

Special Education Resource Guide

Compiled by High Point's SEPAG

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Grades 9-12

Sending Districts: Frankford, Lafayette, Sussex/Wantage, Montague

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Cognitive Disabilities • Extended School Year Learning and/or Language Disabilities •
Multiple Disabled Resource • In-Class Support

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Special Education Classes and Resource Programs at High Point

General descriptions of academic levels offered

Resource Center Program (POR):

The Resource Center courses offer small group instruction in the following areas: English/Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, Health and Physical Education, and Work Experience. This program offers students the opportunity to focus on specific study skills including note taking, assignment organization, homework completion, project planning and teen preparation. The purpose of the program is to provide support and maximize success in specific general education courses.

Learning and/or Language Disabled Program (LLD):

The Learning and/or Language Disabled program offers small group academic instruction in a self-contained format. Instructional methodology includes a practical, functional, multi-sensory, language-based approach to learning. Students placed in the LLD self-contained program demonstrate cognitive ability and/or communication skills that are significantly below age expectations. The goal of the program is to provide students with a full range of daily living and vocational skills necessary to lead a productive life beyond high school.

Cognitively Disabled Program (MCI):

The Cognitively Disabled program offers small group instruction in a self-contained format. Students placed in the Cognitively Disabled program require extensive direct instruction in multiple settings in order to acquire and apply the skills necessary to function in domestic, community, living, recreational/leisure and vocational activities in school, work, home and community environments. Modified curricula and alternative instructional approaches focusing on basic skills, life skills, and vocational skill development are utilized.

In-Class Support (ICS):

In-Class Support is delivered in a general education classroom setting by a certified general education teacher and a certified special education teacher. These teachers collaboratively co-plan, co-instruct, and co-assess one group of students, some of whom are eligible for special education services.

- Provides curriculum/determines appropriate modifications to include special education students in general education curriculum
- Makes modifications and accommodations as indicated in students' IEPs
- Pre-teaches, re-teaches, or otherwise delivers instruction
- Reports on student progress via grading for academic work, progress reports for goals and objectives, and parent contact when appropriate

In-Class Aide (ICA):

A paraprofessional may support/reinforce instruction provided by a certified teacher, but a paraprofessional is not responsible for delivering instruction.

- Works under the direction of a certified teacher
- Supports students to participate in teacher-developed instruction
- Ensures that accommodations recommended by the IEP team are provided
- Assists the student with organization, following directions, and remaining on task
- Uses modeling, verbal prompts, and nonverbal cues to encourage student engagement

Related Services

Related services includes speech-language pathology and audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, including therapeutic recreation, early identification and assessment of disabilities in children, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling, orientation and mobility services, and medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes. Related services also include school health services and school nurse services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training. Any services deemed necessary by evaluation should be included in a student's IEP.

Refer to IDEA's definition of related services at §300.34

Speech

The development of age-appropriate speech and language skills is essential to the learning process and to a student's social and emotional growth. Children must be able to comprehend the language, express their thoughts, request explanations from the teacher and produce speech that others can easily understand.

Speech disorders include the following problems:

- Articulation disorders, which include difficulties producing sounds in syllables or saying words incorrectly to the point that other people can't understand what's being said.
- Fluency disorders include problems such as stuttering, the condition in which the flow of speech is interrupted by abnormal stoppages, repetitions, or prolonging sounds and syllables.
- Resonance or voice disorders include problems with the pitch, volume, or quality of a child's voice that distracts listeners from what is being said. These types of disorders may also cause pain or discomfort for the child when speaking.

Language disorders can be either receptive or expressive. Receptive disorders refer to difficulties understanding or processing language. Expressive disorders include difficulty putting words together, limited vocabulary, or inability to use language in a socially appropriate way.

What is remediation? Speech-language therapy involves having a speech-language specialist work with a child on a one-to-one basis, in a small group or directly in a classroom, to overcome difficulties involved with a specific disorder. Speech-language therapy uses a variety of therapeutic strategies, including:

- Language intervention activities – involve having a speech-language specialist interact with a child by playing and talking. The therapist may use pictures, books, objectives, or ongoing events to stimulate language development. The therapist may also model correct pronunciation and use repetition exercises to build speech and language skills.
- Articulation therapy – articulation, or sound production, exercises involve having the therapist model correct sounds and syllables for a child, often during play activities. The level of play is age-appropriate and related to the child's specific needs. Articulation therapy involves physically showing a child how to make certain sounds, such as the "r" sound. A speech-language therapist may demonstrate how a child should move his tongue to produce specific sounds.

