272-4553

www.brailleinstitute.org

California Children's Services

(530) 822-7215

<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/ccs>

California Department of Education/Special Education Division

(916) 445-4613

www.cde.ca.gov

California Department of Rehabilitation

(530) 822-4591

<https://www.dor.ca.gov/>

California Department of Social Services

(530) 822-7327

<https://www.suttercounty.org/government/county-departments/health-and-human-services>

Center for Parent Information and Resources

(973) 642-8100

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/whatiscpir/>

Early Start Family Resource Network

(530) 822-2987

<https://www.sutter.k12.ca.us/subsites/SELPA/Infant-Program/>

Easter Seal Society

(916) 485-6711

<https://www.easterseals.com/superior-ca/connect-locally/superior-california.html>

Employment Development Department

https://edd.ca.gov/en/Office_Locator/

<https://edd.ca.gov/>

Epilepsy Foundation

800-332-1000

<https://www.epilepsy.com/>

Family Soup

(530) 751-1925

<https://familysoup.org/>

Social Security

(800) 772-1213

www.ssa.gov

Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health

In Case of an Emergency dial 911

(530) 822-7200

<https://www.suttercounty.org/government/county-departments/health-and-human-services/sutter-yuba-behavioral-health>

United Cerebral Palsy of the Inland Empire

(916) 565-7700

<https://ucpsacto.org/>

Links to National and State Organizations

American Printing House for the Blind [www .aph.org](http://www.aph.org)

Beyond Affliction: The Disability History Project
www.npr.org/programs/disability

California Council of the Blind www.ccbnet.org

California Department of Health Care Services
www.dhcs.ca.gov/pages/default.aspx

California Educators of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing www.cal-ed.org

California Employment Development Department www.edd.ca.gov

California Foundation for Independent Living Centers - YO!
www.yodisabledproud.org/organi:ze/disability-history-week.php

Center for Applied Special Technology www.cast.org

Disability [https://www .disability.gov/](https://www.disability.gov/)

Disability History Association www.dishist.org

Disability HistoryTimeline
<http://isc.temple.edu/neighbor/ds/disabilityrightstimeline.htm>

Disability Resources www .disabilityresources.org/HISTORY.html

The Disability Rights Movement
www.americanhistory.si.edu/disabilityrights/exhibit.html

IMPACT www.impactfamilies.org

Learning Disabilities Association of California
www.ldaca.org

Museum of Disability History www.museumofdisability.org

National Federation of the Blind www.nfb.org

National Organization on Disability www.nod.org

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/index.html>

Social Security Administration www.socialsecurity.gov/applyfordisability

**U.C. Berkeley Disability Rights and Independent Living
Movement**<http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/drilm>

UC Davis MIND Institute www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/mindinstitute/education

U.S. Department of Justice www.ada.gov

Special Education Terminology

The following is a list of terms used in specialized areas, such as education, psychology, and medicine. The definitions of these words are helpful to parents when reading reports, attending meetings, conferences, and/or talking with specialists who work with their child.

Academic - Refers to subjects such as reading, writing, math, social studies, and science.

Access - The right to enter, get near, or make use of something or to have contact with someone. For example, a child with a disability may need transportation to access his special education program.

Accommodations - Changes in format, response, setting, timing or scheduling that do not alter in any significant way what a test measures or the comparability of scores.

Adapted Physical Education (APE) - A related service for students with disabilities require developmental or corrective instruction in the area of physical education.

Adaptive Behavior - The ability of an individual to meet the standards of personal independence as well as social responsibility appropriate for his or her chronological age and cultural group.

Advocate - A person who represents and provides support to children with disabilities and/or their parents.

Age of Majority - Age 18, the age at which special education parental rights and procedural safeguards transfer from the parent to their child with a disability unless conservatorship is made. This must be addressed by the IEP team prior to age 18.

Alternate Assessment - A test designed for the small number of students with severe disabilities who cannot participate in the regular state standardized testing system.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) - An informal method of settling concerns or disagreements. It is a process that encourages all parties to problem solve and reach a mutually beneficial agreement.

