

A Guide to Special Education



What you need
to know about
special education
for New York state
students ages 3-21

New York State
PTA[®]
everychild.onevoice.[®]

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A Union of Professionals



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Introduction

The New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. (NYS PTA®) and New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) are pleased to have collaborated on updating this Guide to Special Education. Special education is all about connections ... connections between the school and the family; connections between the school and supporting agencies; connecting families with supporting agencies/programs; and connecting families with families. To connect well, one must build bridges ... bridges that are built on firm foundations with good information as well as ones that lead to good destinations. It is a team effort and one that needs to be carefully monitored throughout the entire process.

As a parent of a child with a disability, you have a responsibility to be involved in the bridge building process. You advocate for your child who you know intimately. As an educator of a child with a disability, you assist in laying the groundwork for the bridge. You are familiar with the educational system and the myriad of instructional strategies that help children learn best. As an administrator, you have a responsibility to assist the bridge building process by ensuring that appropriate programs and services are provided to enable each child to reach his or her destination. Communication is a key component of special education ... communication that is positive and informative and that encourages collaboration and minimizes misunderstandings.

Our organizations, from their very beginnings, have shared a steadfast commitment to improving the education, health, and welfare of children. This Guide then is a natural extension of this commitment. We hope it will be helpful as we continue to make the necessary connections to assure every child with a disability reaches his or her potential.



Maria L. DeWald

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All Students Can Learn

Every child can learn. Across New York State, children with disabilities are learning more and achieving at unprecedented levels. Some children with disabilities need special education programs and services or other supports to help them learn. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) establishes a prominent and active role for parents and teachers in planning and implementing educational programs for eligible students with disabilities.

Parents and teachers, working collaboratively with other school staff, play important roles in helping students become contributing individuals in adult society.

The importance of the collaborative planning that occurs at Individualized Education Program meetings cannot be overstated. IEP meetings are often the only time parents, teachers and service providers who are involved with the child meet together to discuss the child's learning and behavioral needs. Parents should strongly urge their school districts to assure that all required members of the Committee on Special Education attend each meeting involving their children to ensure the child's needs are being appropriately addressed.

Sometimes special education policies and procedures can seem overwhelming to parents, teachers and school personnel. Take heart; the information provided in this guide can help you participate meaningfully in your child's educational program.





General Information

A student with a disability has a mental, physical or emotional impairment that affects his or her educational performance and requires special education that is provided at no cost to the parents. In New York state, special education is provided for preschool students (ages 3 to 5) and school-aged children (ages 5 through 21.) For school-age children, disabilities that may require special education services include autism, deafness, deaf-blindness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, learning disability, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, or visual impairment (including blindness).

Federal and state education laws require each school district to provide students with a “free and appropriate public education” (FAPE) based upon their unique needs.

Each board of education must establish two multidisciplinary committees:

- Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) for children ages 3-5; and
- Committee on Special Education (CSE) for students ages 5-21.

When a parent or teacher believes a child might benefit from special education, the district’s committee plays an important role. It reviews written referrals from parents and teachers, arranges for student evaluations and reviews the results. In consultation with the student’s parents, the committee, which includes that student’s teacher, makes recommendations about the student’s need for special education and an individualized education program (IEP). In addition, the committee must review, at least annually, the student’s IEP and arrange for a re-evaluation of the student at least once every three years.

Questions and Answers

1. What is special education?

Special education means specially designed instruction, services or programs, provided at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities and to ensure their access to the general curriculum that applies to all students. Special education services and programs may be provided individually to a student or in a group with other students with similar educational needs. Each school district's Committee on Special Education makes recommendations about appropriate special education services and programs, which are described in detail in a written plan for each child, known as the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Special education may include specially designed instruction or supplementary instruction and services provided in the general education class, help from a consultant teacher, resource room programs, special classes, home and/or hospital instruction or programs and services provided in other public or approved private schools.

