

A PRESCHOOL TRANSITION HANDBOOK



Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center

Early Intervention Services

Third Edition (updated 9/2021)

Dear Parents,

This handbook is a guide for you as you prepare your child with special needs for the transition from early intervention services to preschool services at three years of age. **Transition** is the move from one program to another.

This handbook was developed to assist families in understanding the agencies, laws, and steps in making the transition to preschool. Knowing what to expect will help make this a smooth process for your child and family. There are many professionals and experienced parents available to assist you and your child. This handbook will provide you with the resources available to help you.

This handbook provides answers for most of the questions that you may have. You can read the handbook from cover-to-cover or read individual sections. It is our hope that this handbook will make your child's transition to preschool an exciting milestone in your child's life.

With best wishes,

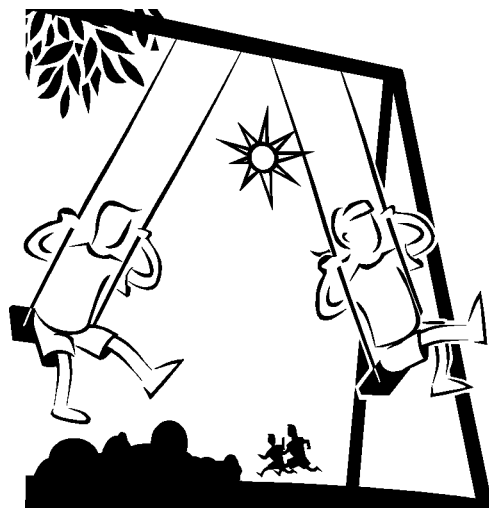


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INTRODUCTION TO TRANSITION

WHAT IS TRANSITION?

Transition is change.

It is a time in life when a person experiences a change in physical location, relationships, or attitudes. This handbook will describe a special transition you and your child are about to go through; the transition from early intervention services to public preschool services. It involves moving from the services funded or coordinated by the Regional Center to services provided by the school district.

Transition is a time of growth for families.

Most parents have concerns about sending a child off to school. This experience is shared by most families with young children. Starting school is a milestone in a child's life and should be looked at as a positive step of growth for you and your child. Most parents do worry about these changes.

Transition Experiences.

As a parent of a child with special needs, your child and family have probably experienced many transitions. Your child may have moved from the hospital where he/she was born, moved from a home-based infant program to a center-based program, and probably moved between various agencies providing services. Each of these transitions required thought and planning.

EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES VS PRESCHOOL SERVICES

Early Intervention Services are specialized infant/toddler services for children, birth to three years of age and their families. These services may include developmental evaluations, infant development programs, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and parent training programs. They are available to eligible children and their families under a federal law called IDEA Part C. California calls this the "Early Start Program." This program is coordinated by the regional centers and public school districts. The Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) is the comprehensive document that includes all of the services a child may need under Part C and their funding sources.

Preschool Services are the educational services available to your child with special needs, from three to five years of age, under IDEA Part B. Your child must qualify for special education services through the public school district. The Individual Education Plan (IEP) is the comprehensive document that includes the educational services that a child may need. A child may continue to receive other types of services through the regional center after three years of age, if he/she qualifies with a developmental disability.

TRANSITION PROCESS

WHY DOES MY CHILD HAVE TO TRANSITION TO NEW SERVICES?

Early Intervention services funded by the regional center under IDEA Part-C, do not continue past three years of age. At three years of age, your local public school district is responsible for preschool educational services for children who qualify for special education. California law does not allow the regional center to continue funding services when preschool services are available through other public funded agencies.

WHEN DO WE BEGIN?

An introduction to transition begins at two years of age or at a later point if you are new to the regional center. Planning for transition begins at two years, six months of age at your child's Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting. At that time, your service coordinator will begin to talk about transition to preschool services.

Although public school and Head Start programs begin on or shortly after your child's third birthday, starting early allows everyone enough time to prepare. The preparation time is needed to schedule a transition planning meeting, complete all necessary assessments and allow you time to learn about the new system of services for your child and family.

WHO MAY BE INVOLVED?

Your regional center service coordinator, the early intervention teachers or therapists, who currently provide services to your child, public school representatives), Head Start coordinator, and an advocate (if invited) may all be involved in the transition process. You and the professionals make up the multidisciplinary multi-agency team that will work together to ensure a smooth transition for your child. Your local family resource center is also available to provide parent-to-parent support. *You, the parent or guardian, are the most important member of the team. NO decisions can be made without you.*



Transition Options at Three:

- Public preschool or special services, if eligible
- Head Start program, if eligible
- Private preschool (parent pay)
- Services funded through insurance
- Other community services
- Combination of above
- No program

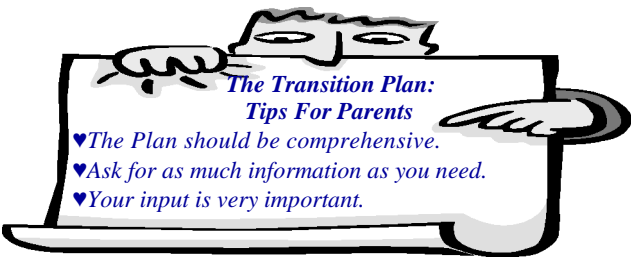
WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THE 6 MONTH TRANSITION PERIOD?

TRANSITION PROCESS

2 years:	START DISCUSSING WITH YOUR SERVICE COORDINATOR
2 years, 6-9 months:	PLANNING
2 years, 9-11 months:	ASSESSMENTS
2 years, 11-12 months:	ELIGIBILITY MEETINGS

PLANNING

- ✓ When your child is 2 years, 6 months of age, with your written consent, the regional center service coordinator will send a referral packet with your child's Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), recent assessments and early intervention reports to the local public school district and /or Head Start program,
- ✓ School district procedures may vary. Some school districts require that you register your child prior to beginning assessments. Other school districts ask that you register your child prior to starting services.
- ✓ Your service coordinator will update your child's medical and early intervention program information.
- ✓ Your service coordinator will schedule a transition planning meeting with you, the early intervention service provider(s), the regional center, and a school district preschool representative. You may choose to invite other family members, friends, or individuals. This meeting should be scheduled, as much as possible, at a convenient time and place for you.
- ✓ This meeting is to review your child's IFSP, as well as to develop a written *Transition Plan (TIFSP)*. The Transition Planning meeting is your opportunity to ask for information, discuss your observations of your child's strengths and needs, and express your desires regarding preschool services.
- ✓ If the school district does not participate in this meeting, your Service Coordinator will send them a copy of the Transition Plan that was developed by you and the Regional Center.



ASSESSMENTS

- Separate assessments may be necessary for the regional center and the school district.
- The Transition Plan should state what assessments (e.g. psychological, medical) the regional center can provide to determine your child's eligibility for continued regional center services after age three. It should also state what assessments the local school district will need to determine eligibility for special education services.
- The regional center and the school district will try to share each other's assessments and information. The coordinators from each agency will share with you the results of the assessment(s), help you to understand what the results mean, and assist you in understanding what steps are taking place. You may request copies of your child's assessments.
- Assessments may be done in your home, at the infant program, or you may be asked to bring your child to an office / school for assessments.

