

A GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN TRANSITIONING FROM PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION

2014



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Check the NYSED website (<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/>) for new information on preschool eligibility and Special Education programs/services.



DEAR PARENTS:

Your child is getting ready to transition from Preschool Special Education to Special Education services. This handbook will provide you with some general guidance about the transition process, including:

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The Early Childhood Direction Center (ECDC) can talk with you if you have individual questions or concerns that relate to your child, family, or school district.

You can contact the ECDC by phone at
315-443-4444 or 1-800-962-5488
by e-mail at ecdc@syr.edu
or visit our website at <http://ecdc.syr.edu>.



TRANSITION PLANNING



Some children currently receiving Preschool Special Education Services will move to Special Education services under the Committee on Special Education (CSE). Others who no longer need specialized services will be ***declassified***. Regardless of what programming decisions are made, transition planning will be part of your child's final annual review under CPSE.

Transition planning will include:

- A review of your child's progress
- Identification of community resources needed by and available to you and your child
- A determination whether your child will be referred to Committee on Special Education (CSE)
- Timelines to ensure continuity of services
- Clarification about how information will be passed from CPSE to CSE
- A determination of whether services will be 10 or 12 months
- Steps to help your child adjust to a new setting

If you have questions and concerns about your child's transition planning process, you can share these concerns with your CPSE Chairperson or call the Mid-State Early Childhood Direction Center at 315-443-4444.



CONTINUITY OF SERVICES

Your child's transition from CPSE to CSE occurs the year they turn 5 on or before December 1st.

For example:

- Your child turns 5 on November 28th—your child will be eligible for Kindergarten services in September of the year prior to their 5th birthday.
- Your child turns 5 on or after December 3rd—your child is not eligible for Kindergarten until September of the following year.

If your child is transitioning from CPSE to CSE you may want to begin a process of transition. Below are suggested activities and timeframes to assist you in transition planning.

What Happens?

When

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Start talking to your school district personnel about what services may be available for your child next year. Ask them what you can do to prepare. | Fall—Early Winter |
| 2. The CPSE refers your child to the school districts' Committee on Special Education if services need to continue. | Early Winter |
| 3. School personnel observe your child and conduct any necessary evaluations and discuss recommendations with teachers and therapists for the upcoming year. | Winter—Spring |

CONTINUITY OF SERVICES (CONT.)



What Happens (cont.)

4. Formal reviews are held by your school district with you. You may have one or possibly two meetings to discuss your child's educational information. The CPSE will hold its annual review to discuss progress made during the year. If your child will be transitioning to CSE services, the CSE must arrange for an exit assessment. The following page has more information about exit assessments.
5. Visit the school whenever possible, participate in kindergarten orientation, complete an "All About Me" booklet, get to know the teachers and ask ALL questions that you have about the school and the program.

When?

Spring

Spring



"All About Me" can be obtained from the Early Childhood Direction Center at Syracuse University or on line at <http://ecdc.syr.edu/resources/all-about-me-todo-sobre-mi/>

PRESCHOOL EXIT ASSESSMENTS



Preschool children with a disability who stop receiving preschool services due to program completion or declassification will be given an exit assessment. Likewise, information from the exit assessment is part of the discussion at the child's annual CPSE meeting. Information gathered in the following three areas are part of the exit assessment.

- ♦ Positive social-emotional skills, including social relationships
- ♦ Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills including early language/communication and early literacy
- ♦ Appropriate behaviors to meet their needs

The exit assessment is not an assessment of your child, it is an assessment of the program. The purpose of the exit assessment is to determine the effectiveness of the child's past program placement.



KIDS MOVING TO CSE

Under CPSE and IDEA regulations, the CPSE is required to notify the Board of Education (BOE) in the district in which your child resides of the child's eligibility for Special Education services. An observation along with a review of information arranged by CPSE and possibly new evaluations will be conducted on your child. Information should be shared with you and the team.

