Free services for children birth to five years of age may be obtained through two separate systems, according to the age of the child:

1. **EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM (EI)**
   (For children birth through 2 years)

EI services are available to children from birth through 2 years of age. The steps in the EI process include referral, evaluation, eligibility determination, and delivery of services. First, a child must be directly referred for a Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation (MDE). This can be done by his or her parent or guardian, or by a professional working with the child and family. (Below is the phone number to contact the intake office at the Westchester county Department of Health.) After the referral, the family is assigned an Initial Service Coordinator (ISC), who will contact the parent as soon as possible. The ISC will assist the parent in selecting a State-approved evaluation site to perform the MDE. The evaluation results and the needs of the family, in addition to the informed clinical opinion of the evaluators, are used by the evaluators to determine the child’s eligibility for EI services.

Next, if the child is eligible for EI services, a meeting is held to discuss the specific services to be provided to the child and family. Participants in this meeting, which may include the child’s parent(s), the ISC, the EI Official or Designee (EIO or EIOD), and the evaluator(s), will create the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). The IFSP is a legal document which lists the services agreed upon by the participants. The aim is to provide services to children and families in locations considered to be “natural environments,” which means settings where typical same-age peers would naturally or normally participate. These include the child’s home, the home of a caretaker or relative, a child care center, or other community locations where children without disabilities or developmental delays are found. Services may include, but are not limited to, speech, physical or occupational therapy, social work and/or psychological counseling, special instruction, and nursing services. EI services are provided throughout the calendar year, including summertime.

Please contact us for a copy of the timeline and more detail about the EI process and services. If you have access to the internet, you can locate a flow chart on our website: [www.wihd.org/ecdc](http://www.wihd.org/ecdc). Give us a call at (914) 493-2902 if you have any questions about EI and other services available to assist children with special needs from birth to age five.

To refer a child for an evaluation or for further information about services provided through your local EI Program, contact:

**WESTCHESTER** (914) 813-5094

**PUTNAM** (845) 808-1640 ext. 46031

**ROCKLAND** (845) 364-2625
2. **COMMITTEE ON PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION SYSTEM (CPSE)**  
(For children 3 to 5 years)

CPSE services are available to children aged 3 to 5 years, by direct referral to the local school district's Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE). Each school district employs a professional who serves in an administrative role, called the “CPSE Chairperson”. He or she is available to assist parents through the process of referral, evaluation, eligibility determination, and delivery of services. He or she will lead all of the meetings of the “Committee”. The rest of the Committee will be made up of other participants involved in either the evaluations or the delivery of potential services to the child and family. The child’s parent(s) are included as equal members.

First, a parent must provide a written request to the school district for a Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation (MDE), including a brief explanation of the reason for concern about the child’s development. This letter counts as the “referral.” In response, the school district will provide the parent with a list of New York State Education Department-approved evaluation sites, as well as a copy of their due process or legal rights, and a consent form. The parent writes the name of their chosen site on the consent form, along with a signature, which counts as legal “consent” for the MDE to be done. After the evaluation report(s) have been returned to the Chairperson, the full CPSE will meet.

Together, the Committee determines the child’s eligibility for CPSE services. Eligibility for further CPSE services is based on whether a preschool student’s delay or disability meets the legal criteria and has a negative impact on his or her ability to learn or to participate in age-appropriate activities. Any eligible preschool-aged child will simply be classified as a “preschool student with a disability.” No additional medical or educational diagnosis is required for preschool students to receive CPSE services. CPSE services are scheduled according to the local school district calendar year, on a 10-month basis. A legal document called an Individualized Education Program (IEP) must be written, which lists the services to be provided and the student’s individual learning goals. Limited “Extended School Year” services may be provided for 6 weeks during the summer, only for children with the most significant management needs and/or who exhibit substantial regression that requires an inordinate period of review to regain levels of skill that had been attained before services were stopped (as observed and documented by professional service providers).

The services available to serve an eligible preschool student with a disability fall along a continuum. The aim is to provide services to every child in his or her Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). This means that for all children, appropriate services are to be provided in a setting with his or her typically developing peers as much as possible, while meeting his or her individual needs. Service options may include, from least to most restrictive:

A. Related Services  
B. Special Education Itinerant Teacher Services (SEIT)  
C. SEIT in combination with Related Services  
D. Special Class in an Integrated Setting (SCIS)  
E. Special Class  
F. Residential Program
Continuum of CPSE Services

A. **Related Services:** These are developmental, corrective, and other supportive services provided to assist a student with a disability. Services may include speech, occupational, and physical therapy, counseling, orientation and mobility services, parent counseling and training, and assistive technology. If two or more related services are recommended, the CPSE designates one of the related service providers as the Coordinator.

B. **Special Education Itinerant Teacher Services (SEIT):** Services are provided by a NYS certified special education teacher, who travels to the location of the child’s regular education class or program. S/he may provide specially designed, individualized or group instruction to meet the unique needs of the student(s). A SEIT may provide “direct services” to the child, and/or “indirect services,” like a consultant, to his or her general classroom teacher(s). SEIT services must be provided at least two hours per week.

C. **SEIT in combination with Related Services:** A preschool child may receive a mixture of the services above to meet his or her special learning needs. They may all be provided at a location including, but not limited to: an approved or licensed pre-kindergarten, Head Start program, child care setting, nursery school, therapist's office, or in the child’s home. When a child attends a mainstream early childhood program, it is the parent’s responsibility to locate it, enroll the child, and pay any fees or tuition. The SEIT is the designated Coordinator.

D. **Special Class in an Integrated Setting (SCIS):** A State Education Department-approved preschool special education program provides a classroom which includes children with and without identified special needs. It includes at least one special education teacher, in addition to a general education teacher and/or a paraprofessional. Each class lasts for a minimum of 2½ hours per day. Children approved for a SCIS may also receive related services. Transportation options will be discussed upon eligibility determination.

E. **Special Class:** A State Education Department-approved preschool special education program provides this classroom, in which every child enrolled in this class is classified as a “preschool student with a disability” by his or her school district. Classes may have up to a maximum of twelve (12) children. The classes are staffed by at least one special education teacher and one paraprofessional. Each class lasts for at least 2½ hours per day. Children approved for a special class may also receive related services. Transportation options will be discussed upon eligibility determination.

F. **Residential Program:** Special education services are provided for a minimum of five hours per day, five days per week. Placement in a residential program must be approved by the Commissioner. Children approved for a residential program may also receive related services.

Please contact us for a copy of the timeline and more detail about the CPSE process and services. If you have access to the internet, you can locate a flow chart at [www.wihd.org/ecdc](http://www.wihd.org/ecdc).

You may also ask us for the name and contact information for your school district’s CPSE Chairperson.

Give us a phone call at (914) 493-2902 or email us at: [ecdc@wihd.org](mailto:ecdc@wihd.org).