ELIGIBILITY MEETINGS

- Once assessments are completed, eligibility for the different agencies can be determined. Eligibility for public school special education services, Head Start program, and continued regional center services are determined separately, since they are different agencies and have different rules about who may qualify for their services.
- An Individual Education Program (IEP) meeting will be scheduled by the public school district to discuss eligibility and preschool service options.
- The regional center will also review your child's records and will determine his/her eligibility for continued regional center services.

Transition Planning Meeting Highlights

- ♥ Review the current IFSP
- ♥ Discuss possible services for your child at three
 - ♥ Explain eligibility criteria for various agencies
 - ♥ Discuss steps necessary to support transition to special education or other services.
 - ♥ Discuss assessments needed prior to age 3
 - ♥ Discuss timeline and steps to develop an IEP, if your child is eligible for special education.
- ♥ Plan other activities
- ♥ Exchange information
- ♥ Meet agency representatives

HOW SHOULD I PREPARE FOR TRANSITION?

- **Think about your child's strengths and areas of concern –** Identify what you think your child needs to learn in order to develop new skills and abilities. Write down your thoughts. Bring your questions, concerns and input with you to the Transition Planning meeting.
- **Organize your thoughts –** How will a transition to a new setting fit into your life? What are your resources? Are there other family responsibilities and commitments? What are your preferences and priorities?
- **Schedule assessments when your child is at his/her best –** Inform the person who will be doing the assessment about your child's daily schedule and his/her best time.
- **Follow up with assessments as scheduled – Delay in assessments may cause delays in starting preschool services.** Know what assessments are needed, who will be doing them and when they will be scheduled.
- **Keep Records -** Keep a notebook with your Transition Plan, names of contact people, program information and preschool visits.
- **Contact Parent-to-Parent Support Resources –** The Family Resource Center in Alhambra offers warmline services, support groups, information and IEP/IFSP assistance, provided by parents of children with special needs. They can also provide you with an E-Z Access notebook to help keep your child's information organized.
- **Gather information –** Learn about program options available in your community. Know your rights and responsibilities.
- **Prepare your child and family –** Develop a plan of what needs to be done and who in your family will do it.
- **Discuss –** Discuss the transition process and upcoming IEP meeting or regional center eligibility decision with your service coordinator or public school representative as needed.
- **Ask questions –** Ask as many questions as you have! If something seems clear at the time of the meeting and later does not, call your service coordinator. He/she will be happy to answer your questions or find the person who can answer them.





The Transition Plan: State of California Says...

The Transition Plan should contain the following information:

- **Discussion with, and training of, parents** regarding the toddler's transition to special education (for a toddler with a disability who may be eligible for special education preschool services under IDEA Part B) or to other community support (for a child who will not need special education services after age three.)
- **Transmission of Information:** With parental consent, the transmission of information about the toddler to the LEA including evaluation and assessment information and copies of IFSPs that have been developed and implemented.
- **Identifying Needed Assessments:** Assessments needed to determine regional center and special education eligibility. Determining the regional center or LEA responsible and time lines for completing the needed assessments.
- **Referral to LEA:** Steps necessary to ensure that the referral to a preschool is received in a timely manner to ensure that assessments required under Part B of IDEA are completed and an IEP is implemented by the toddler's third birthday
- **Referral For Evaluations And Assessments:** Plans for a referral for evaluation and assessment for services under Part B of IDEA, by the toddler is 2.6 years old, or before the LEA's break in school services if the toddler will become three years old during a break in school services. IEP development requirements
- **Plan for Joint IEP/IFSP Meeting, and If Necessary, IPP Meeting:** Plan to review the progress towards meeting the early intervention services outcomes identified in the IFSP; Plan to Determine the eligibility for special education and develop the IEP; and Plan to develop an IPP if the toddler is also eligible for services under the Lanterman Act.



REGIONAL CENTER ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

WILL MY CHILD BE ELIGIBLE FOR CONTINUED REGIONAL CENTER SERVICES AFTER AGE THREE?

An individual must have a developmental disability to be eligible for regional center services after three years of age. As defined by the Lanterman Act, developmental disabilities include intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, and other conditions closely related to intellectual disability or requiring similar treatment. These conditions must originate before 18 years of age, be expected to continue indefinitely, and constitute a substantial handicap. Conditions that are purely physical or medical in nature, or those that are temporary are not included. Eligible conditions are described in more detail in the Lanterman Act. Your service coordinator can provide you with a copy of the Lanterman Act.

HOW IS ELIGIBILITY DETERMINED?

If your child has one of the developmental disabilities noted above, a definite diagnosis by the regional center multidisciplinary team may or may not have already been made. If your child has been receiving early intervention services as a high risk infant, continued regional center eligibility will need to be determined before three. If you are not sure about your child's status, ask your service coordinator.

If your child's continued eligibility for regional center services needs to be decided, a psychological evaluation and/or other assessments may be required by the regional center. The various assessments and program reports will be discussed during the Transition Planning Meeting. These assessments need to be done 2-4 months before your child's third birthday. Once these are completed, your service coordinator will discuss the results with you and send you copies, if requested.

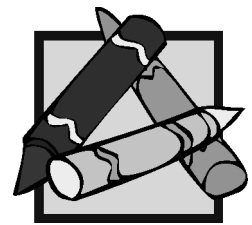
Your service coordinator will meet with the multidisciplinary clinical team at the regional center to review updated program reports and assessment information. Your child's eligibility will be determined at this time.



If your child is eligible for continued regional center services, an annual review meeting will be scheduled to review the IFSP and to determine what services your child will need from the regional center for the next year. This meeting will take place during the month of your child's third birthday.

If your child is *not* eligible, your service coordinator will contact you to discuss recommendations and plans to complete the transition process. Your child's case will be closed at three years of age and you will receive a written notice.

PUBLIC SCHOOL ELIGIBILITY PROCESS



WHAT IS SPECIAL EDUCATION?

Special education is an individualized education program designed to help children reach their full potential. It is provided for children 3 through 21 years (some school districts serve children from birth), 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 needs. Children are placed in special education programs only after resources at the regular education program have been considered and utilized when appropriate.

Special Education Preschool Programs are designed to promote a partnership of professionals and families to help meet each child's needs. Teachers and specialized service personnel participate in this team effort. In the Preschool Programs children are helped to develop language, socialization, motor and pre-academic readiness skills.

Special education students may be served in any a variety of settings depending upon needs as determined by the IEP team, which includes school district professionals and yourself. *Available settings and services may differ depending on the school district.* Examples of settings and services may include services from a specialist in a regular classroom/Head Start Program or outside of a classroom setting, special day classes, special centers, non-public schools, state schools, or residential schools.

WILL MY CHILD BE ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION?

Program eligibility is determined by the IEP team. A child may be eligible when the assessment shows impairment to a degree which requires special education in one or more of the following areas:

- language development delay
- hearing and/or vision impairment
- orthopedic/other health impairment
- autistic like behavior
- significantly below average intelligence
- learning problems
- articulation disorder
- serious emotional disturbance
- established medical disability
- traumatic brain injury

HOW IS ELIGIBILITY DETERMINED?

