

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SPECIAL EDUCATION

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What is the special education process?

- * **Referral of student**
- * **Evaluation of student**
- * **Recommendation of program for student**
- * **Implementation of program**

Students believed to be educationally disabled are REFERRED to a multidisciplinary team called the CSE. The CSE EVALUATES students' abilities. The CSE RECOMMENDS an appropriate Individualized Education Program (IEP) based on evaluation results. The program is IMPLEMENTED based upon Board of Education and parental approval. The IEP is MODIFIED or adjusted by the CSE at an Annual Review. The student has a Triennial Evaluation at least every third year to assure that the student continues to require special education programs and services.

Who is on the CSE?

Required member of the committee include a district representative (chair), the child's parents and teacher, a special education teacher or provider, a school psychologist and a parent representative (a parent of a different child in the district who receives special education services). Other members may include: the student, a physician, or any others that the parent or school district request.

What is a "multidisciplinary evaluation"? The components include:

- * **Social history**
- * **Observation in the classroom**
- * **Academic achievement**
- * **Psychological assessment**

- * Physical examination
- * Other assessment in all areas related to the suspected disability Specific other assessments may include:
- * **Social - emotional development, communication skills, and motor abilities.**

Who completes the multidisciplinary evaluation?

Multiple professionals must evaluate, including, but not be limited to: school psychologist, social worker, school nurse, physician, school administrator, guidance counselor, teachers (special education, regular education. reading, etc.), and service providers (Speech/Language Therapist, **Audiologist, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist**).

How does the CSE determine eligibility?

The student must meet the qualifications for at least one of the 13 classifications established by the state (Autistic, Deaf, Deaf/Blind, Emotionally Disturbed [ED], Hard of Hearing [HH], Learning Disabled [LD], Intellectual Disability [ID], Multiply Disabled [MD], Orthopedically Impaired [OI], Other Health Impaired [OHI], Speech Impaired [SI], or Visually Impaired [VI]).

What is special education?

Special education means specially designed individualized or group instruction or special services or programs and special transportation, provided at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities.

1. Such instruction includes but is not limited to that conducted in classrooms, homes, hospitals, institutions and in other settings.

2. Such instruction includes specially designed instruction in physical education, including adapted physical education.

Specially-designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible student, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs that result from the student's disability; and to ensure access of the student to the general curriculum, so that he or she can meet the educational standards that apply to all students.

What special education services and programs are included in NYS' continuum of services?

The continuum of special education services for school-age students with disabilities is an array of services to meet individual students' needs that includes:

- consultant teacher services
- resource room services
- related services
- integrated co-teaching services
- special class

What is meant by least restrictive environment?

Children with disabilities must be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate based on their individual needs. The CSE must determine that a student cannot be educated even with supports before changing the student's placement to a more restrictive setting (outside of general education).

What is an IEP?

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is the guiding document when working with a child with a disability. An IEP must include present levels of performance, educational needs (including how the disability affects the student's participation in the general education curriculum), student's placement, goals and objectives for the school year, specific programs and services to be provided, program modification and test accommodations (if needed), evaluation procedures to monitor student's progress, and projected date of review of the IEP.

Who sees the IEP?

The special education teacher has a copy of each student's IEP. General education teachers, special area teachers, related service providers, nurses, bus drivers and other support staff responsible for implementation of the IEP must have ACCESS to the document through the special education teacher.

What happens if the student's IEP needs to be changed?

Either the student's teacher or parent may refer the student back to the CSE for review of the IEP at any time.

What is an Annual Review?

An annual review is a yearly review of a student's program. It is usually a CSE meeting with the child's classroom teacher, parent, related service personnel and other professionals that work with the student. Sometimes the CSE includes the student as well. The CSE meets to determine if the student's program is effective, this is where services can be added or deleted or changed in a student's program.

What are test accommodations and how are they implemented?

Test accommodations are changes in typical testing procedures or a format that enables students with disabilities to participate in state and district testing programs. The CSE determines if a student's disability needs to be accommodated during testing and indicates the accommodations on the student's IEP. Some examples of accommodations include: extended time, administering test in a separate location, directions clarified, and others.

What is a sub-committee?

A sub-committee is an extension of the full CSE. It must include a district representative (chair), the child's teacher (special education and regular education), and the child's parents. It may include related service providers and others who have

pertinent information. The subcommittee is authorized to make IEP revisions, conduct annual reviews, and review triennial evaluation results.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT 504 ACCOMODATIONS

Schools are required to identify all students with disabilities and to provide them with a free appropriate public education.

1. What is '504'?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was originally developed to prohibit discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving federal assistance. Public and private schools which receive federal funds are required to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability.

2. What is the '504' process?

A faculty member or parent recognizes that a student is having difficulty in school.

Additional instructional interventions may be put in place to assist the student. If adequate progress is not being made the student may be given further evaluations through the school.

If the student appears to meet the criteria, a '504 Accommodation Plan' is developed.

3. Who completes the evaluation?

The evaluation must be tailored for the individual.

School professionals who may evaluate, include but are not limited to: school psychologist, social worker, school nurse, physician, school administrator, guidance counselor, teachers (**special** education, regular education, reading, etc.), and service providers (Speech/Language Therapist, Audiologist, Physical Therapist Occupational Therapist).

An outside evaluation/diagnosis may also be considered.

4. What is the eligibility criterion?

The student:

- has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities;
- has a record of such impairment;
- Or is regarded as having such impairment.

5. What is a “major life activity?”

Major life activities include but are not limited to:

- caring for one's self

- performing manual tasks
- walking
- seeing
- hearing
- speaking
- breathing
- working
- learning

6. Why was my child considered for evaluation under Section '504'?

Children who have obvious indicators of a “substantial impairment” are frequently targeted for a '504' evaluation.

These indicators may include but are not limited to:

- a pattern of discipline problems resulting in suspensions/expulsions
- behaviors which interfere with academic success
- Retention of a student
- Receipt of failing grades over consecutive grading periods
- Difficulty with academic material despite consistent effort
- Existence of a chronic health condition
- At-risk students

7. What is a '504 Accommodation Plan'?

The written plan may include classroom and test accommodations, as well as related aids and services (such as speech, counseling, etc.).

The intent is for school and classroom modification to the extent that the student is not being discriminated against due to his/her impairment.

Accommodations may be offered “as needed.”

8. Who sees the '504 Accommodation Plan'?

All teachers and support staff who work with the student receive a copy and are responsible for its implementation.

The plan becomes part of the student’s confidential record and follows the student to any school in the U.S.

9. What is the parent’s role?

Parents give consent for the initial evaluation and must be given notice of a meeting to develop a '504' plan.

Parental agreement is not necessary to implement a '504'. The parent must be informed of re-evaluation.

10. How can the '504' be changed?

A meeting to review/revise the '504' can be held at the request of the student, parent, or school staff. Plans must be reviewed “periodically”, generally on an annual basis.