2. Where are special education services provided?

Each student must be educated in the least restrictive environment, or LRE, in which he or she can learn. For most students with disabilities, that means the general education classroom. The committee would only consider special classes or separate schools when the nature or severity of the disability means that a student cannot learn in a general education class even with supplementary aides and services (which could include teacher aides, assistive technology and other supports). In all cases, special education programs and services must be provided in the least restrictive environment. Unless a child's IEP requires another setting, the child should be educated in the school he or she would attend if the child did not have a disability. Special education classes and other programs, if appropriate, may be provided through the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) or private school.

3. Who are the members of the Committee on Special Education and Committee on Preschool Special Education?

If a child is referred for special education, the parents are automatically members of the committee as it addresses the child's needs. Committee members work as a team and are responsible for reviewing referrals, arranging for evaluations and recommending programs and services for children with disabilities. Committees must ensure that students' IEPs help them to progress as far as possible in the general curriculum. Parents and teachers provide valuable information to assist the committee in making decisions about a child's strengths, appropriate programs and services, and placement to meet the child's unique needs.

Note: Some school districts may also have a Subcommittee on Special Education.

Each school district must establish a Committee on Preschool Special Education and a Committee on Special Education, which must include the following:

- ✓ The parent of the child
- ✓ Not less than one general education teacher of the student
- ✓ Not less than one special education teacher or, where appropriate, at least one special education provider (i.e. related service provider) of the student
- ✓ A school district representative who is qualified to provide or supervise special education and who is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum and district resources. (This person may also be the special education teacher/provider or school psychologist) The representative of the school district is the chairperson of the Preschool Committee on Special Education.
- ✓ At the discretion of the parent or school district, any other individuals who have knowledge or expertise regarding the student, including related service personnel as appropriate
- ✓ An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results (this person may also be the special education teacher/ provider, general education teacher, school psychologist, school district representative or a person the school district determines has knowledge or expertise about the student
- ✓ A school psychologist (CSE only)
- ✓ A parent of a child with a disability residing in the school district or a neighboring school district (unless the parent of the student requests that this additional parent member not participate). The parent member may also be a parent of a child who has been declassified or who graduated within the last five years.
- ✓ The student, if appropriate (transition goals begin for students age 15 and older)
- ✓ A physician, when appropriate and upon request (CSE only)
- ✓ A licensed or certified professional from the Department of Health's Early Intervention Program (CPSE only)
- ✓ A county representative (CPSE only)



4. May teachers be excluded from CSE Meetings?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 allows school districts and parents to agree to exclude the child's special education and/or general education teacher from a CSE meeting even when the teacher's curriculum is being discussed in the meeting. The excused member, according to the IDEA, is required to provide written input into the development of the IEP prior to the CSE meeting. The IDEA also allows the school district and parent to agree to make changes to the student's IEP after the child's annual review meeting without involving the other members of the CSE. At the time of this document's publication, the New York State Education Department is considering how the state will comply with this federal requirement.

NYSUT and the NYS PTA® strongly believe that the child's teachers and other members of the CSE should attend all Committee meetings to develop or review the child's IEP. Without the voice of the child's teacher and other members of the CSE, there cannot be a complete discussion of the child's unique needs and how these needs will affect the developmental growth of the child. These organizations believe that the submission of written input by the excused member is not a viable alternative to the benefits of a face-to-face meeting. Please periodically check the NYSUT Web site for additional information on New York state's compliance with this requirement.

5. *What is the role on the committee of the general education teacher (sometimes referred to as the “regular” education teacher)?*

When a child is, or may be, participating in a general education setting, the committee must include at least one general education teacher to help develop, review and revise the student's IEP. The general education teacher likely to be implementing the IEP should participate in discussions about best strategies to help the child learn. If the student has more than one teacher, the school district may designate which teacher or teachers will participate.