Annual Review - A scheduled meeting of the IEP team on at least an annual basis to review, revise, and update the IEP.

Appeal - An integral part of the due process and complaint procedures. If the party filing a complaint disagrees with the findings, the party may give input at the local board presentation of findings or request review of the findings by the State Superintendent of Instruction. A parent or LEA that disagrees with a due process decision may appeal that decision through the court of appropriate jurisdiction.

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) - Application of learning principles derived from operant conditioning used to increase or decrease specific behaviors.

Aptitude Test - A test which measures someone's capacity, capability, or talent for learning something.

Assessment/Evaluation - Assessment encompasses all those functions in the testing and diagnostic process. It may include observation, interviews and testing methods to identify if a child has a disability, the severity of that condition, and the child's

educational needs based on his or her learning profile.

Assistive Technology - The term "assistive technology device" means any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability. The term "assistive technology service" means any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.

Attention Span - The extent to which a person can concentrate on a single task (sometimes measured in length of time).

Auditory Perception - How a person perceives or hears specific sounds.

Autism - A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, and adversely affecting a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.

Behavior Intervention Services - A systematic implementation of procedures designed to promote lasting, positive changes in the student's behavior in the least restrictive environment.

Blind - When a child relies basically on senses other than vision as a major channel for learning.

Cognitive Operations (Skills) - Processes involved in thinking, knowing; analytical or logical:

- Cognition - comprehension
- Memory - retention and recall of information
- Convergent thinking - bringing together of known facts
- Divergent thinking - use of knowledge in new ways (creative thinking)
- Evaluation - critical thinking

Community Advisory Committee (CAC) - A committee of parents and guardians, including parents or guardians of individuals with exceptional needs, and representatives from schools and community agencies, which has been established to advise the SELPA regarding the development and review of programs under the comprehensive local plan.

Complaint - An alleged violation by a public agency of any federal or state law or regulation.

Confidentiality - Assurance that no information contained in school records be released without parental permission, except as provided by law.

Consent - Permission from the parent/student or a student eighteen years or older as required by law for assessment, release of records, and implementation of a special education program developed by an IEP team.

Core Curriculum - The LEA-defined curriculum. The core curriculum is the range of knowledge and skills which are included in the LEA-adopted course of study and which must be learned for successful grade promotion and graduation. IEP goals and objectives should reflect knowledge and implementation of the LEA's core curriculum as adapted for the student with disabilities.

Counseling and Guidance - Counseling in a group setting, provided by a qualified

individual pursuant to an IEP.

Criterion-Referenced Testing (or Measurements) - Measures individual performance compared to an acceptable standard (criterion) - such as "can correctly name letters of the alphabet," not to the performance of others as in norm-referenced testing.

Day Treatment - Day Treatment and Day Rehabilitation may be provided by a school-based program or by a non-public school program. Services include assessment, plan development, therapy, rehabilitation, and educationally-related services.

Deaf - When a student has a hearing loss so severe that it inhibits language processing and affects educational performance.

Deaf Blind - When a student has a hearing loss and visual impairment which causes severe communication, developmental, and educational problems.

Disproportionality - Refers to being out of proportion. Disproportionate representation is the determination that students in special education are over - or under-represented based on race/ethnicity overall or by disability.

Due Process - Procedural safeguards to ensure the protection of the rights of the parent / guardian and the student with a disability under IDEA and related state and federal laws and regulations.

English Language Development (ELD) - A separate core content instructional area for English Learners (EL) to accelerate their English proficiency by promoting the effective and efficient acquisition of listening, speaking, reading; and writing skills of the EL student. ELD instruction is the direct, systematic, explicit development of vocabulary, grammar, comprehension and expression in both oral and written domains of English using curricula and instructional methods appropriate for second language learners. It is provided during the regular day, based on the ELD state adopted standards, and differentiated for the English proficiency level of each EL until the student is reclassified. All ELs, including those receiving special education services, must receive ELD instruction appropriate to their proficiency level, consistent with the LEA's instructional plan for teaching ELD, and from a teacher authorized to provide such instruction.