AT THE COMMITTEE ON SPECIAL EDUCATION (CSE) MEETING



The following will occur:

- ◆ Review evaluation findings
- ◆ Determine eligibility for CSE services
- ◆ Develop and Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- ◆ Discussion of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
- ◆ Arrange for delivery of services
 - ◇ Type
 - ◇ Duration
 - ◇ Frequency
 - ◇ Location
- ◆ Identify the Least Restrictive Environment for your child (LRE)**
- ◆ Discuss 10 month vs. 12 month programming to prevent substantial regression
- ◆ Functional Behavioral Assessment if needed.
- ◆ Work to resolve differences before other procedures are considered

****Least Restrictive Environment:** placement of students with disabilities in special classes, separate schools or other removal from regular educational environment occurs only when the nature and severity of the disability is such that, even with the use of supplementary aids and services, education cannot be satisfactorily achieved.

For additional information on special education and the Procedural Safeguards Notice refer to <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/>

THE COMMITTEE ON SPECIAL EDUCATION



The CSE can include but not limited to the following individuals:

- ◆ The parent(s) of the student
- ◆ One general education teacher
- ◆ One special education teacher or if appropriate a special education provider
- ◆ School psychologist
- ◆ Representative of the school district
- ◆ An individual who can interpret evaluation results
- ◆ School physician—if requested
- ◆ A parent member - if requested
- ◆ Other persons having knowledge of the student
- ◆ People who you invite

The only time that the full Committee on Special Education (CSE) must meet is for a child's initial meeting. A subcommittee may be used when CSE meets to amend any current IEP document and at annual review.

Other information about the CSE:

- Each school district in NYS must have a Committee on Special Education (CSE).
- The NYS Education Department (NYSED) is the oversight agency
- The CSE reviews information prior to the child's annual review and determines if the child will continue to receive services under CSE. If it is determined that your child is no longer eligible, the CPSE must inform the family prior to the annual meeting of CPSE intent to declassify.
- The CSE develops an Individualized Education Program (IEP) if your child is determined eligible (see "Eligibility for CSE" on page 8).



ELIGIBILITY FOR CSE

If the CSE determines the child is eligible, additional assessments may be conducted (see pg 9) and may included the following. If the child is deemed not eligible for CSE **declassification** will occur (see pg. 16).

Eligibility for CSE is:

- Based on an individual evaluation in your child's native language
- Determined by multidisciplinary team
- Dependent on multiple sources of information including:
 - ⇒ Interview
 - ⇒ Observation
 - ⇒ Evaluations
- **Areas include in the evaluation: For children being declassified an evaluation must be conducted. However evaluations do not always need to be completed for children who are moving from CPSE to CSE a review of current information is appropriate.**
 - ⇒ Adaptive—self-help in areas like dressing and eating
 - ⇒ Cognitive—thinking, figuring things out, problem solving
 - ⇒ Motor—moving fine muscles development like grasping
 - ⇒ Speech and Language—talking, understanding and communicating
 - ⇒ Social Emotional—getting along with others, coping

The State Education Department has established 13 classifications that lead to CSE eligibility. There are specific criteria for meeting each classification.

- autism
- deafness
- deaf-blindness
- emotional disturbance
- hearing impairment
- learning disability
- Intellectual disability
- multiple disabilities
- orthopedic impairment
- other health impairment
- traumatic brain injury
- speech and language impaired
- visually impaired, including blindness

Information on the official New York State definition and the criteria described here can be obtained by contacting ECDC or <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/>

EVALUATIONS

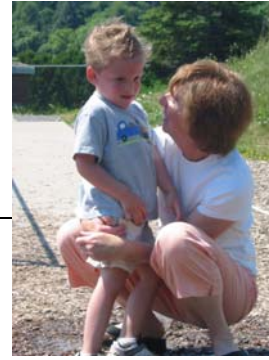


An **evaluation** is a careful examination of a child's skills, strengths and weaknesses to determine current levels of functioning, and how best to plan for your child. What can he do? What does she like to do? What kinds of things should he/she be encouraged to do next? If additional information is needed the CSE may ask for the following information to help determine CSE eligibility and for developing the most appropriate IEP (Individualized Education Program).