Various assessments will be done to determine your child's strengths and needs. These assessments may include a psychological, health, speech, hearing, or language assessment. The assessments required by the school district will be discussed during the Transition Planning meeting. The results of the assessments and your child's eligibility for educational services will be determined at the IEP meeting with the school district.

HEAD START PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

The Head Start Programs are available to children three to five years of age, however, four year old children are given priority. Head start program enroll applicants according to the family's needs. A child with a special need may not have to meet the financial eligibility requirement. A child may be eligible for public school service and also attend a Head Start program.

Referral	By parents, teachers, doctors, Regional Center or agencies Reason for referral Initial Screening
Assessment Plan	Mail Plan to Parent for Consent Reason for Assessment Areas to be Assessed Type of tests or procedures to be used Who will conduct Assessments
Informed Consent	Notice of Rights Parent Permission to Test
Receipt of Parent Consent	Assessment begins when parent permission received
Assessment Begins	Assessments may include: Health Study Class Observation Psychological Evaluation Adaptive Behavior Scale Language Evaluation
IEP Team Meeting	Eligibility for Special Education Services
Immediately	Development of IEP Goals/ Objectives Placement Determination Related Services Parent Consent Notice of Rights
IEP Implementation	Instruction Specialist(s), Teacher(s) Teaching Paraprofessional
Annual IEP Team Meeting	Review of IEP Teacher(s), Specialist(s), Report(s) Modify/ Add Goals/ Objectives Parent Consent, Notice of Rights

PRESCHOOL SERVICES

Public School Special Education Preschool Services are available to eligible children from three to five years of age. Each school district may offer a variety of options for preschool settings and services. The range of available services are different in each school district. Examples of services include:

After School Early Education Programs - parent participation program, one or two afternoons per week.

Designated Instruction and Services - instruction and services that are necessary for the child to benefit educationally, in areas such as:

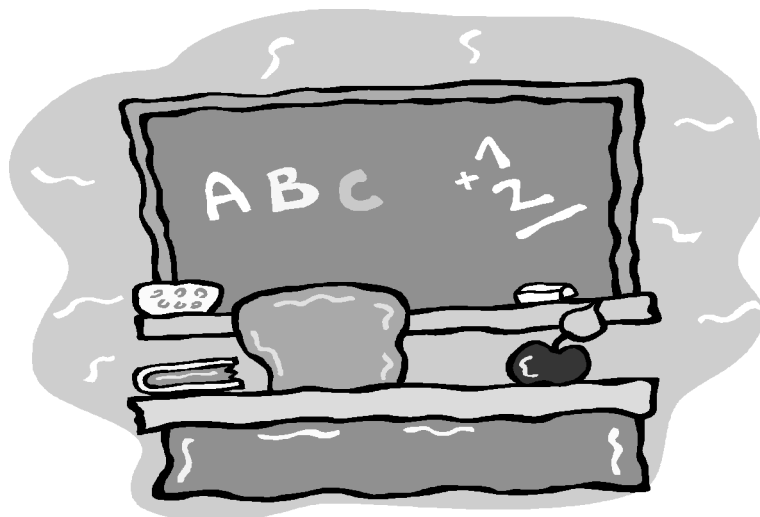
- ♥ Adaptive Physical Education
- ♥ Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- ♥ Speech and Language
- ♥ Vision Services

Resource Specialist Program Services - special instruction provided by a specialist in a regular classroom or in a resource room.

Special Day Class Services - services provided for children whose educational needs are such that they require special educational instruction for more than 50% of the school day. Some school districts may offer mixed classrooms for children with different types of disabilities or categorical classrooms for children who share similar disabilities.

Special Education Center - these classrooms are located on special campuses where all students on campus have disabilities.

Non-Public Schools - placement in a non-public school may be provided by the school district when the educational program developed in the IEP is not available or appropriate in any of the programs offered by the school district.



Home Program - teacher visits the child at home.

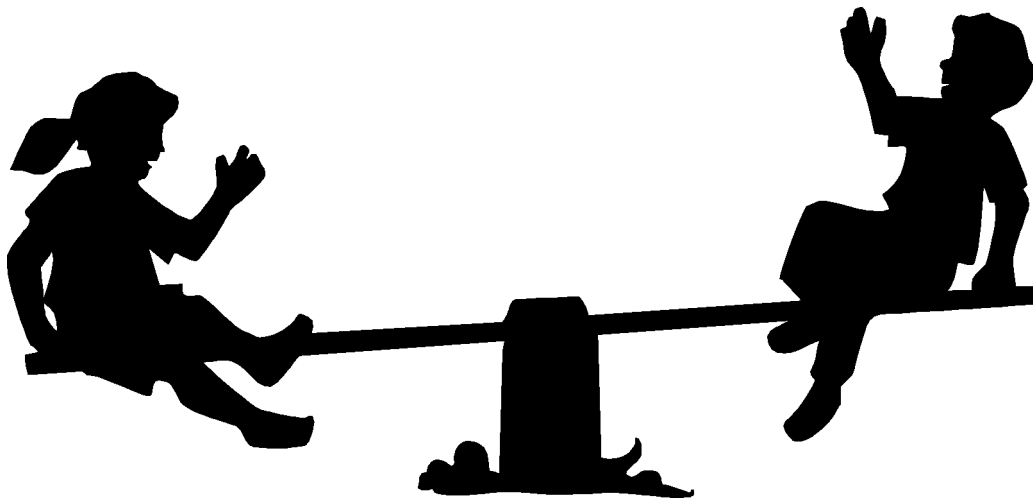
Head Start Program Services - services provided to preschool children to meet their educational, social, health, nutritional, and emotional needs. The program generally serves four to five year old children from the community and also offers service to children with special needs. Approximately 10% of the program is designated to serve children as young as three years of age who have special needs. Space availability is on a first-come-first-serve basis. Head Start is not a special education program.

Other Preschool Programs - programs available to children, three through five years of age.

There are many different types of preschool programs in the community. These include:

- State Preschool
- Parks and Recreation Activity Programs
- Adult Education Programs (Mommy and Me)
- Church, Temple, Neighborhood Groups
- Children's Centers
- YMCA
- Gymboree
- Private Preschools

Each of these community programs has something to offer preschool age children. Depending on your child's needs and strengths, there may be various options available for him/her. Many of these programs operate at a low cost or may have a sliding scale payment system. Parents are responsible for payment. Ask your service coordinator for assistance in obtaining information about services in your neighborhood.



VISITING PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

WHEN DO I VISIT THE VARIOUS PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS?

At the Transition Planning meeting, the IFSP team will discuss which types of preschool services may be available to your child. It is helpful to visit preschool programs before the IEP meeting, if possible. In this way you will be a more informed team member. If you wish to visit a class or classes, it is your responsibility to call the school district representative to arrange a visit.

SHOULD I BRING MY CHILD WHEN I VISIT THE PROGRAMS?