Emotional Disability - Because of serious mental health challenges a student exhibits one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree, which adversely affects educational placement:

- An inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances exhibits in several situations
- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems

Expressive Language Skills - skills required to produce language for communicating with other people. Speaking and writing are expressive language skills.

Established Medical Disability - For a preschool student, between the age of

three and five years, who is identified as having a disabling medical condition or congenital syndrome that the IEP team determines has a high predictability of requiring special education services,

Extended School Year (ESY) - The term means the period of time between the close of one academic year and the beginning of the succeeding academic year. An extended year program shall be provided for a minimum of 20 instructional days, including holidays. Schools must provide extended year services to individuals with disabilities based on regression and recoupment data. Whether or not an individual is entitled to extended school year services is determined by the IEP team.

Fine-Motor Coordination - Pertains to usage of small muscle groups (writing, cutting).

Formal Assessment - Using published, standardized tests usually for measuring characteristics, such as "intelligence" or "achievement;" tests which have a standard set of directions for their use and interpretation.

Foster Family – EC Section 56155 (b): A family residence that is licensed by the state or other public agency having delegated authority by contract with the state to license, to provide 24 hour non-medical care, and supervision for not more than six foster children, including, but not limited to, individuals with exceptional needs.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) - A special education program and/or related service(s) as determined on an individual basis which meets the unique needs of each child with a disability at no charge to the parent. Such an educational program and related service(s) are based on goals and objectives as specified in an IEP and determined through the process of assessment and IEP planning in compliance with state and federal laws and regulations.

Grade Equivalent - The score a student obtains on an achievement test, translated into a standard score which allows the individual student's score to be compared to the typical score for students in his or her grade level. A "grade equivalent" score of 6.0 means the score that the average beginning sixth grader makes; a "grade equivalent" score of 6.3 means the score that the average student who has been in sixth grade for three months makes.

Gross-Motor Coordination - Pertains to usage of large muscle groups (jumping, running). Bilateral - Ability to move both sides of the body at the same time (jumping). Unilateral - Ability to move one side of the body without moving the other (hopping).

Cross lateral (cross pattern) - Ability to move different parts of the opposite sides of the body together or in different sequences (e.g., skipping, which is a highly integrated movement).

Hard of Hearing - When a student has a hearing impairment, whether permanent or fluctuating, which impairs processing speech and language reception and discrimination through hearing, even with amplification, and which adversely affects educational performance.

Individual Counseling - one-to-one counseling, provided by a qualified individual pursuant to an IEP.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) - The Federal legislation that created amendments to PL 94-42, including the title of the act.

Individuals with Exceptional Needs (IWEN) - A student with a disability whose educational needs cannot be met by modifications of the regular school program

and who requires special instruction and/or related services. Excluded are children whose needs are solely or primarily due to the unfamiliarity with the English language or to cultural differences.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) - The IEP is a written educational plan for each special education student that includes instructional goals and objectives based upon the educational needs specified and developed by the IEP team.

Individualized Education Program Team - Comprised of multidisciplinary staff which includes the surrogate parent and open to any other persons charged with care and education of wards of the court and dependents in each local educational agency. The team is responsible for determining special education eligibility for individuals referred to special education services and appropriate educational program goals.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) - A written plan for providing early intervention services to an eligible child from birth to three years of age. The plan must be developed jointly by the family and appropriately qualified personnel involved in the early intervention. The plan must be based on the multidisciplinary evaluation and assessment of the child and include the services necessary to enhance the development of the child and family's capacity to meet the child's special needs.

Informal Assessment - Using procedures such as classroom observations, interviewing, or teacher-made tests which have not usually been tried out with large groups of people, and which do not necessarily have a standard set of instructions for their use and interpretation.

Intellectual Disability - A student who has significantly below average general intellectual functioning and deficits in adaptive behavior, which manifested during the developmental period, and adversely affects the student's educational performance.

Intelligence Test - A standardized series of questions and/or tasks designed to measure mental abilities - how a person thinks, reasons, solves problems, remembers, and learns new information. Many intelligence tests rely heavily on the understanding of spoken language.

Intelligence tests are given under controlled conditions involving standard instructions and time limits.