Referral for Speech Services

Among the many services available to students within our district, including students not eligible for special education, are those services provided by our speech therapists. Therapists are trained in techniques to identify, support and remediate a student's speech and language needs. There are two ways in which our district identifies which children may be eligible for speech and language services.

- A child can be referred for evaluation by the child's teacher.
- A child can also be referred by the child's parent who may send a letter to the Child Study Team.

Within 20 days of receipt of a referral a meeting will be convened to discuss with parents, teachers and speech therapist of evaluation for speech services is warranted. If an evaluation is agreed upon, once it is completed, parents, teachers, and speech therapist will reconvene another meeting with 90 days to discuss assessment results and, if necessary, subsequent therapy.

Extended School Year (ESY):

An **ESY** program provides for the extension of special education and related services beyond the regular school year. An extended school year program is provided in accordance with the student's IEP when an interruption in educational programming causes the student's performance to revert to a lower level of functioning and recoupment cannot be expected in a reasonable length of time.

Out of District Placements:

Out of district placements include Special Services School District, State Approved Schools for the Disabled, State Operated Programs and Home Instruction. Home Instruction is considered the most restrictive and should only be utilized on a temporary basis.

About Child Study Team

The Child Study Team (CST) is a multi-disciplinary educational team that is responsible to locate, identify, evaluate, determine eligibility, and develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for students suspected of having educational disabilities. Our Child Study Team consists of a learning disabilities teacher consultant, school psychologists, and school social worker.

ABOUT SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

The Child Study Team, special education instructional staff, and related services specialists provide evaluation and intervention services to students. A parent/guardian, teacher, school nurse, school administrator, special services staff, medical specialist and other professionals or agencies concerned with the welfare of students may initiate a referral to the Child Study Team when an educational disability may be suspected.

Public schools are required by law to develop a process for identifying potentially educationally disabled students. An educationally disabled student is one who may be experiencing difficulties of a physical, emotional, academic, intellectual, or social nature to the extent that the student is not able to function effectively in a regular education program. A Child Study Team evaluation is necessary to determine the basis of the difficulties and whether the student is eligible for special services. If the student is determined eligible for special education and related services an individualized educational program (IEP) is developed.

With federal passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) in December 2004, parents/guardians are an integral part of the IEP Team that plans an appropriate school program and an IEP for the educationally disabled child. Parents and school personnel work together throughout this process in developing an appropriate program to meet the unique student needs. The district provides the full continuum of programs options as outlined in the New Jersey Administrative code (NJAC 6A: 14). The complete rules and regulations pertaining to Child Study Team procedures and students with disabilities are contained in the New Jersey Administrative Code, Title 6A, Chapter 14, Special Education. Parents/Guardians may obtain this document by contacting the Child Study Team or by accessing the website @ <http://www.state.nj.us/education/specialed/>

The First Step in the Referral Process

The Intervention and Referral Service (I&RS) team serves as a resource for teachers and is an integral part of the pre-referral process. I&RS members typically include, but are not limited to, the school principal, nurse, counselor, CST members and teachers. I&RS may also include parents, special education super-visors, speech therapists, or reading specialists. The purpose of the I&RS is to address any possible concerns teachers may have regarding their students' academic, social, or emotional functioning. Based on meetings with teachers, the I&RS team develops case-specific strategies for use in regular education classrooms. Teachers then implement these strategies according to I&RS recommendations. Parents are informed about the progress of their child through contact with the teacher. If the strategies are not effective, they may be revised or, if it is suspected that the student is potentially educationally disabled, a referral will be made to the Child Study Team.

Parents can request their child be brought before the I&RS team. They would do this by contacting the child's teacher or principal.

**Parents are always notified if their child is referred to I&RS.* Parents can always request a CST evaluation before, during, or after the I&RS process. Written requests for CST evaluations should be directed to the Director of Special Education.