Your service coordinator and current infant program teachers may help you answer this question. This may be a good time to introduce your child to the idea of this new change and to see the various settings. If your child has difficulty with new environments, you may want to visit the programs by yourself and choose to revisit the most appropriate program at a later date with your child.

Visiting the various programs allows you to see the types of programs available in the school district that are potentially appropriate for your child. *The classroom you visit may not be the classroom your child will be offered.* You may ask your service coordinator, current infant program teacher or therapist to accompany you on a school visit. You may also arrange to visit a program more than once and you may want to see a program at different times during the day.



PRESCHOOL PROGRAM OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

CHILDREN IN THE PROGRAM

How many children are there in the classroom? _____
At what level of development are the children in the classroom (e.g. ability to walk, talk, self-feed, toilet)? _____

Additional comments about children in the program: _____

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

What toys/equipment are available? _____
How is the classroom decorated? _____
How is the classroom arranged? _____
Space for activities? _____
Space for group work? _____
Can the children reach the toys? _____
Can the children move freely? _____
Is the play yard close? _____
Are the bathrooms close by? _____
Are bathrooms appropriate size? _____
What about a child in diapers? _____

Additional comments about classroom environment: _____

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Preschool hours? _____
What is a typical day schedule? _____
Do the children play in structured groups? Yes No _____
Are they encouraged to play independently? Yes No _____
Is the instruction individualized for the child's needs? Yes No _____
Are planned activities appropriate for the child's needs? Yes No _____
Is there a variety of learning activities? Yes No _____
Are there opportunities for your child to play with non-disabled children?
Yes No _____
Is a daily schedule posted? Yes No _____
Are the children well supervised? Yes No _____
Are computer(s) and other equipment offered? Yes No _____
How does the teacher interact with the children? _____
Does the teacher seem responsive and comfortable? Yes No _____
Are children given a chance to communicate their needs? Yes No _____
What time-out procedures are used? _____

Additional comments about classroom activities: _____

SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM PERSONNEL

Who is the administrator of the school or program? _____

Who is the principal? _____

What is the role of the principal? _____

What related services are available? _____

How are they delivered (in class/resource room/Other)? _____

How many teachers work in the class? _____

What is the teacher's background/ training/experience? _____

How many aides work in the class? _____

Do volunteers work in the class? _____

Does the staff have training for special needs, e.g. medication, G-tube feedings? _____

Are there enough adults? _____

Additional comments about school and classroom personnel: _____

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

How are parents encouraged to be involved? _____

What do parents do when they visit? _____

Do parents assist with the class on a regular basis? Yes No _____

How does a teacher keep in contact with the parent?

Notebooks Yes _____ No _____

Phone calls Yes _____ No _____

Individual meetings Yes _____ No _____

Home visits Yes _____ No _____

Additional comments about the family involvement: _____

ADDITIONAL OVERALL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS REGARDING THIS SCHOOL



Note to Parents:

This checklist is one way of recording your impressions and comments about preschool program(s) that you visit. Use this form also as a means to compare different preschool programs. As you visit programs, remember that children in each program will be different from the group your child may join. You may visit a program where the children have been together for awhile or may be older than your child.

PUBLIC SPECIAL EDUCATION

IEP INFORMATION

The following section provides a summary of information that is important to understand as you enter the public school system. References for complete information are provided in the appendix section.

WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY ABOUT PUBLIC EDUCATION?

Children between the ages of three and twenty-one, who are eligible for special education, must receive an educational program especially designed to meet the child's unique learning needs. It must be free and appropriate. If there is no appropriate public school program available, a private school program must be provided at public school expense.

Your child has a right to receive education in the "least restrictive environment" (LRE). "Least restrictive environment is the environment which is as close as possible to general education with non-handicapped peers." *This may or may not be a regular classroom setting.*

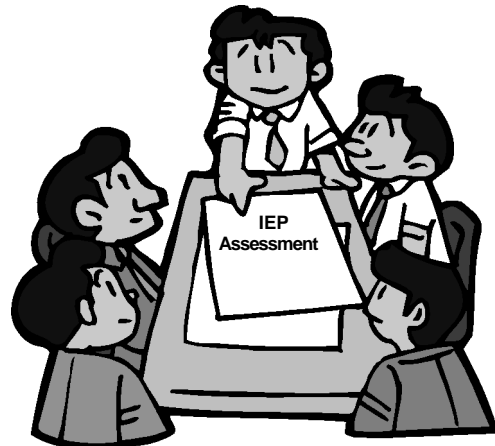
WHAT IS AN INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)?

An IEP is a document which must be written for each child who receives special education and related services. Your child's IEP helps insure that special education program and services provided are appropriate to your child's learning needs, and that their appropriateness is evaluated regularly. The IEP is a written plan of the services to be delivered by the school district. The IEP must be reviewed once a year. You or your child's teacher can request a review more frequently.

WHAT IS THE IEP TEAM?

The IEP Team determines your child's eligibility for special education and develops the IEP at a meeting that must be held at a mutually convenient time and place for all participants. The IEP team must include:

1. You, the parent or guardian
2. A representative of the school (usually an administrator) who is qualified to provide or supervise special education programs
3. A special education teacher
4. Other persons, as decided by the school and yourself (e.g. psychologist, speech specialist, child advocate, interpreter, friends of parents, regional center service coordinator)
5. A person who has conducted the assessment of your child, or who understands the assessment procedure used with your child, is familiar with the results, and can explain the results to the team.



You may ask anyone you want to attend the IEP meeting with you, including your regional center service coordinator, family resource center representative, and/or an advocate. *Due to the nature of the meeting, where there are a number of professionals discussing your child, it is recommended that you bring someone who can be a support to you.* As soon as you know the date and time of the IEP, contact those persons who will be attending with you.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT THE IEP MEETING?

It is very important to attend the IEP meeting. However, it is your right if you choose not to attend, to give verbal permission for the meeting to go on without you.

At the meeting, the school district representatives review the assessment information, discuss eligibility, and explain the various services that are appropriate for your child. If your child is eligible for special education services, the IEP team will go on to develop the IEP. *As a member of the team, your input is very important.*

WHAT WILL BE DISCUSSED AT THE IEP MEETING?

Introductions.

Members of the IEP team are introduced. If you do not understand why a school district representative needs to be present, **BE SURE TO ASK!**

Rights.

Your rights as a parent are explained.

Assessment Report.

The results of your child's assessments will be read, explained and discussed. If you do not agree with the assessments, this is the time to present your concerns. Give the team specific examples of what your child does and why you disagree with the assessments. If no agreement is reached at the meeting, you may obtain an independent assessment. You may or may not be reimbursed. You have the right to request and/or review copies of written assessments prior to the IEP meeting.

Eligibility.

Your child's eligibility to receive special education and related services is determined.

Goals and Objectives.

Your child's educational goals and objectives are developed. The goals should be realistic. Objectives should describe the steps that must be accomplished to reach your child's goal.

AN IEP SHOULD INCLUDE:

- ♥ *An eligibility statement*
- ♥ *Your child's present level of performance*
- ♥ *Goals and objectives for the coming year*
- ♥ *Designated instruction and service needs*
- ♥ *Appropriate program placement agreed upon by the IEP team*

Appropriate School Services.