- Physical examination
- Individual psychological evaluation
- Social history
- Observation of your child in the students learning environment
- Possible assessments for speech (SP) Occupational Therapy (OT) Physical Therapy (PT)
- Other appropriate assessments, such as a *Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)*—this is a **mandated evaluation component for a child whose behavior impedes or affects his/her learning or that of others. For more information, go to <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/topicalbriefs/FBA.htm>**



YOU ARE A TEAM MEMBER



The laws about Special Education identify parents as members of the CSE. The CSE is responsible for creating the Individualized Education Program (IEP) which is designed to identify the programs and services to meet your child's educational needs. Your child's IEP is developed by a **team** that includes you, another parent of a child with a disability from the school district, an administrator from the district, teachers (general and special education), an evaluator, an individual who can interpret the evaluation results, and people that you feel have information on your child. Parents must put a request in writing to the committee that they will bring an additional person to the meeting.

That is quite a crowd! To help you feel part of the team your district should:

- give you at least 5 days notice about where and when the meeting will be held;
- Let you know what will be discussed at the meeting;
- reschedule the meeting if it is inconvenient for you to attend (let them know as soon as possible);
- provide copies of report summaries if you request them;
- let you know who will be attending the meeting;
- come to the meeting prepared with knowledge and information about your child that will guide the team in developing the IEP, not present you with an IEP that has already been completed before the meeting.

PREPARING FOR YOUR CSE MEETING



Before your child's CSE meeting think about your answers to the questions below. All of these issues can and should be considered at the meeting. Your views and priorities for your child are important and should help guide the meeting!

- Are there aspects of your child's behavior that you believe interfere with learning? If so what?
- What are your child's strengths and weaknesses?
- What methods have you found to be effective in supporting your child's growth and development?
- How well does your child interact with other children their age?
- Do you want support for increasing your child's social skills?

You should leave the meeting with a clear understanding of:

- Your child's strengths and weaknesses
- The goals that will be worked on for the school year
- The methods and services that will be used to reach these goals
- How the teacher/therapists will keep you informed about your child's progress

If you disagree with any recommendations that have been made, identify the recommendation and talk about it. If you and the other members of the committee don't reach agreement after talking the issue through, ask to meet again only if there is more information to be gathered that is beneficial. If the District Representative feels there is no further information to be gathered he/she has the authority to decide that the content of the IEP stands. A parent then has a right to go to Due Process if they are not in agreement.

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/coverpsgn109.htm#notice>

Don't leave the meeting until you understand the recommendations that have been made. If you disagree with any portion of the IEP, make sure the minutes of the meeting document your disagreement.

DEVELOPING THE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM IEP



The Individualized Education Program (IEP) includes the following components:

- ◆ Present Levels of Educational Performance (PLEP)
- ◆ Measurable annual goals
- ◆ Special education programs/placement
- ◆ Related services
- ◆ Extended school year eligibility
- ◆ Frequency, location and duration of services
- ◆ Modifications/supplementary aids and services, assistive technology and personal supports
- ◆ Transportation
- ◆ Classification
- ◆ Reporting progress to parents
- ◆ Testing accommodations
- ◆ Participation in district wide/state assessments
- ◆ Coordinated set of transition activities
- ◆ Declassification support Services



And can serve as:

A monitoring document and a foundation for communication



THE SERVICE OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS

School age children with a disability will receive services typically in the general education curriculum with support services in place. However some children, due to their needs, may need a program or services that occurs out of the general education curriculum. These may include:

- ◆ Special class
- ◆ District based BOCES program
- ◆ In or out of state day/residential placement
- ◆ Home or hospital instruction

Special Education Services that are provided within the general education curriculum may include:

1. *Related Services.*

This option provides your child with the services of one or more therapists such as occupational therapy (OT), physical therapist (PT), speech therapist (SP) to meet his/her special needs. The therapist works with your child a specified number of times each week that is determined by CSE, and also provides information and strategies to your family and the providers of any community based typical programs your child might attend. **The location of the services will be decided at the CSE meeting.**

2. *Consultant Teacher Services*

Consultation services will be for the purpose of providing direct or indirect support to the student. A direct CT means directly to the child in the general education room. Consultant teacher and resource room combined can now occur. This level of service allows up to 3 hours of service per week. Such services shall be recommended by CSE to meet the specific needs of the student and be included in the students IEP. This service can be further broken down on the IEP. For example: 2 hours of consultant in the resource room, 60 minutes of resource room teacher without direct CT.

- ◆ Direct consultant teacher—specially designated individualized or group instruction provided by a certified special education teacher to a student with a disability to aid such student to benefit from the student's regular education class.
- ◆ Indirect consultant teacher—consultation provided by a certified special education teacher to regular education teachers to assist them in adjusting the learning environment and/or modifying their instructional methods to meet the individual needs of the student.

3. *Integrated Co-Teaching Services:*

This may be added to the continuum but requires a special education teacher and general education teacher to co-teach. No more than 12 students with disabilities in the class and teacher assistants or aids can not be used in place of the special education teacher.

4. *Resource Room:*

Resource room programs shall be for the purpose of supplementing the regular or special classroom instruction of students with disabilities who are need of supplemental programs.

- ◆ Each student shall receive no less than three hours of instruction.
- ◆ Students shall not spend more than 50% of their time during the day in the resource room.
- ◆ An instructional group shall not exceed 5 students.
- ◆ The composition of the group shall be based on similarity with individual needs.

5. *Special Class.*

This is a class consisting of students with disabilities who have been grouped together because of similar individual needs for the purpose of being provided specially designed instruction. The maximum class size for those students whose special education needs consist primarily of the need for specialized instruction which can best be accomplished in a self-contained setting shall not exceed 12 students. Classes that contain students whose management needs interfere with instruction to the extent that an adult is needed within the classroom to assist in instruction shall not exceed 8 (8:1:1) students.

6. *In or out of state day/residential*

Services in this placement are provided to a student with a disability or combination of disabilities and it has been documented that the nature or severity of the students disability is such that public school placement for instruction are not appropriate in meeting the needs of the child.

Don't forget to ask about classrooms your school may have that represents the Co-teaching model (general education and special education teacher co-teaching within the classroom)

In All Cases...

The CSE arranges for the appropriate amount of services to meet your child's special educational needs while ensuring that she/he are being served in the least restrictive environment (LRE). In other words, as much as possible, kids should be "just kids."



YOUR ROLE



After the IEP is developed, there are some things you can do to make sure it is working well:

- Get to know your child's service provider—you can share information about things that are working and identify challenges that your child may have. An informational handout that you can use as you share this information is “All About Me.”
- Have regular conferences or other agreed upon ways to communicate—the methods of informing you about your child's progress is now required to be part of the IEP. You might use notebooks, phone calls or meetings.
- Observe and listen to your child:
 - ⇒ How is your child reacting at home?
 - ⇒ Are there behaviors that interfere with development or daily activities?
 - ⇒ Are there new skills you have seen?
- Share information with all team members that you think will impact your child.
- An important thing to remember about any plan is that it must be reviewed regularly to make sure that it matches your child’s strengths and needs.

You are a decision-maker. It may take some practice, but you can do it!! You have a right to be heard, to participate, to disagree and to ask for changes. Remember, laws don't enforce themselves. Even if you feel nervous...speak up, ask questions, and share your opinions about your child.

This is being a contributing member of a team that is working for your child!

If you disagree with any part of this process there is guidance available to help you make sure your rights are being upheld.

Procedural Safeguards Notice

This should be provided by your school district—make sure you receive a copy!

DECLASSIFICATION FOR SOME



Some children may no longer need an IEP under Special Education Services for those children there is a process identified as declassification.