6. *What is included in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP)?*

Here is some of the information typically included in an IEP:

- A description of the student's academic and functional abilities and needs, including how the student's disability affects participation in the general education curriculum or, for preschool children, how the disability affects participation in appropriate activities.
- Measurable annual goals and objectives for the student. Note: Short-term objectives and bench marks are only required for students with severe cognitive disabilities who take the alternate assessment and for preschool students with disabilities.
- Information about the special education programs and services that will help the student meet his or her goals and objectives and support the student's involvement in the general education curriculum. In some cases, a child's IEP may require the services of a teacher's aide or teaching assistant.
- Program modifications and test accommodations, if needed.
- Supports for the student's teacher to help implement the IEP, such as training on a behavior management program or an assistive technology device.
- A description of when parents will receive reports on the progress their child is making toward the annual goals.
- The projected dates of the initiation of special education programs and service and the annual review of the IEP.
- The student's recommended placement.
- A description of transition services beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student is age 15.
- Participation in general education programs, including physical education and an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the student will not participate in appropriate activities with age appropriate peers.

7. *What are the steps to developing a student's IEP?*

Step 1: Referral for Special Education Services

A referral is a written statement that goes to the school district's Committee on Preschool Education (for students ages 3-5) or the school district's



Committee on Special Education (for students ages 5-21.) The referral indicates that a parent, teacher or other professional believes that a student may have a disability that adversely affects educational performance.

Parents and teachers should:

- Describe in writing the specific reason for the referral, including any behaviors that may impede learning of the child or others.
- Clearly support each reason, using test results, observation and other information.
- Describe how the suspected disability affects the child's ability to be involved in the general education curriculum or appropriate activities.
- Describe attempts to remediate the learning problem and state why such attempts have not been successful (teachers only).

Step 2: Student Evaluation

An evaluation is an assessment to gather functional, developmental and academic information about a student, using a variety of tests and techniques, to determine whether a student has a disability and the content of the student's IEP. The committee will arrange for a student evaluation, review it and decide whether a student is eligible for special education.

Parents and teachers should:

- Provide specific examples as evidence of the child's learning problem.
- Make recommendations on tests that should be part of the child's evaluation.
- Provide information on behaviors of the student that may be related to the suspected disability and impact the ability of the student to learn.
- Provide information on the effectiveness of specific interventions tried with the student.

Step 3: Individualized Education Program

If the student is eligible for special education, the committee develops an IEP to meet the unique educational needs of the child.

Parents and teachers should:

- Participate in all meetings to develop, review and revise a child's IEP.
- Help determine positive behavioral strategies for the child.
- Help determine annual goals and how they will be measured.
- Help determine specific programs, services, modifications and supports to help the child meet his or her annual goals and objectives and be involved in the general education curriculum.
- Help determine when parents will be informed about their child's progress during the school year.
- Help determine test accommodations
- Help determine where programs and services will be provided.
- Help to plan transition services related to postsecondary goals of the student.
- Help determine whether the student needs services during the months of July and August to prevent substantial regression of abilities.

Step 4: Implementation of the IEP

Implementation means providing the programs and services included in the Individualized Education Program. (This happens after the school district's board of education reviews the recommendation provided by the committee.)

Parents and teachers should:

- Review the IEP and ask questions if it includes information they do not understand.
- Implement program modifications and instructional adaptations, if required to do so.
- Refer back to the committee any child whose program or placement they believe is no longer appropriate.

Step 5: Annual Review of the IEP

At least annually, the committee must review and revise, where appropriate, each student's IEP.

Parents and teachers should:

- Prior to the review, thoroughly review the child's current IEP, the results of the most recent evaluation the student's strengths and the results of the student's performance on any state or district-wide assessment programs.
- Provide any information about the child that will help the committee understand the current needs of the child.
- Help determine changes to programs, services, modifications, and supports in the IEP to reflect the unique needs of the child and to help the child meet his or her annual goals and to progress in the general education curriculum.



Step 6: Re-evaluation

At least once every three years, the committee must re-evaluate the student to determine if the student continues to have a disability and continues to need special education (A CSE is not required to arrange for a re-evaluation more frequently than once a year, unless the parent and school district representative on the committee agree otherwise.)

Parents and teachers should:

- Review the child's performance since the last evaluation.
- Make recommendation on what tests, if any, should be administered.
- Ask questions about evaluation information that is unclear.