Special Education and related services appropriate for your child are identified.

Placement.

This is when the team discusses *where* the services for your child will be offered.

Questions.

You will be provided with time to get your questions and concerns answered.

Important Note to Parents:

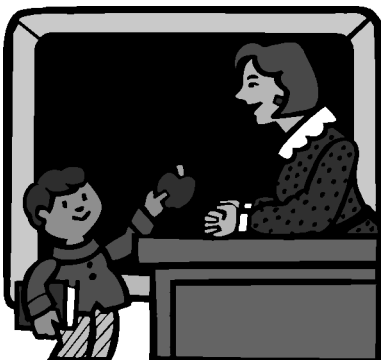
As a parent and a member of the IEP team, you have the right to participate in the development of goals and objectives, but not to determine specific program methodologies. You can participate in the choice of what model of service delivery is appropriate for your child, but may not necessarily be able to choose a specific school, teacher, classroom, or neighborhood. Special Education is a service, not a place.

Consent.

Once the IEP is completed, you will be asked to sign it along with all of the other team members.

If you agree with the IEP assessment(s), goals, objectives, placement, and services, you will sign to indicate your agreement.

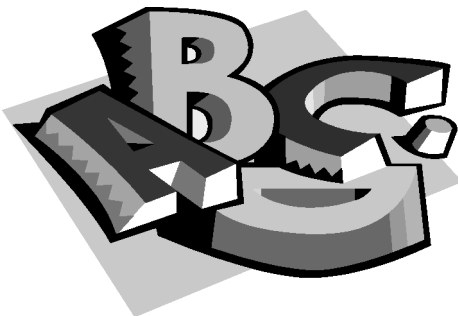
If you disagree with any of the recommendations of the IEP team, regarding assessment, placement or the services offered to your child, you may sign the IEP as a participant, indicating your wish to ask for due process. If you do not agree with the IEP and do not give consent, the team will discuss with you the next steps.



WHAT CAN I DO TO PREPARE FOR THE IEP MEETING?

As a parent, you are naturally “the best” advocate for your child. Your active participation is extremely important to best meet the needs of your child. The following list of questions will help you prepare for the IEP meeting:

- ✓ Have I signed the written notification of the IEP meeting?
- ✓ Have I asked who will be at the IEP meeting?
- ✓ Have I notified my child’s Regional Center service coordinator?
- ✓ Have I invited an outside specialist who works with or knows my child well?
- ✓ Have I invited my spouse, friend, or advocate to accompany me to the meeting for support, e.g., to listen, give information, or ask questions?
- ✓ Do I have a copy of my child’s assessments?
- ✓ Does the school have copies of all outside assessments that have been completed?
- ✓ Do I understand the assessment results and what they mean for my child?
- ✓ Do I agree with all the assessment results?
- ✓ Do they reflect my child’s strengths and needs?
- ✓ Have I noted the social and emotional interaction of my child with their peers, family and community?
- ✓ Did I provide specific, accurate information about my child’s skills at home? 3 Have I made a list of my child’s abilities and strengths? 3 Have I made a list of my child’s need?
- ✓ Have I found out about the preschool special education programs/services in my school district?
- ✓ Do I know about all possible options?
- ✓ Which types of programs and services seem appropriate for my child?
- ✓ Why are these services important?
- ✓ What do I want my child to learn over the next school year?
- ✓ What do I think are appropriate goals and objectives?
- ✓ How will my child’s development be monitored?
- ✓ Do I have any current medical information to bring to the meeting?
- ✓ Is there anything else I want to share at the meeting?
- ✓ Did I review my observation checklists?
- ✓ Do I have transportation and child care for the meeting?
- ✓ Do I want an interpreter for the meeting?
- ✓ Do I know my child’s legal rights?



Note to Parents:

You may wish to write these answers down and bring them with you to the meeting, along with any other notes you prepare. It is a good idea to keep a record of all telephone calls and activities.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE IEP MEETING?

Often preschool programs have special registration procedures. Ask what you need to do to register your child in preschool. Make sure you know when your child's services/program will begin.

HOW DOES MY CHILD GET TO SCHOOL?

Transportation may be provided by the school district, but it may take a few days/weeks for the service to begin. However, you may wish to transport your child until services start or on a permanent basis. If you choose to transport your child on a regular basis, and later find it too difficult, you may request transportation from the school district.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN SCHOOL IS NOT IN SESSION?

The public school district is responsible for the provision of educational services during this time (i.e., summer) when the need for extended school year (ESY) services is identified in the IEP. The ESY school site and teacher may not be the same as during the regular school session.

HOW OFTEN IS THE IEP REVIEWED?

The IEP is reviewed at least annually. You may ask for an IEP meeting at any time.

WHAT IF I DO NOT LIKE THE PRESCHOOL(S) OFFERED TO MY CHILD?

If you disagree with any agency decision, it is important for you to understand the due process procedures. You must follow each step in a timely manner to reach a resolution. Contact your service coordinator for additional assistance and information.

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD

Children often take their cues from their parents. If you have a positive attitude, your child will be more likely to adapt and be comfortable with the change. The following tips may help you and your child prepare for and adjust to a new setting:

♥ **Prepare your child for leaving the current program.**

Saying good-bye to friends and teachers is a natural part of the growing process. You can help make it a positive experience for your child. Explain to him/her about the changes ahead. Read books and talk about going to a new school.

♥ **Visit your child's new program.**

Allow your child to meet the new teacher and visit the new setting several times before he/she leaves their current program. This will make the new setting familiar to him/her before actually beginning the new program. If your child can walk, let him/her walk into the new classroom. This helps a child establish independence.

♥ **Expect some difficulties.**

Your child, as many typical children do, may show some changes in his/her behavior or development, like sleeping difficulties or more tantrums, when they begin a new program. Support and reassure your child by keeping his/her routine at home consistent. Keep changes at home to a minimum during this period. Spend special "quality time" at home during this adjustment period. Reassuring your child will help. These changes will improve with time.

♥ **Favorite items.**

Allow your child to take a favorite blanket, stuffed animal, or any other special item to help him/her adjust to the new school setting. Transitional objects should be allowed by the new teacher and are very important for your child's emotional adjustment.

♥ **Separating from your child.**

Leaving your child at a new school is a very difficult time for most children and parents. Until the new setting becomes familiar, it may help if you stay with him/her for a while each day. Help him/ her engage in an activity before you leave. It may help if you put your child's hand in the teacher's hand before you leave the room.

♥ **Every child reacts differently to changes.**

It may take a few days to several weeks for your child to feel comfortable in his/her new program. If there are some real difficulties, try to figure out what may work best. Try to remember the things that have worked in the past for him/her and try to adapt those methods to this situation. Set up a meeting with the teacher to discuss your concerns.

♥ **Talk to the teacher.**

Remember many educators are parents. Even if they are not, most of them have a good understanding of the ups and downs you may be experiencing and may have some helpful suggestions. If you feel you are not getting the support or services you expect, speak with the teacher. Share your honest feelings and discuss the options that may be available to resolve your concerns. Offer assistance if you can. You can help the teacher to understand your child and family. Teachers will be more willing to work with you to solve an issue if your approach is calm and you appear to be looking for cooperative solutions to the problem.