Procedural Safeguards

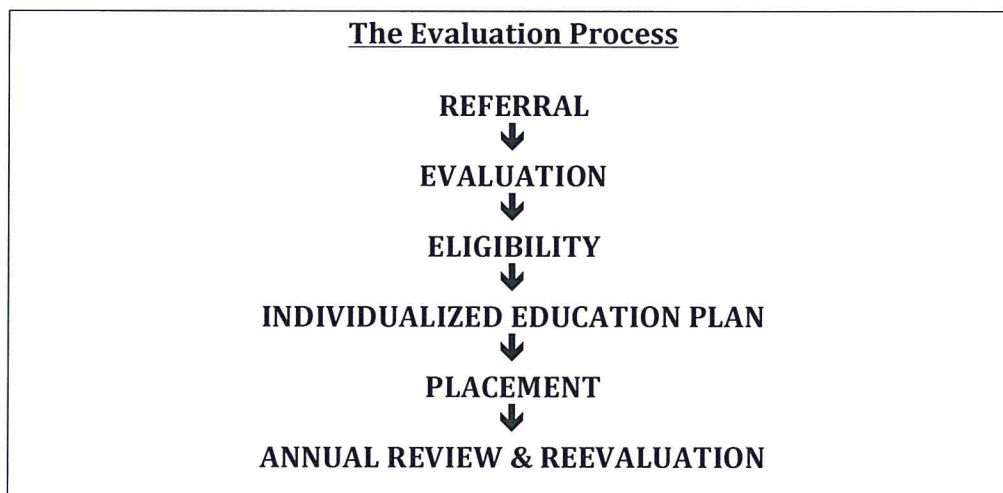
Handbook on Parents' Rights

IDEA requires school districts to provide parents of a child with a suspected disability, a notice containing a full explanation of the procedural safeguards (legal rights) available under IDEA and other state and federal regulations. This handbook is called, "Parental Rights in Special Education" (PRISE). Parents can obtain a copy of PRISE in any of the district's schools or in the Child Study Team office or by visiting <http://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/form/prise/prise.pdf>

When you will receive the Procedural Safeguards

The procedural safeguards must be given to you one time each school year and at the following times:

- When your child is first referred for evaluation or when you request an evaluation;
- When you request a copy of the procedural safeguards;
- When your child is removed for disciplinary reasons and the removal results in a change in placement;
- Upon receipt of the first State complaint and/or the first due process petition in a school year, if you should file a State complaint or request a due process hearing; and
- Upon revision to the procedural safeguards



Referral

The Identification and Placement Process: Description

A student is generally referred for evaluation by school personnel through the I&RS team or by the child's parent/guardian. The referral should be made in writing, addressing the specific presenting concerns and the child's current strengths and needs. The referral is presented to the Director of the Child Study Team who assigns the referral to a designated case manager. The assigned case manager has responsibility for managing the referral process. If parents make a referral for evaluation, it is important that they know who is designated to receive the referral, who will manage the referral process and who will be contacting the parent during the referral process. They can obtain this information by calling the child's school

Evaluation

Informed, signed, parental consent must be received in order for the school to proceed with the evaluation. It is important for the parent to understand the components of the evaluation and how the results of the evaluation will be used to determine eligibility for special education services. An initial evaluation shall consist of a multi-disciplinary assessment in all areas of suspected disability. Such evaluation shall include at least two assessments and shall be conducted by at least two members of the Child Study Team in those areas in which they have appropriate training or are qualified through their professional licensure or educational certification and other specialists in the area of disability as required or as determined necessary.

The specific kind of evaluations a child needs is decided on an individual basis and will include professionals trained to assess specific areas. Persons from varying disciplines including a school psychologist, speech-language therapist, physical therapist, audiologist and/or occupational therapist may conduct evaluations.

The common elements of a comprehensive assessment generally include the following:

- a) A psychological evaluation, which includes a standardized aptitude test that measures cognitive functioning, a clinical interview, observation, and as needed social-emotional and adaptive behavior rating scales;
- b) A social history, which includes developmental, medical, and educational histories, and parent, teacher, and student interviews;
- c) An educational evaluation, which includes achievement testing, learning style inventory, and a classroom observation; and
- d) A medical evaluation/health appraisal, which includes a physical examination and visual and auditory acuity testing.