Intelligence Quotient (IQ) - The score obtained on a test of mental ability; it is usually found by relating a person's test score to his or her age.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) - The concept that each child with a disability is to be provided opportunities to be educated with nondisabled peers and in a setting which promotes interaction with the general school population and classmates who are typically developing to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of both. LRE is determined by the IEP team on an individual student basis.

Licensed Children's Institution (LCI) aka Group Home - A facility of any capacity which provides 24-hour non-medical care and supervision to children in a structured environment, with such services provided at least in part by staff employed by the licensed agency.

Local Educational Agency (LEA) - A school LEA, SELPA approved LEA charter school, or county office of education that provides education services.

Local Plan - The state required plan (*EC* Section 56170) that designates how the

local educational agencies of the special education local plan area will meet both state and federal requirements for educating individuals with exceptional needs who reside in the geographical area served by the plan. The Local Plan must include the governance structure, administrative support, and agency responsibilities.

Long-Range Goals - Global and general "aims statements" which describe what needs to be learned by the student.

Low Incidence Disability - A severe disability with an expected incidence rate of less than one percent of the total K-12 statewide enrollment; includes hearing impairments, visual impairments, and severe orthopedic impairments (*EC Section 56026.5*).

Mediation - A conflict resolution process that can be used to resolve special education issues. Mediation is entered into prior to holding a due process hearing as an intervening, informal process conducted in a non-adversarial atmosphere that allows the parties to create their own solutions rather than having one imposed upon them through the judicial process.

Modality - A way of acquiring sensation; visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, olfactory, and gustatory are the common sense modalities.

Multi-Handicapped - Students with a combination of disabilities (such as intellectual disability and deafness) which causes severe educational problems. Deaf-blind is not included in this category.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support - MTSS is defined as a coherent continuum of evidence based, system-wide practices to support a rapid response to academic and behavioral needs, with frequent data-based monitoring for instructional decision-making to empower each student to achieve high standards.

Non-Discriminatory Assessment - Assessment tools and methods which are "fair" to the student in the sense that they are given in the child's native language; given and interpreted with reference to the child's age and socioeconomic and cultural background; given by trained persons; appropriate even if the child has a physical, mental, speech, or sensory disability. Because some tests used in schools often do discriminate against certain students (e.g., by asking questions that relate to the experiences of white, middle-class, English-speaking persons), the term culturally appropriate assessment has come into use to emphasize that assessment must be fair to students of other language and cultural backgrounds.

Norms - Information, provided by the test-maker, about "normal" or typical performance on the test. Individual test scores can be compared to the typical score made by other persons in the same age group or grade level.

Occupational Therapist - Trained in helping pupils develop daily living skills (e.g., self-care, prevocational skills, etc.)

Occupational Therapy (OT) - Treatment provided by a therapist trained in helping a student develop daily living skills (e.g., handwriting, self-care, prevocational skills, etc.)

Orthopedically Impaired - A severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by a congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures).

Other Health Impaired - A pupil has limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, due to chronic or acute health problems

such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette syndrome; and which adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Parent - Means a biological or adoptive parent unless the biological or adoptive parent does not have legal authority to make educational decisions for the child, a guardian generally authorized to act as the child's parent or authorized to make educational decisions for the child, an individual acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent, including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative with whom the child lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare, a surrogate parent, a foster parent if the authority of the biological or adoptive parent to make educational decisions on the child's behalf has been specifically limited by court order.

Parent Counseling - Individual or group counseling provided by a qualified individual pursuant to an IEP to assist the parents of special education students in better understanding and meeting their child's needs.

Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs) - The stages of English language development that English learners are expected to progress through as they gain increasing proficiency in English as a new language. The PLDs describe student knowledge, skills, and abilities across a continuum, identifying what ELs know and can do at early stages and at exit from each of three proficiency levels: Emerging, Expanding, and Bridging.

Psychological Services - Services provided by a credentialed or licensed psychologist pursuant to an IEP. Services include obtaining and interpreting information about child behaviors and conditions related to learning, planning programs of individual and group counseling and guidance services for children and parents.

Reading Comprehension - The ability to understand what one has read.

