



**DEL MAR UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
225 9th STREET
DEL MAR, CALIFORNIA 92014**

**PUPIL SERVICES AND SPECIAL EDUCATION
Phone 858-523-6192 Fax 858-481-1076**



A PARENT'S HANDBOOK

You may find it helpful to keep important names handy. Write them down:

School Principal

Name _____
Phone Number _____
Email _____

District Office of Special Education

Name _____
Phone Number _____
Email _____

My Child's Teacher(s)

Name _____
Phone Number _____
Email _____

Name _____
Phone Number _____
Email _____

Transportation

Name _____
Phone Number _____
Email _____

Name _____
Phone Number _____
Email _____

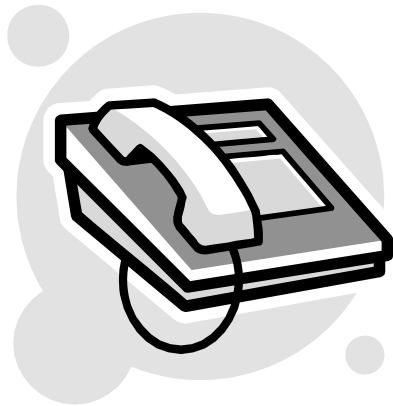
Others

Name _____
Phone Number _____
Email _____

Name _____
Phone Number _____
Email _____

Name _____
Phone Number _____
Email _____

Name _____
Phone Number _____
Email _____





If your child has a disability, this handbook is for you. It is designed to help you become better informed. This means understanding what a disability is and what it is not. It also means finding out how and where to get help for your child.

You can do a lot to ensure that your child gets the education he or she deserves. Use this handbook to:

- Keep track of professionals who help your child
- List important phone numbers
- Track questions that you have

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What is a Student Study Team?

The Student Study Team (SST) is a school team, which includes the parents, general education teacher(s), school administrator, other specialists such as a speech therapist, and the student (when appropriate). The SST is a function of the general education staff. It is a systematic problem-solving approach to assist students who are having school difficulty or are not progressing at a satisfactory rate. The Team clarifies problems and concerns about a child. It then develops strategies, modifications and organizes resources to support the student. The SST provides a system of accountability for serving the student.

What are the Benefits of a Student Study Team?

- It is an effective way to bring together staff resources to support students having difficulties in the general education classroom.
- It may eliminate other school site meetings.
- It is a concentrated problem-solving process where all needed persons are included.
- It provides a supportive atmosphere for students to become actively involved in their own needs.
- It is a problem-solving body that can define the needs of the school and help translate those needs into improved curriculum and instruction for the student.

- It produces a synergy that results in more comprehensive learning strategies.

What is Special Education?

Special Education is defined in the California Education Code as:

Specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of individuals with exceptional needs, whose educational needs cannot be met with modification to general education instructional curriculum. In addition, are related services, which may be needed to assist a student so that they benefit from their specially designed instruction.

Special Education is an integral part of the total public system and provides education in a manner that promotes maximum interaction between pupils with disabilities and those without disabilities in a manner which is appropriate to the needs of both.



Who Identifies and Refers a Student for an Evaluation?

School personnel are responsible for identifying students who may have special needs. Identification may also come from parents, doctors or community agencies. If you suspect that your child might have special needs, establish an appointment with your child's classroom teacher to discuss your concerns.

Usually a referral is a two-step process. The first step is to refer the student to the Student Study Team (SST). The SST reviews what has been done in general education classes.

The SST will develop and/or recommend methodology, modification or accommodations to the general education program. If after the methodology, modifications or accommodation have been tried and there continues to be significant concerns, the student can be referred for an evaluation.



What is an Evaluation for Special Education?

An evaluation of your child is a well-rounded process conducted by a team of specialists that will tell you how your child is doing in all areas of the suspected disability. The assessors must first inform you as to what assessment tools they plan to use. Then they must have your permission to assess. Once the school has received your permission to assess, the assessment team has 60 calendar days to complete the evaluation and present the information to you.

Different specialists will gather information about your child in different ways. There will be both informal and formal testing. They will talk to individuals who know your child, including doctors, the classroom teacher and other professionals. They will observe your child in a variety of settings and they will administer a variety of academic and psycho-educational tests. Additional tests might include the assessment of your child's speech and language abilities, gross and fine motor skills, hearing, vision and emotional development.

All methods used for assessing your child must be racially and culturally non-discriminatory. If your child's language is other than English, tests must be given in that primary language or other mode of communication. The test results will be explained to you in clear terms and in your own language.

What is Eligibility?