Persons trained in the area of hearing or visual impairment may also provide assessment services, if needed. At this step of the process, parents should receive *Parental Rights in Special Education* (PRISE). After parent consent for initial evaluation of a preschool age

or school age student has been received, the evaluation, determination of eligibility for services under this chapter, and, if eligible, development and implementation of the IEP for the student shall be completed within 90 calendar days.

You, as a parent, can provide the school with information about your child that you want them to use in deciding if your child has a disability that requires special education and related services. In the event that a parent does not give permission for the school to evaluate the child and the school personnel believe that the child is in need of special education, the school system may, but is not required to, pursue the initial evaluation of the child by utilizing due process procedures.

Independent Evaluations

As described above, before receiving special education services, your child must receive an evaluation if a disability exists. If you disagree with the school's evaluation results, you can request an independent evaluation. This service is provided at the school system's expense and the testing is done by a licensed professional not employed by MTPS. The IEP team must consider the results of the independent evaluation.

Eligibility

After the required evaluations are completed and summary reports are written and shared with parents, the Individualized Education Program team (IEP Team) conference is held to determine if a child has a disability and needs special education and/or related services. The IEP Team includes the child's parents and professionals who are knowledgeable about the child's learning and behavior in the school environment. The team should discuss every area of physical, behavioral and academic functioning that affects the child's educational performance. The team must decide if the student (a) meets the eligibility criteria for a disability area as outlined in the New Jersey Special Education Administrative Code, Chapter 14, Title 6A; (b) if the disability adversely affects educational performance; and (c) is in need of specially-designed instruction and related services. All three criteria must be met in order for the student to be found eligible for special education.

According to IDEA 2004, students may not be deemed eligible for special education services if they do not meet the eligibility criteria of the law or if their eligibility is based on a lack of instruction in reading and math. A student may also be deemed not to be eligible if the disability does not adversely affect the child's educational performance.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Section 504 is a civil rights law that protects against discrimination and grants equal access for all. It affects students who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more life functions (e.g. learning). Under Section 504, if the student does not qualify for special education and related services, he or she may be eligible for reasonable accommodations in the general education classroom. Although

there is no official list of reasonable accommodations the following academic adjustments are noted specifically in the law: a) modifications to the method of instruction, b) extended exam time. c) alternate testing formats, and d) increased time to complete a course. Also auxiliary aids such as calculator, tape recorders, word processors, may be considered reasonable accommodations. Although there is not legal requirement to do so, in some cases OT and PT are provided in a 504 Plan.

The Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

Upon completion of the evaluation, an eligibility conference will be held to discuss whether the student meets the code criteria making them eligible for special education and/or related services. A copy of the collaborative Child Study Team finding report will be given to the parents. Subsequently, but usually immediately following this conference, and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) conference will be held.

At this meeting, the student's educational strengths and needs will be considered. Goals and objectives will be developed to address identified needs. The team will then determine the appropriate program for each individual student with consideration of the least restrictive environment as a priority. The evaluations, determination of eligibility for services, and (if eligible), the development and implementation of the IEP shall be completed within 90 calendar days of the district's receipt of parental permission to evaluate.

The implementation of a child's individual education program should occur 15 days after the IEP Team's completion of the plan, unless parents and school personnel mutually agree to an earlier implementation date. Times may vary, for example, if a child is assigned to another school for services and transportation must be arranged; if supplemental aids must be acquired and/or staff must receive specialized training in order to fully implement the IEP. The IEP document should identify the student's primary educational placement, the projected date for the beginning of the services and modifications described in the plan, and the frequency, location and duration for each service.

Required Elements of an IEP

For a comprehensive list of the required elements of an IEP, see Special Education NJ Administrative Code, Chapter 14:-3.7 (e) 1-17., pg. 62-68.