8. *What are the timelines for receiving special education services?*

The clock starts when parents agree in writing to have their child evaluated for initial special education services. For preschool children (ages 3-5), the Committee on Preschool Special Education must provide a recommendation to the board of education within 30 school days of the date the district received parental consent for the initial evaluation. The board of education must arrange for the services no later than 30 school days from the date the committee makes its recommendation.

For school-age children (ages 5-21), the *initial* evaluation and determination of student eligibility for special education must be completed within 60 calendar days from receipt of the parents consent for an evaluation. The board of education must arrange for special education services to be provided to the students within 60 school days of the parental consent to evaluate. For students receiving special education services, the board of education must arrange for programs and services described in the IEP within 60 school days of the referral for review of the IEP. When the committee recommends, with parental agreement, that a student will benefit from being placed in an in-state or out-of-state program or private school, the student must be placed in such setting within 30 school days of the recommendation.

9. *What procedures are schools allowed to use to determine whether a student has a learning disability?*

The recent amendments to IDEA allow a school district's Committee on Special Education to determine how well a student responds to research-based interventions, commonly referred to as response to intervention (RTI)

as part of the student's special education evaluation. The CSE would determine if a student is eligible for special education if a student's response to such interventions and other evaluation results do not produce meaningful growth in learning and the student requires programs and services beyond general education. A Committee on Special Education may continue to determine whether a student has a learning disability based on a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading /skill reading comprehension, mathematical calculation or mathematical reasoning.

10. What are Extended School Year Services (ESY)?

When developing a student's IEP, the Committee on Special Education should consider whether a student will be eligible for special education and related services provided during the months of July and August. This is commonly referred to as "extended school year services." School districts are required to provide these services to prevent substantial regression—that is the inability to maintain developmental levels due to a loss of skill, set of skill competencies or knowledge during the summer months. The IEP must indicate the specific special education programs and services to be provided to the student. The parent must provide written consent for their child to receive these programs and services during July and August for the first time.

11. Are students with disabilities expected to meet the same standards and take the same tests as general education students?

School districts must ensure that each student with a disability has equal access to the full range of programs, services and assessments available to all students in order to achieve desired learning results, as appropriate to the unique needs of the student. Most students with disabilities have the ability to pass state tests and achieve the requirements for a high school diploma, if they are afforded access to the general curriculum and provided the necessary supports. Some students with disabilities will not be able to achieve a Regents or local high school diploma. These students will earn an Individualized Education Program (IEP) diploma, based on achieving the goals specified in their IEP. Parents, teachers and other members of the Committee have an important role in ensuring students with disabilities receive the special education supports and services, as well as test accommodations and program modifications they need to help them attain New York state's learning standards.

12. Are student educational records confidential?

Yes. While parents may access all school records concerning their children, a school district's policy on the confidentiality of student records may limit access by school personnel to certain documents. Under the federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, only parents, teachers and school personnel who are involved in the education of children with disabilities have the right to access a child's educational records. All general education, special education and other school personnel who have students with disabilities in their classes or caseloads have the right under state law to



receive a paper or electronic copy of the student's Individualized Education Program. It makes sense: To meet a student's individual needs school staff will need to know what services and supports are required in the IEP.

13. What is the alternate assessment for students with disabilities?

Some students with disabilities are not able to participate in the regular grade 3 through 8 English Language Arts and mathematics assessments or Regents examinations. The New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) measures the functional abilities of students with severe disabilities in English Language Arts, mathematics, social studies and science. Achievement toward meeting alternate performance standards is measured based on information that is collected over a period of time using a "data folio." The CSE, involving the student's parents, determines which students with disabilities are eligible to participate in the NYSAA.

14. What are test accommodations and how are they implemented?

Test accommodations are changes in testing procedures or formats that enable students with disabilities to participate in state and district tests. The Committee on Special Education determines if a student's disability needs to be accommodated during testing and indicates the specific accommodation(s) on the student's IEP. Examples of accommodations include more time to complete tests, administering tests in separate locations, large print editions of tests, reading directions aloud to students and permitting use of a calculator. According to state policy, some test accommodations are not allowed on the grades 3 through 8 English language arts and mathematics tests. Test accommodations are to be used consistently by the student in his or her recommended educational program. If an IEP calls for a test accommodation, it should be provided for all tests, quizzes and examinations. The building principal has direct responsibility for ensuring that test accommodations on the student's IEP are fully and consistently implemented.