For a student to be eligible for a free appropriate public education program and to receive special education and related services he or she must meet certain criteria that falls within one of the 14 area of disability established by the state of California. The professional assessors and the parent(s) consider the assessment results, the criteria and the individual needs of the student to determine if the student is eligible for special education and related services.

What are the 14 Areas of Disability?

1. Autistic

A developmental disability, which significantly affects verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction, and it adversely affects educational performance.

2. Deaf

A hearing loss resulting in auditory processing, language and speech delays that adversely affects educational performance.

3. Deaf/Blind

A concomitant hearing and visual impairment, the combination of which causes severe communication, development and educational delays that adversely affects educational performance.

4. Emotionally Disturbed

A severe emotional disturbance that adversely affects educational performance.

5. Established Medical Disability

A disabling medical condition or congenital syndrome for children between ages 3 and 5 who have a high probability of their medical needs adversely affecting educational performance.

6. Hard of Hearing

A hearing loss resulting in auditory, language and speech delays that adversely affects educational performance.

7. Mental Retardation

A significant intellectual functioning that is below average general intelligence existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifests during the developmental period that adversely affects educational performance.

8. Multiple Disabilities

A concomitant of impairments, the combination of which causes such severe educational problems that they cannot be accommodated in a special education program solely for one of the impairments as both adversely affects educational performance. One example of a multiple disability is mental retardation and deaf or orthopedically impaired and blind.



Areas of Disability (continued)

9. Orthopedically Impaired

A severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects educational performance.

10. Other Health Impaired

A severe health disorder that adversely affects educational performance.

11. Specific Learning Disability

A severe discrepancy between ability and achievement in one or more of the academic areas (reading recognition, reading comprehension, math calculation, math reasoning, written expression, oral expression, listening comprehension, spelling) and a processing disorder (auditory, visual, sensory-motor, memory or attention) deficit.

12. Speech and Language Disorder

A difficulty understanding or using spoken language to such an extent that it adversely affects educational performance. Such difficulty results from an articulation disorder, abnormal voice, fluency, inappropriate or inadequate acquisition, comprehension or expression of spoken language.

13. Traumatic Brain Injury

An injury to the brain after birth caused by an external physical force or by an internal occurrence resulting in total or partial functioning and which adversely affects educational performance.

14. Visually Impaired

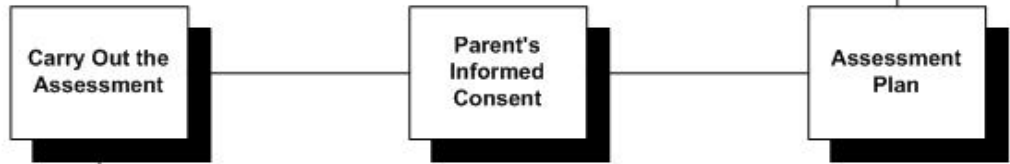
A visual impairment that even with correction adversely affects educational performance.



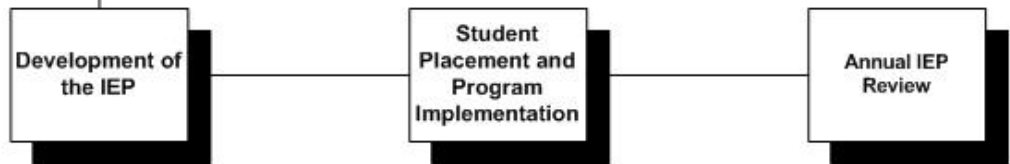
IDENTIFICATION



ASSESSMENT



PLANNING



15 Days

15 Days

60 Days

What is an IEP?

The individualized education program (IEP) is a written plan for special education and related services. The plan is written for students who have been determined eligible for and who need special education and related services. It describes the special education and related services specifically designed to meet unique educational needs of a student with a disability. It contains goals and benchmarks that are based on the student's present level of educational performance. It specifies the educational placement and describes the related services and supports necessary to reach the student's goals.

The IEP is an opportunity for parents and educators to work together to identify the student's needs, to identify services that will be provided to meet those needs and to describe the anticipated outcomes. The IEP serves as a focal point for clarifying issues and helps parents and educators to work collaboratively in making decisions that are in the best interest of the child. The IEP describes what your child needs in order to access the general education curriculum. It also lists the supports, services and accommodations that your child will need in order to make progress in the least restrictive environment.

The IEP is a fluid document. As your child grows and learns the IEP will need to be revised. An IEP must be reviewed and rewritten at least once a year, but the IEP team can reconvene at any time to review and revise the document, should there be

a concern on the part of any team member including the parent.

What are the Parts of an IEP?