♥ **Stay involved.**

You are the primary protector of your child's interests and an essential member of the educational team. It is important to be an active participant in his/her education. Meet the teacher at the beginning of the school year and participate in school activities.

♥ **Praise your child.**

Tell your child everyday how well he/she is doing in school. A small present like a coloring book would be a good reward for his/her efforts, during this period of adjustment.

THE FIRST FEW MONTHS AT THE NEW SCHOOL

For the first month or two in a new program, your child will be getting to know other children, teachers and toys within the new classroom. You can help the staff get to know your child better by sharing information such as:

1. Special sitting and feeding positions
2. Snacks your child likes to eat.
3. Any special diet your child is on.
4. Ways your child communicates.
5. Special equipment and how to use it.
6. Favorite activities.

YOUR RIGHTS AND THE LAW

PARENT'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Parents have the right to information about their child and their child's program. They have the responsibility for seeking and maintaining this information.
2. Parents have the right to review their child's records. They have the responsibility for asking questions when they do not understand terms or reports.
3. Parents have the right to be full partners in their child's program. They have the responsibility for becoming and "remaining active members of the team.
4. Parents have the right to stand up for their child to make sure he or she gets the services he or she needs. They have the responsibility for basing their actions on accurate information.
5. Parents have the right to make suggestions or recommendations about their child's program or services. They have the responsibility for doing so.
6. Parents have the right to a vision for their child's future. They have the responsibility for helping their child achieve it.

LAWS AFFECTING SPECIAL EDUCATION

PL 101-476 - The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

In October 1990, Federal Public Law PL101-476, The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), amended the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL94-142). IDEA guarantees four basic rights to all children with disabilities. In order to assure that these rights are received, this law also includes two protections:



Rights Under IDEA

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Children with disabilities are entitled to a public education appropriate to their needs, at no cost to their families. Children 0-21 are entitled to a free appropriate public education dependent upon the school district in which the child resides.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Children with disabilities must be educated with students who do not have disabilities as much as possible and as close to home as possible.

Designated Instruction and Services (DIS)

Children with disabilities must be provided related services they need in order to benefit from their educational program. Some examples are: physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, counseling, deaf and hard of hearing services, vision services, adaptive physical education, etc.

Assessment

An Assessment must be completed to determine the child's needs in all areas related to his or her suspected disabilities. This may be done only with the parent's informed consent.

Protections Under IDEA

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

The IEP must be written at least annually for all children with disabilities. It is prepared by a team comprised of appropriate school district personnel and the parents.

Due Process

Due process rights ensure that no changes can be made in a child's program without prior notice to the parents. Due process also provides a mechanism for the resolution of disagreements.

PL 93-112- THE REHABILITATION ACT, SECTION 504

Section 504 guarantees that people with disabilities may not be discriminated against because of their disability. While IDEA protects children in the area of education, Section 504 protects those with disabilities for life and encompasses right to vote, education, accessibility, employment, etc. Some children who are not covered by IDEA requirements are assured the right to a free and appropriate education under Section 504.

IDEA - PART C

Part C authorizes assistance to states to address the needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities, and their families. The Part C program supports coordination across agencies and disciplines to ensure that comprehensive early intervention services are available on a statewide basis. These services are designed for children below the age of 3 who meet the state's eligibility criteria for developmental delay (and at risk if a state chooses to serve these children under Part C, which California does), and their families.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990 (ADA)

The ADA guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in employment, public accommodations, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications. Corresponding state law regarding special education can be found in the California Education Code, Part 30, Sections 56000 to 59300, and Title 3 regulations. Under California law, children with disabilities are eligible for education from birth to 21 years of age.

DUE PROCESS/FAIR HEARING **FOR REGIONAL CENTER (For Children Birth to Three)**

You as a parent or guardian have the right to appeal any decision made by the regional center if you feel that the decision is illegal, discriminatory, or not in your child's best interest. You need to initiate your due process appeal within thirty (30) days. If you disagree with a regional center decision, you can...

- 3 Ask for a meeting with the supervisor or multidisciplinary team. This is optional but may resolve the problem without any further due process,
- 3 Ask your service coordinator for the decision in writing and for the due process request form and procedure.
- 3 Complete the due process request form and follow the procedure. Ask your service coordinator or peer consultant for assistance, if needed.
- 3 Contact the Family Resource Center or other advocacy resources for assistance, as needed.

FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Is Due Process Needed?

As a parent, you are a part of the IEP team. If you disagree with any of the recommendations of the Individual Education Planning Team, regarding identification, evaluation, placement, or the provision of a free and appropriate public education to your child, you may wish to ask for Due Process. The intent of Due Process is to provide an objective forum. It allows for appropriate educational decision-making when a disagreement occurs.



When considering Due Process, all attempts should be made by the Individual Education Planning Team to reach an acceptable resolution of the differences. If such attempts have failed to solve the disagreements, then Due Process may be pursued by submitting a [written request](#) to the Superintendent of Public Instruction. A copy should be sent to your school district (public education agency). The request for Due Process should state the issue(s) upon which you are basing your appeal. Upon receipt of your request the following two events must take place:

- 3 1. The Superintendent of Public Instruction will advise you and the public education agency of all your rights relating to procedural safeguards (Due Process) including the right to waive the mediation conference.
- 3 2. Within three days after your school district receives your request for Due Process, they must advise you of free or low cost legal services available in your area.

[Due Process consists of the informal conference at the local level, the mediation conference, and the hearing at the state level.](#) This procedure can be modified because you have the option to waive either the informal conference, the mediation conference, or both. There are strict timelines that must be followed by all parties involved, including the parent.

If you want a mediation conference, the Superintendent has 15 days from the receipt of your request to hold the conference. Many issues can be resolved at this stage. However, if the problem is not resolved, the mediator will list those issues upon which the state level hearing will be based.

Due Process should not last longer than 45 days unless either party requests a delay. If satisfactory results are not brought about through the Fair Hearing process, you or the school district may choose to carry action into the courts.

The public school Due Process is complicated. You may wish to ask for help from your regional center service coordinator/ peer consultant, consumer rights advocate, family resource center or other advocacy resources.

When Should I File a Complaint?

You may file a written complaint with the Department of Education which serves your area if you believe that your public educational agency has failed to comply with the procedural safeguards and mandates of the law, or when the educational program of your child is not being carried out as designated on the Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Know Your Rights and Responsibilities for Due Process

Become familiar with all of the rights and responsibilities of Due Process. Your local district has the obligation to inform you of your legal rights. Parent advocacy groups and family resource centers can help you understand the fair hearing process and prepare you for the meeting that will be held.