IEP Team Attendance

According to Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Individualized Education Program team or IEP Team must include the following persons:

- The parents of the child;
- At least one regular education teacher of the child;

- At least one special education teacher or, where appropriate, at least one special education provider of the child;
- A representative of the local education agency (LEA) who
 - a. is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities;
 - b. is knowledgeable about general curriculum; and
 - c. is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the local educational agency;
- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results. This person may be the LEA representative described above;
- At the discretion of the parent or the school system, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel, as appropriate; and
- The child, when appropriate.

Parents shall be given written notice of a meeting early enough to ensure that they will have an opportunity to attend.

Meetings shall be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time and place. If a mutually agreeable time and place cannot be determined, the parent(s) shall be provided the opportunity to participate in the meeting through alternative means, such as videoconferencing and conference calls.

Resolving Disagreements

What happens if I disagree with the school district over the identification, evaluation, classification, educational placement or the provision of a free, appropriate public education?

There may be a time when you and the school district disagree. Many disagreements can be resolved by communication with your child's teacher, case manager, the school principal, or other school district personnel. There are also procedures established under state and federal law to address your concerns, such as complaint resolution, mediation or a due process hearing.

Refer to the PRISE booklet, page 15, for further details regarding dispute resolution.

Disabilities Covered Under the Act

The following defines each area of disability included in New Jersey Special Education Administrative Code, Chapter 14, Title 6A:

- **Auditorily Impaired:** means an inability to hear within normal limits due to physical impairment or dysfunction of auditory mechanisms. An audiological evaluation by a specialist qualified in the field of audiology and a speech and language evaluation by a certified speech-language specialist is required.
- **Autistic** means a pervasive developmental disability, which significantly impacts verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction that adversely affects a student's educational performance. Onset is generally evident before age three.
- **Cognitively impaired** means a disability that is characterized by significantly below average general cognitive functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior.
- **Communication Impaired** means a language disorder in the areas of morphology, syntax, semantics and/or pragmatics/discourse, which adversely affects a student's educational performance and is not due primarily to an auditory impairment.
- **Emotionally Disturbed** means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a student's educational performance due to:
 - i. An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors;
 - ii. An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
 - iii. Inappropriate types of behaviors or feelings under normal circumstances;
 - iv. A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or
 - v. A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.
- **Multiply Disabled** means the presence of two or more disabling conditions, the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in a program designed solely to address one of the impairments.
- **Deaf/blindness** means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational problems that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for students with deafness or students with blindness.
- **Orthopedically Impaired** means a disability characterized by a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a student's educational performance.
- **Other Health Impaired** means a disability characterized by having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness with respect to the educational environment, due to chronic or acute health problems.

- **Preschool Child With a Disability** means a child between the ages of three and five experiencing developmental delay, as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in one or more of the following areas:
 - i. Physical, including gross motor, fine motor and sensory (vision and hearing)
 - ii. Cognitive
 - iii. Communication
 - iv. Social and emotional
 - v. Adaptive

- **Social Maladjustment** means a consistent inability to conform to the standards for behavior established by the school. Such behavior is seriously disruptive to the education of the student or other students and is not due to emotional disturbance as defined above.
- **Specific Learning Disability** means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. A specific learning disability is determined when a severe discrepancy is found between the student's current achievement and intellectual ability in one or more of the following areas, and that discrepancy is not primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, general cognitive deficits, emotional disturbance or environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage:
 - (1) Basic reading skills;
 - (2) Reading comprehension;
 - (3) Oral expression;
 - (4) Listening comprehension;
 - (5) Mathematical calculation;
 - (6) Mathematical problem solving;
 - (7) Written expression; and
 - (8) Reading fluency.

- **Traumatic Brain Injury** means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force or insult to the brain, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both.
- **Visually Impaired** means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a student's educational performance.

Other Definitions Included in IDEA

- **Adapted Physical Education** is a diversified program of activities specially designed for an individual who meets eligibility criteria for special education and/or

related services and is not able to participate safely and/or successfully in the regular physical education program.

- **Assistive Technology** is any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selections, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.

Accommodations and Modifications in the Classroom and for Testing

The IEP team determines whether accommodations, modifications of curriculum or testing, or alternative testing are needed. When the decision is made it must be documented in the student's IEP. The decision regarding the need for special consideration is based on the student's evaluation results, current level of functioning, and unique learning characteristics.

