

Washington Township Special Services
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CHILD STUDY TEAM PARENT HANDBOOK

2018-2019



Learning Knows No Bounds

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Introduction:

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (also known as IDEA), all students with disabilities are entitled to a free and appropriate public education, in the least restrictive environment, including special education and related services to meet the individual needs.

In New Jersey, this federal legislation is carried out through NJAC 6A:14. This code outlines the responsibilities of the local districts in locating, identifying, evaluating, classifying and providing services for children with disabilities. It also identifies parent's rights to join educators in developing an appropriate educational program. A copy of the code may be requested at any time from the Child Study Team Office. A copy of Parental Rights in Education may also be requested at any time from the Child Study Team Office.

Also, New Jersey's Early Intervention System provides services for infants and toddlers (from birth to the child's third birthday) that have developmental delays or disabilities as well as support for their families. If you are concerned your infant or toddler is developing or learning differently, you can call an Early Intervention System referral 888-653-4463.

How is a child identified to the Child Study Team?

A child is identified to the Child Study Team by a written referral/request for Child Study Team Services. This written request is completed either by a school staff member, the parent, or an agency concerned with the welfare of the student. Before a request is made, however, interventions or modifications within the general program should be attempted and documented in writing. This can be done through I&RS (Intervention and Referral Services Committee).

What happens once a child has been identified?

Upon receipt of a referral for evaluation, a meeting of the Child Study Team, the parent, and the general education teacher, who has knowledge of the student's educational performance or the district's programs, is held. At that meeting, all existing evaluation data is reviewed and a determination is made as to whether or not a comprehensive evaluation shall be conducted by the Child Study Team. No testing can occur without the written consent of the parent. The parent is provided (at the meeting) with a written statement of the reason for the referral and the interventions that have been attempted. It then explains the types of evaluations to be completed and identifies the case manager from the Child Study Team who is responsible for ensuring that the process is completed in compliance with NJAC 6A:14. This notice provides a statement of the procedural safeguards that are provided in the evaluation process. 1

What is the evaluation process?

Evaluations are a means of gathering comprehensive information about a child in the suspected area of disability. Such information is gained through formal testing (individually administered) and through a functional assessment of academic performance and/or behavior. A functional assessment would include student observation, interview with teacher and parent, record review (including documented interventions), and informal assessment measures. Evaluations are completed by at least two members of the Child Study Team (the school psychologist, social worker, and/or learning consultant). Where appropriate, the child may also be evaluated by a speech language specialist, a neurodevelopmental pediatrician, a psychiatrist, an occupational therapist, a physical therapist, or a medical doctor. An individual or collaborative report is written by the professionals who evaluate the student.

How do I find out the results of the testing?

Once all testing has been completed, an eligibility conference is scheduled. Attending that meeting will be at least one member of the Child Study Team who evaluated the child, the case manager, the classroom teacher, a special education teacher (if appropriate), and the parent. The results of the evaluations are discussed and the parent is provided with a written notice of the child's eligibility for special education services. If the child is eligible for services, and the parent is interested and willing, the participants then go on to discuss programming recommendations for the child. This information is then documented in an IEP (Individual Education Program). Before this program can be implemented, the parent must sign the IEP to indicate agreement. If the parent is unwilling to sign, the program cannot be implemented unless the Child Study Team files for mediation or Due Process. This step is further explained in "Parental Rights in Special Education".

Once a child is classified does he stay classified the entire time he is in school?

A classification remains in place for a three-year period of time. According to NJAC 6A:14, a classified child must be reevaluated every three years to determine if (s)he continues to be a student with a disability. At this time, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team (which includes the Child Study Team, the parent, and appropriate teachers) meets to determine the nature and scope of the reevaluation. If a reevaluation is warranted, the IEP Team determines which CST members and/or specialists should conduct the reevaluation and parental consent is sought. As with the initial evaluation, an eligibility conference is then scheduled, so that the results of the testing can be shared and recommendations for programming can be made.

During that three-year period of time, if for any reason the teacher, parent, or Child Study Team feels a reevaluation is necessitated due to a significant change in circumstances, the testing can be completed once a meeting is held to discuss this reevaluation and parental consent is sought.

What program options are available in special education?

As previously mentioned, it is the responsibility of each school district to educate a child in the least restrictive environment. Placement in the general education setting with the support of supplemental aids and services is the first option considered. If it is determined that a student with a disability cannot remain in the general education setting with supplementary aids and services for all or a portion of the school day, a full continuum of alternative placements shall be available to meet the needs of the student.

How often is an IEP developed?

An IEP is initially developed when a child is identified as being eligible for special education services. It must then be reviewed annually, or sooner, as necessary.

What is included in an IEP?

An IEP shall include, but not be limited to:

- A statement of the student's present levels of academic achievement functional performance
- A statement of measurable annual academic and functional goals related to the core curriculum content standards, including benchmarks or short-term objectives
- A statement of the special education and related services and supplemental aids and services, including the projected starting date, the frequency, location, and duration of those services
- An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the student shall not participate in the general educational programming
- A statement of any individual modification or accommodations in statewide or district-wide assessments
- A statement of how the student's progress toward the annual goals will be measured
- A statement of how the student's parent will be generally informed of their child's progress toward the annual goals and the extent to which that progress is sufficient to enable the student to achieve the goals by the end of the year