Communicate with your school district. Although the issue or concern is usually between the school district and you, it is still important to communicate with district personnel. Information that you must communicate to the district includes:

convenient dates

locations for the hearing

provisions for interpreters

exchange of documents

Decide on Open VS Closed Hearing

Due Process may be either closed or open to the public. The type of hearing is entirely your decision. If a hearing is open to the public, confidentiality is waived. Careful thought should be given to the type of hearing you desire.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE LETTER

(Requesting a Report)

The following is an example of a letter from a parent/guardian requesting a copy of their child's assessment results. The letter is to be sent to the school district special education department where your child was assessed. The listing of school district special education offices is in Appendix D:Resources. Be sure you keep a copy of this letter for your records.

Today's Date
School District Name
Special Education Department
Address
City, State, and Zip Code

Dear _____ ,

On _____ (*date of evaluation*) , my child, _____ (*your child's full name*) was assessed by _____ (*name of examiner or school district*) to determine eligibility for preschool.

Please send me a copy of my child's assessment results so that I may review them before the IEP meeting.

Sincerely yours,

Your name
Your address
Your phone number

APPENDIX B

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Assembly Bill
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
APE	Adaptive Physical Education
ARC	Association for Retarded Citizens
CAC	Community Advisory Committee
CCS	California Children Services
CDE	California Department of Education
CP	Cerebral Palsy
DCFS	Department of Child and Family Services
DD	Developmental Delays or Developmental Disability
DDS	Department of Developmental Services
DHH	Deaf/Hard of Hearing
DIS	Designated Instruction and Services
DPSS	Department of Public Social Services
ESY	Extended School Year
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
FRC	Family Resource Center
HI	Hearing Impairment
ICC	Interagency Coordinating Council
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Program
IFSP	Individualized Family Service Plan
IPP	Individual Program Plan
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
LEA	Local Education Agency
LID	Low Incidence Disability .
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
LSD	Language or Speech Disorder
LSH	Language, Speech and Hearing Specialist (Speech Therapist)
MH	Persons with Multiple Disabilities
OH	Severe Orthopedic Impairment
OHI	Other Health Impairment
O&M	Orientation and Mobility
OT	Occupational Therapy

PL	Public Law (Federal)
PT	Physical Therapy
RIS	Requires Intensive Services
RLA	Responsible Local Agency
RSP	Resource Specialist Program
SB	Senate Bill
SC	Service Coordinator
SDC	Special Day Class
SDL	Severe Disorders of Language
SED	Serious Emotional Disturbance
SELPA	Special Education Local Plan Area
SH	Students with Severe Disabilities
SLD	Specific Learning Disability
SLDA	Speech/Language Delay-Aphasia
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
TASK	Team of Advocates for Special Kids
TDD	Telecommunications Device for the Deaf
UCP	United Cerebral Palsy
VI	Visual Impairment

APPENDIX C

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Adaptive Physical Education (APE) - a service that assists children with motor activities such as balance and climbing.

Advocate/Advocacy - someone who takes actions to help someone else; also to take action on someone's behalf. Advocates may be family members, friends, Regional Center staff, independent evaluators or experts, legal representatives, or even the individuals themselves representing their own interests.

Assessment - testing and observation to identify the child's strengths, needs, and to monitor progress.

Audiological Services - services for evaluating and assisting children with hearing loss; provided by a licensed audiologist.

Autism - a developmental disability characterized by unusual communication, social interaction, and behaviors, starting before age 3.

Categorical Class - a type of specialized class that serves children who share a common disability.

Cerebral Palsy - a non-progressive disorder characterized by impaired movement and posture occurring in the first 2 years of life, and resulting from damage to neurons in the brain. Cerebral palsy may affect only certain areas of the body; it may cause rigidity, spasticity, involuntary movement, low muscle tone, balance problems, or a combination of these.

Cognitive Skills - thinking skills, sometimes referred to as problem-solving skills.

Community Advisory Council (CAC) - a group of parents of children with special needs, students, members of the community, and special education professionals that advise the school district and school board about special education programs.

Designated Instructional Services (DIS) - instruction and services that are necessary for the child to benefit educationally, for example adaptive physical education (APE) or speech services.

Developmental Disabilities - according to the Lanterman Act, a disability which originates before an individual attains age 18, continues or can be expected to continue indefinitely, and constitutes a substantial disability for the individual. Under the law, developmental disabilities include intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, and other conditions closely related to intellectual disability or requiring similar treatment.

Developmental Delay - a term used to describe the development of children when they are not able to perform the skills that other children of the same age are able to perform.

Due Process/Fair Hearing - method or process for resolving disputes between the agency responsible for securing services (may be the Local Education Agency or the Regional Center) and families. Due process includes informal meetings, mediation, and fair hearing procedures.

Epilepsy - a seizure disorder characterized by recurrent sudden episodes of loss of consciousness or movement problems. Types of seizures include partial, grand mal, petit mal, and infantile spasms.

Evaluation - a way of collecting information about a child's strength and needs; also called assessment.

Extended School Year (ESY) - a related service that provides an additional session to assist children in meeting the IEP goals.

Fair Hearing - a formal meeting held by an outside individual to resolve a disagreement about regional center services or a child's educational program.

Family Resource Center (FRC) - a center that is usually staffed by parents who have children with special needs. They provide information, training activities, and support to parents of children from birth to three years of age.



Fine Motor Skills - skills involving hand use or the use of small muscle groups (i.e. scribbling, bead work)

Full Inclusion - generally means placement in the regular classroom, essentially 100% of the time, with the use of supplemental aides and services as necessary. At this time, there are no federal or state statutes mandating the full inclusion of all students with disabilities. However, since 1977, Federal law has required children with disabilities to be placed in a general education classroom to the maximum extent appropriate. Current law does not prohibit full inclusion of individual students. The ultimate decision as to each student is made by the IEP Team.

Goals - a list of skills and/or behaviors you, the teacher and your child will be aiming for over the next year. They are based upon your child's needs.

Gross Motor Skills - skills involving the use of large muscle groups for example walking or running.

Head Start - is a federally funded preschool program that serves children from low income families to meet the child's educational, social, health, nutritional, and emotional needs. 10% of the class is reserved for children with special needs.

Hearing Impaired (HI) - a term used to describe children whose main disability is in the area of hearing.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) - a written document that is developed between the family and the service coordinator from the regional center when your child is between birth and three years of age.

Individualized Educational Program (IEP) - a written document that states the child's current level of educational performance, specifies annual goals and objectives, and identifies the appropriate services needed to meet those goals.

Informed Consent - a parent's written permission to assess and/or receive a special education program.

Inclusion - the use and participation by individuals with disabilities and their families of the same community resources which are utilized by non-disabled peers.

Integration - children with and without disabilities participating in community activities together.

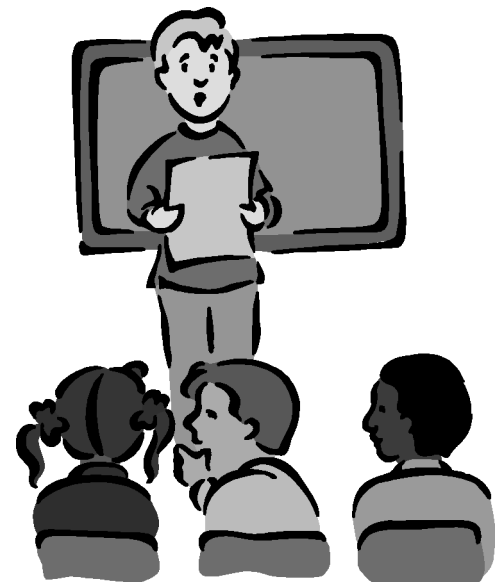
Itinerant Teacher - a special education teacher, with support from speech and language specialist services, who works in a variety of classrooms and at different sites. Most itinerant teachers work at a variety of sites.