Questions that you as a parent may be asking yourself as your child approaches the end of Preschool Special Education:

- ♦ What is declassification?
- ♦ How does declassification happen?
- ♦ Who decides if my child will be declassified?
- ♦ What should I do if I don't agree?
- ♦ What should I do if my child begins to struggle once he/she is in school?

Declassification can be a wonderful opportunity for your child. Declassification indicates that your child has made such progress they no longer require services under CPSE or CSE. If a child is recommended for **declassification**, a process MUST be followed. This process includes the following components:

- ♦ The CPSE reviews existing evaluation data as part of the reevaluation process and identified what if any additional data is needed.
- ♦ The CPSE has the responsibility to arrange for additional assessments by an approved evaluator selected by the parent
- ♦ The results must be provided to the CPSE, the parents and the municipality
- ♦ The CPSE must review the reevaluation and assessment results and determine the child's progress rating in each of the three outcome areas

For preschool children who will be declassified it may be helpful on the child's exiting IEP to document a date to review the child's progress or need for possible supports. These supports may include Academic Intervention Services (AIS), a 504 plan or the possibility of a referral to CSE. Most children who are declassified under CPSE do extremely well in their kindergarten setting. If referred to CSE by CPSE it is the CSE's role to determine if services are needed at school age. It is only CPSE's role to determine if a child should be declassified at preschool or referred to CSE for possible services.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT TRANSITIONING

Q When should I start thinking about my child's kindergarten program?

A You can start getting general information as soon as you want! Find out what school the kids in your neighborhood go to and ask your neighbors what the kindergarten is like. Visit the school and take a tour. Observe in the kindergarten classroom, if possible, to see what the school is like.

The actual planning for your child usually begins with you and the preschool staff in the late fall or right after the December Break. If you haven't heard anything from your child's teacher or therapist by February, you should give him/her a call and start things off yourself.

Q How do I find out what is available in my school district?

A There are a lot of ways to get this information. The folks at your child's preschool may have had some experience with your district and know about the kindergarten programs there. You can call your Director of Special Education or the CSE Chairperson or your neighborhood school principal for this information as well.

Q Should I visit the school right away to check how things are going?

A It may be a good idea to give the new teacher some "breathing room" and time to get to know your child before scheduling a conference. You should start the year off right with communication with the teacher through notes. Tell them if your child has a new interest or if they had a hard night. All this information will help them learn about your child. Certainly a first meeting in October or early November isn't unreasonable if you feel the need. Of course, if you have specific concerns or questions, go ahead and call or visit.

FAQ CON'T

Q How will the new teacher/school learn about my child and his/her strengths and needs?

A

The new teacher does get copies of the IEP and other information, but this may be after the school starts. Therefore it may be up to you to let the teacher know how to work with your child. Remember that you are the expert when it comes to your child. You will have important information about your child that the will not be in other forms. We have “All about me” form on our website that is a great tool to help the teachers get to know your child.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- ◆ You are an excellent source of information about your child. Your input to your child’s program is valuable and important.
- ◆ Let the school personnel know that you want to be involved. It is your right to work with the people who are teaching your child. A team approach, in which you and the school district are working together, is the BEST approach.
- ◆ Contact your child’s teacher on a regular basis. Informal conversations or notes are an excellent way to stay informed and establish a relationship with your child’s teacher.



- ◆ Pay attention to your child. Listen when he/she talks about school. Pay attention to his/her feelings and to behavior changes, that may be early signs that something is wrong. It is also great to share the positive changes or observations with the school.
- ◆ It is always helpful to keep good records. Organize folders or boxes early so that you have a place to store medical records, written reports, test results, etc. This will help you later when you need them.
- ◆ Try to meet and talk to other parents. Get to know parents through informal talks or by joining parent groups at your school or community. Other parents are a wonderful source for support and information.

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Created and distributed by
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<http://ecdc.syr.edu/resources/parent-guides/guide-to-special-education-transition-to-school-age-cse/>

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When you have questions about young children, call us.

While we teach our children, they teach us.