Listed below are acceptable accommodations and modifications for standardized testing as per the New Jersey Department of Education.

ACCEPTABLE ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

A. Setting Accommodations

1. Administering the assessment:
 - a) individually in a separate room
 - b) in a small group in a separate room
 - c) in the resource room
 - d) in a special education classroom
 - e) at home or in a hospital (this will depend on the nature of the assessment task)
2. Seating the student in the front of the room near the examiner or proctor
3. Seating the student facing the examiner or proctor
4. Providing special lighting
5. Providing special furniture e.g., desks, trays, carrels

B. Scheduling Accommodations

1. Adding time as needed
2. Providing frequent breaks
3. Terminating a section of the test when a student has indicated that he/she has completed all the items he/she can. The examiner must ensure that the student has attempted all items in a section since items are not ordered by difficulty. When this accommodation is used, the test must be administered in a small group or individually to avoid distraction.

C. Test Materials Modifications

1. Administering the large-print version of the test
2. Administering the Braille version of the test

D. Test Procedure Modifications

1. Administration modifications
 - a. reading directions aloud

- b. reading test items aloud (do not read aloud or sign the reading passages in Language Arts Literacy –the reading items may be read or signed); ONLY the teacher who must read the test items aloud or sign is permitted to have a test booklet assigned to him/her for this task
 - c. providing and ensuring that amplification (hearing aid and/or FM system) is in working order
 - d. using a sign language or cued speech interpreter to sign or cue the directions or test items but NOT the reading passages
 - e. masking a portion of the test booklet and/or answer folder to eliminate visual distractors or providing reading windows
 - f. repeating, clarifying, or rewording directions ONLY
 - g. providing written directions on a separate sheet or transparency
 - h. using an examiner who is familiar with the student
 - i. using an examiner who can communicate fluently in sign language (American Sign Language or a form of Manually Coded English)
 - j. providing manipulatives for math items e.g., number line, counting chips, abacus (for NJ ASK 3-8 ONLY)
 - k. using graph paper for HSPA Mathematics (all students are permitted graph paper for NJ ASK 3-8)
 - l. using a Braille ruler and talking calculator or large-face calculator
2. Response modifications
- a. using tactile or visual cues for deaf or hard of hearing students to indicate time to begin, time remaining, and time to end a particular part of the test
 - b. using calculators for NJ ASK 3-8 Mathematics (all students are permitted calculators for HSPA)
 - c. having an examiner record the student's identification information on the test booklet and/or answer folder
 - d. dictating oral responses to a scribe (examiner or proctor who writes from dictation)
 - e. using a Braille writer to record responses
 - f. signing responses to a sign language interpreter (student must indicate all punctuation and must spell all key words)
 - g. recording responses on a word processor (all editorial functions MUST be disabled)
 - h. providing an augmentative communication device
 - i. using a larger diameter or modified special grip # 2 pencil
 - j. circling answers in the test booklet (the examiner subsequently transfer the answers to the answer folder); for the NJ ASK 3-4, the examiner bubbles the student's answer choice in the scannable test booklet
 - k. allowing separate additional continuation pages for writing tasks

Placement

The New Jersey Administrative Code for special education and the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ensure that children with disabilities receive a free, appropriate, public education in the least restrictive environment.

As noted above, in accordance with the least restrictive environment, the first placement option considered is the regular education classroom with the necessary supplemental aids and supports to enable the student to meet his/her educational goals.

Annual Review and Reevaluation

The IEP Team will meet once a year, or more if necessary, to review and revise the IEP. The Team will discuss strengths, weaknesses, and progress of the student and plan for the following year accordingly.

In addition to annual reviews, the Child Study Team must complete a reevaluation of the student once every three years. The IEP Team determines the scope of the reevaluation by reviewing existing data. Further assessments are not conducted if the IEP Team finds that continued eligibility could be determined from existing data. However, if a reevaluation is warranted, the IEP Team will determine the assessments needed and obtain parental consent. Once testing is complete (within 60 calendar days) the IEP Team meets to discuss findings and plan programming. As with initial evaluations, copies of the re-evaluation reports are provided to parents at least ten days in advance of that IEP Team meeting.