The IEP has a number of different sections. Among them are:

- The present levels of educational performance, which indicate the student's level of functioning in specified areas. There is a direct relationship between the assessments, present levels of performance and the goals that are developed.
- Special factors which discuss several different elements. Among the special factors discussed are:
 - How parents will be informed of their child's progress
 - How transition services will be provided
 - How the child will participate in state and district tests and what accommodations will be made
 - How behavior may impede the child's educational progress
- Annual goals that are statements that can be reasonably accomplished in one year's time. Therefore, goals must be measurable. Priorities need to be established when choosing the goals. The goals should be based on the child's ability to access the general education curriculum, his/her strengths and needs, and future expectations. Goals should be written to meet the needs of the child, not to address specific methodology or curriculum.

Who are the Participants at an IEP Meeting?

The IEP team must include:

- One or both parents
- A special education teacher
- An administrator or their designee
- A general education teacher (if the student is or may be participating in the general education environment.)

The IEP team may also include as appropriate:

- The student
- A member or members of the evaluation team
- Other professional staff members
- Other individuals, at the discretion of the parent or school district, who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the student.

What is Specially Designed Instruction and Related Services?

A full range of specially designed instruction is available to implement each child's individualized education program (IEP), in accordance with the principle of the least restrictive environment. The term "least restrictive environment" refers to the setting, determined by the IEP team, that gives your child as much contact as possible with age-appropriate peers, in a general education setting, while meeting your child's unique educational needs. The least restrictive environment also means that removal of a child with disabilities from general education occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that

education in general education classes with or without the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Children often will receive instruction in more than one setting. A child may spend part of the day in general education and part of the day in a specially designed instructional program. Examples of programs include:

- Resource Specialist Program
- Special Day Class Programs
- Non Public School Programs

Students who are eligible for special education may require additional support of a related service. The IEP team determines what related services, if any, are necessary for the child to benefit from his/her education program. The IEP team then identifies the service(s) and decides who will deliver the support, time and frequency. The purpose of the related service is to provide the child with an educational program based on the child's individual needs. Related services should support the child's access to the general education curriculum. Examples of related services include:

- Speech & Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Counseling
- Audiology Services
- Orientation & Mobility Instruction
- Adapted Physical Education



Are IEPs Confidential?

Although confidentiality must be ensured, the contents of your child's IEP will be shared with all instructional staff serving your child. The staff member managing your child's IEP will review the IEP goals, including accommodations, with all of the teachers involved with your child.

You have the right to inspect and review all of your child's educational records before any meeting about your child's IEP. The school district will provide you access to the records within 5 days after the request has been made.

What is the Appeals Process?

Building a strong collaborative relationship with your IEP team will help to ensure that your child gets the services he or she needs. Sometimes, however, despite the best intentions and efforts of staff and parents the team members cannot reach agreement. At such times, it is important for you to understand your procedural safeguards. A Notice of Procedural Safeguards is provided to you before you agree to an evaluation, before every IEP meeting and during the appeals process.

When a parent has a disagreement with respect to any matter relating to the identification, evaluation or educational placement of his/her child the parent can discuss their concerns with their child's case manager, school principal or the Director of Pupil Services.

Another option available to resolving differences is the use of the Resolution

for Student Success model. This is a free effective problem-solving process for resolving conflict. The process helps both parents and the school district reach a mutually satisfactory agreement in a manner that respects the dignity of individuals while creating a solution.

If the parties cannot resolve their disagreement, then mediation is still another option offered to parents. Mediation is a voluntary process in which the parties must be willing to meet and discuss their concerns in order to negotiate a solution. An impartial mediator facilitates the conflict resolution process. One of the advantages of mediation is that it seeks to be non adversarial. The goal of mediation is to reach a solution that is mutually developed and agreed upon by the participants.



If, after working closely with the school and district special education personnel, you are unable to resolve your conflict, you can exercise your right to due process procedures. Due process is how parents and school personnel formally pursue a disagreement. An impartial hearing officer, knowledgeable in the laws governing special education, will hear the issues and propose a resolution.

How Might My Child Be Disciplined?

A student with an identified disability will be disciplined according to general education school guidelines. When necessary, school personnel may remove a disabled child from their educational placement for short periods of time, to the extent that similar measures are applied to students without disabilities, as long as removal does not constitute a change in placement. Change in placement occurs when a child is removed from their educational program for more than ten consecutive days or is subjected to a series of removal of more than ten school days.

Either before, or not later than ten days after taking disciplinary action involving a change of placement, the IEP team must convene to develop a functional analysis of behavior or to review/develop/modify a behavior intervention plan that is already in place.

If a disciplinary action involving a recommendation for expulsion or other actions involving removal for more than ten days is considered, the IEP team must convene to determine whether the misconduct was a manifestation of your child's disability.