Language delay - a lag or slowness in the development of a child's ability to use or to understand language.

Learning Disability (LD) - a disability characterized by problems using language, remembering, concentrating, following instructions, reading, calculating or learning through listening or looking.

Local Education Agency (LEA) - usually the local school district.

Mainstream - children with special needs spend as much time in a general education classroom as the parent(s) and professionals agree is appropriate



Mediation - a meeting of parents and school district personnel aimed at reaching an agreement regarding the child's educational program. This is also a part of the fair hearing process with the regional center.

Intellectual disability - significantly below average intellectual functioning, occurring prior to 18 years of age, and associated with impairments in adaptive behaviors such as communication, self-care, health and safety, and independent living skills. Must not be determined by IQ scores alone.

Multi-agency Team - a group of individuals representing various agencies who meet and discuss a child's assessments and appropriate services. The parent/legal guardian is a member of this team.

Multidisciplinary - a number of professionals from different disciplines (e.g., education, occupational therapy, nursing).

Multidisciplinary Team - under state law, refers to the involvement of two or more disciplines or professions, and the parent or guardian, in the provision of integrated and coordinated services, including evaluation, assessment, and IFSP development.

Multi-Handicapped* (MH) - when a child has two or more disabilities.

Objectives - describe the steps to be accomplished to reach your child's goal(s). Serve as a guide for planning and carrying out learning activities.

Occupational Therapy (OT) - a related service provided by a licensed occupational therapist who assists children with fine motor activities and everyday tasks like eating, dressing and hand use.

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) - a related service provided by an orientation and mobility specialist who teaches children with visual impairments how to know their position in space and how to move safely from place to place.

Orthopedic Impairment (OI) - a disability characterized by difficulty getting around without adaptive equipment, e.g., wheelchair, braces, etc.

Physical Therapy (PT) - a related service provided by a licensed physical therapist who assists children with gross motor activities such as rolling, sitting and walking.

Parent Counseling/Parent Training- support or educational services for parents to assist their understanding of the special learning needs of their child.

Placement - the actual service that occurs after the IEP is written to meet the child's special needs.

Preschool - classes or specialized services that serve children ages three-to- five-years-old.

Program Specialist - a professional working for a school district special education department who is knowledgeable about educational programs to meet a child's special needs and is responsible for making sure that children receive needed available services.

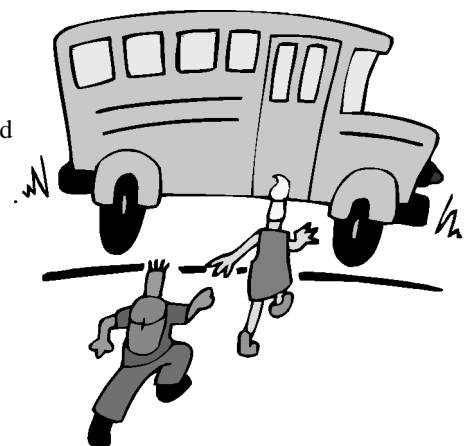
Receptive Language - recognition and/or understanding of what is heard.

Referral - a recommendation for assessment to determine if a specialized service is needed and at what level.

Related Services/Designated Instruction and Services - a term referring to those support services children may need in order to benefit from their educational program.

Resource Room - a special educational classroom for children who are in a regular classroom for more than half the day.

Reverse Mainstreaming - when children without disabilities go to the special education



classroom to play and learn with children with disabilities.

Self-Contained Classroom - a special educational classroom where children receive instruction in all developmental and academic areas.

Self-help Skills - a term relating to those skills associated with feeding, dressing and toileting.

Service Coordinator - as defined by law, the person responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring the child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), including securing services and supports, collecting and disseminating information, providing advocacy, and revising the plan if necessary. With training and support, a family member of the individual may serve as Service Coordinator.

Severely Emotionally Disturbed (SED) - a disability characterized by behavior problems that prevent a child from learning or getting along with other people; the behavior must occur for a long period of time and be severe.

Special Education Local Planning Area (SELPA) - each school district is either a SELPA or is a part of a SELPA. A SELPA is a combination of school districts and the county office of education, joined together to provide resources to meet the needs of students with special needs.

Special Day Class (SDC) - a classroom that is appropriate for children who would benefit from specialized services for over half of the school day.

Special Education - instruction that is adapted to teach children with special needs.

Speech Language Impairment - a term used to describe children whose major disability is in the area of speech and language.

Speech/Language Therapy - related services provided by a remedial language and speech therapist or speech pathologist who helps children learn to communicate.

Transition Plan - a part of the IFSP which is done when a child is 2.6 years old. It is developed by you, your regional center service coordinator, public school personnel, and other members of your multi-agency team. It includes specific steps to help you and your child through the process.

Visual Impairment (VI) - a disability characterized by a vision loss that affects a child's ability to learn.

APPENDIX D

School Districts

Alhambra School District

1001 S. 6th St.
Alhambra, CA 91801
626-308-2591

Rosemead School District

3907 N. Rosemead Blvd.
Rosemead, CA 91770
626-312-2900

San Gabriel School District

408 Junipero Serra Dr.
San Gabriel, CA 91776
626-451-5412

South Pasadena School District

1020 El Centro #2
South Pasadena, CA 91030
626-441-5810 ext. 1140

Norwalk / La Mirada School District

12820 Pioneer Blvd.
Norwalk, CA 90650
562-868-0431 ext. 2084

Los Angeles Unified School District

Infant and Preschool Support Services
333 S. Beaudry Avenue, 16th Floor
LA, CA 90017
213-241-4713

WACSEP

(Whittier Area Cooperative Special Education Program)

8036 Ocean View Ave.
Whittier, CA 90602
562-945-6431

Garvey School District

2730 N. Del Mar Ave.
Rosemead, CA 91770
626-307-3427

San Marino School District

1560 Pasqualito Dr.
San Marino, CA 91108
626-299-7067

Temple City School District

9301 La Rosa Dr.
Temple City, CA 91780
626-548-5081

Montebello School District

816 Donna Way
Montebello, CA 90640
323-887-7900 ext. 6504

Lowell Joint School District

11019 Valley Home Ave.
Whittier, CA 90603
562-943-0211

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This handbook was developed by the Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center for the Developmentally Disabled, Inc. in collaboration with parents, local education agency representatives, and infant/toddler service providers. A special thanks to the following parents and professionals for their hard work, effort, and commitment in reviewing this handbook (alphabetical listing):

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Coleen Schuster, Graduate Student, USC

Caroline Sambrano, ELA Family Resource Center, Parent

Nancy Spiegel, Harbor Regional Center

Frank Tocco, Downey-Montebello SELPA, Director

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