Receptive Language - Receiving and understanding spoken or written communication. The receptive language skills are listening and reading.

Referral - The process of requesting an evaluation for a student who is suspected of having a disability. A referral is official and must be in written form. Once it is made, time lines and procedural safeguards ensue.

Related Services - Related services means transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education; can include speech pathology and audiology, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, early identification, and medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes. The term also includes school health services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training.

Reliability - The extent to which a test provides precise or accurate measures.

Residential Treatment Services - A 24-hour out-of-home placement that provides intensive therapeutic services to support the educational program.

Resolution Session - A structured meeting lead by the facilitator with the primary goal of clarifying issues, determining if solutions can be achieved, and designate the issues for hearing or complaint if no agreement to solutions can be achieved.

Response to Instruction (RTI) - Interventions that include screening, observing, intervening, and tracking progress over time (progress monitoring).

Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI²) - Is defined as a general education

approach of high quality instruction, early intervention and prevention, incorporating academic and behavioral strategies.

Scaled Scores - The translation of "raw scores" (total points earned on a test) into a score which has similar meaning across age levels.

School Psychologist - A person trained to give psychological tests, interpret results, and suggest appropriate educational approaches to learning or behavioral problems.

Self-concept - A person's idea of himself or herself.

Self-help - Refers to feeding, dressing, and other activities necessary for functioning as independently as possible in a family, in school, and in the community.

Service Provider - Refers to any person or agency providing some type of service to children and/or their families.

Severely Handicapped (SH) - Students who require intensive instruction and training (e.g., multi-handicapped, intellectually disabled, autistic, or emotionally disturbed).

Significant Disproportionality - Is the determination that a LEA has significant over-representation based on race and ethnicity overall, by disability, by placement in particular educational settings, or by disciplinary actions.

Social Work Services - Provided pursuant to an IEP by a qualified individual and include such services as preparing a social or developmental history of a child with a disability; group and individual counseling with the child and family; working with those problems in a child's living situation (home, school, and community) that affect the child's adjustment in school; mobilizing school and community resources to enable the child to learn as effectively as possible in the educational program; and assisting parents in developing positive behavioral intervention strategies.

Specialized Academic Instruction - Specially designed instruction to meet the unique need of the individual to allow them to access the core curriculum.

Specific Learning Disability - Means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may have manifested itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. The basic psychological processes include attention, visual processing, auditory processing, sensory-motor skills, cognitive abilities including association, conceptualization and expression.

Speech Language Impairment - When a student has a language or speech disorder that meets one or more of the following: articulation disorder, abnormal voice, fluency disorder, language disorder (receptive or expressive).

Student Study Team (SST) - A team of educational personnel including classroom teachers who are responsible for developing modifications to the regular program and providing appropriate learning environments for students who may be exhibiting school related problems. Through combining knowledge and brain storming efforts, the SST may generate solutions that enable a student to remain in general education rather than be referred for special education.

Surrogate Parent - A person appointed by the SELPA who acts as a child's parent for the purpose of the IEP process to ensure the rights of an individual with exceptional needs when no parent can be identified or located, or the child is a ward of the state and the parents do not retain educational rights for the child.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) - An acquired injury to the brain caused by an external

physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Traumatic brain injury applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. Traumatic brain injury does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

Transition - Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities. The coordinated set of activities is based upon the individual student's needs, preference and interests. The process begins at 16 years or younger and includes the student, family, education personnel, and vocational and adult service providers.

Triennial Assessment - Every student with a disability eligible for special education services shall have a complete reassessment at least every three years.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) - UDL focuses on planning instruction in such a way to meet the varied needs of students at the point of first best instruction, thereby reducing the amount of follow-up and alternative instruction necessary.

Validity - The extent to which a test really measures what it is intended to measure.

Visual Discrimination - Using the eyes to discriminate letters and words.

Visually Impaired (VI) - Students who are blind or who have partial sight and who, as a result, experience lowered educational performance.

Visual-Motor - The ability to relate vision with movements of the body or parts of the body.

Visual Perception - The identification, organization, and interpretation of data received through the eye.