Depending on the nature of the misconduct, a hearing may be conducted by the Superintendent's hearing officer. To determine that the misconduct was not a manifestation of your child's disability, the IEP team must find that the IEP and placement were appropriate, the disability did not impair your child's understanding of the behavior or its impact and that the disability did not impair your child's ability to control the behavior. If the team determines that the behavior was not a manifestation of your child's disability, disciplinary procedures applicable to students without disabilities may be used. If the team finds your child's misconduct was related to his/her disability, the procedural protections of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) will apply.

What is a 504 Plan?

Section 504 is a federal statute designed to eliminate discrimination on the basis of a disability. In accordance with Section 504, a qualified student with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities shall not on the basis of the disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination in any program or activity offered. Section 504 guarantees a student's right to reasonable accommodations, adaptations or modifications when necessary.

Your child's school 504 committee makes the decision regarding your child's qualification for a Section 504. The committee determines if the nature and severity of the disability, its duration and long-term impact affects access and benefit from an educational program. If your child is found to have a disability that requires services under Section 504, the school site committee shall develop a written accommodation plan for your child. Upon reviewing the nature of the disability and how it affects your child's education, the committee shall determine what modifications and/or adaptations are needed for your child to participate in his/her general education program. The written plan will document points agreed upon by the committee.

Section 504, like IDEA, requires a school to look at certain criteria when determining a disability. Formal or informal assessment may be required to include an observation, work samples, medical reports, health history, achievement and standardized tests.



What Are My Responsibilities?

You are the primary helper, monitor, coordinator, observer, record keeper and decision maker for your child. It is your responsibility to:

- ◆ Understand your child's disability
- ◆ Work in a congenial, non-adversarial way with school staff
- ◆ Keep records and a copy of all documentation
- ◆ Understand the terminology used by the professionals
- ◆ Prepare for the IEP meeting
- ◆ Join a parent organization
- ◆ Communicate regularly with your child's teacher
- ◆ Set up, at home, a non-distractable area for homework and develop a schedule for homework completion
- ◆ Give praise and compliments for accomplishments

Where are Parent Support Groups?

Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf

3417 Volta Place, NW
Washington, DC 20007
(202) 337-5220
TTY: (202) 337-5521

American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association

10801 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

Association of Retarded Citizens

9575 Aero Drive
San Diego, CA 92123
(858) 715-3780
<http://www.arc-sd.com/>

Attention Deficit Disorder Association

1788 Second Street, Suite 200
Highland Park, IL 60035
(847) 432-2332
<http://www.add.org>

Autism Society of America

7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 300
Bethesda, Maryland 20814

Autism Society of America

PO Box 131161
Carlsbad, CA 92013-1161

Brain Injury Association

P.O. Box 160786
Sacramento, CA 95816
(916) 442-1710; (800) 457-2443

California-Speech-Language-Hearing Association

825 University Ave.
Sacramento, CA 95825
(916) 921-1568

CHADD

8181 Professional Place, Suite 150
Landover, MD 20785
<http://www.chadd.org>

Exceptional Family Resource Center

380 Mulberry Dr. #A
San Marcos, CA 92069
(760) 510-3994

Learning Disabilities Association of CA

P.O. Box 601067
Sacramento, CA 95827
(866) 532-6322 or (916) 725-7881
ldacainfo@yahoo.com

Mental Health Association in California

1127 11th St., #830
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 567-1167

National Fragile X Foundation

1225 Eight Street, Suite 590
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 552-6619

San Diego Regional Center

4355 Ruffin Rd., Suite 200
San Diego, CA 92124

Spina Bifida Association

P.O. Box 232272
San Diego, CA 92193
(619) 491-9018

United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Sacramento

191 Lathrop Way, #N
Sacramento, CA 95815
(916) 565-7700

What are the Acronyms?

ADA	Americans with Disability Act	IQ	Intelligence Quotient
ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder	LD	Learning Disabled
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder	LEA	Local Educational Agency
APE	Adapted Physical Education	LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
CAC	Community Advisory Committee	NPS	Non Public School
CP	Cerebral Palsy	OM	Orientation Mobility
CMH	Children's Mental Health	PT	Physical Therapy
DIS	Designated Instructional Services	RSP	Resource Specialist Program
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education	SELPA	Special Education Local Planning Area
HI	Hearing Impaired	SDC	Special Day Class
IDEIA	Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act	SH	Severely Handicapped
IEP	Individualized Education Program	SLD	Specific Learning Disabled
IEPT	Individualized Education Program Team	SLI	Speech and Language Impaired
		TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
		VI	Visually Impaired