15. What are the rights of parents in the IEP process?

Parents must be given the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process about their child's education. School districts are required to provide a written notice in the language the parents speak describing proposed actions the school district will take with their child and the steps a parent can take if the parent disagrees. These actions may include the evaluation, classification and placement of a child. Some actions may require a parent's written permission (consent) prior to the school district carrying them out. A parent's consent is required when a child is evaluated and the first time a child receives special education. Parents should ask the chairperson of the CPSE or the CSE for a full explanation of their due process rights.

16. Must the school district provide parents a copy of their legal rights under federal and state laws at least once a year (this is called a procedural safeguards notice)?

Yes, school districts are required to give a copy of the procedural safeguards notice to parents at a minimum one time per year and also:

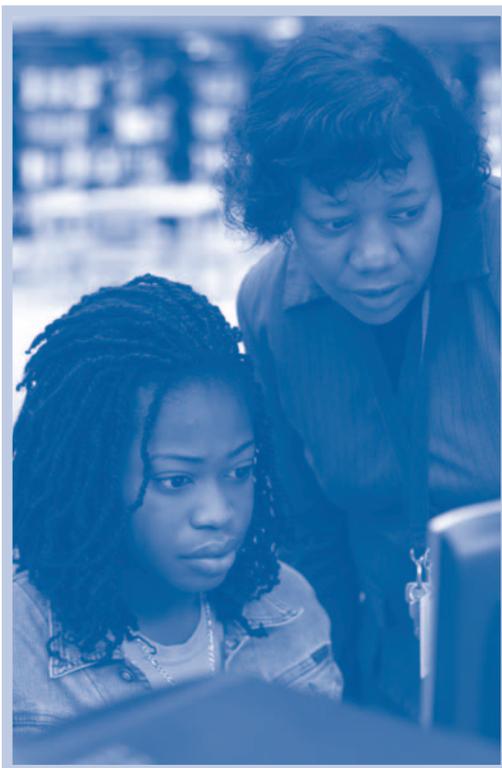
- ▶ When a student is first referred for special education or the parent requests an initial evaluation
- ▶ Upon the first filing of a written notice to request mediation or an impartial hearing
- ▶ When the parents request a copy of the procedural safeguards notice
- ▶ When a decision is made to suspend or remove a student for more than 10 consecutive or cumulative days for disciplinary reasons during a school year.

17. What is an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)?

If the parent believes that an evaluation conducted by the committee is not appropriate or the parent disagrees with the results of the committee's evaluation, the parent can obtain, and request the school district to pay for, an independent educational evaluation. An IEE is a test or assessment done by a qualified individual who does not work for the school district. The school district may ask for an impartial hearing to show that its evaluation is appropriate. If the impartial hearing officer finds that the district evaluation is appropriate, the district does not have to pay the parent for the cost of the evaluation. The parent, however, continues to have the right to submit the result of the IEE to the committee.

18. What steps can a parent take if there is disagreement with a child's IEP?

Sometimes a parent will disagree with the committee's recommendations on a child's evaluation, classification, placement or educational program. If that happens, the parent may ask for additional meetings with the committee, mediation and/or impartial hearings to resolve the disagreements. If a



parent requests mediation, the school district must make it available. If the parent decides not to use mediation, this cannot deny or delay the right to an impartial hearing.

To request an impartial hearing, a parent must submit a written due process complaint notice to the school district. The complaint notice form can be obtained from the school district. Before the impartial hearing can be held, the parent must meet with the school district in a resolution session meeting. At this meeting, the parent, a member of the school district and members of the CPSE or CSE try to resolve the concerns described in the complaint notice.

19. What happens if a parent does not consent to the child's initial evaluation or consent to the first request to provide special education program and services to the child?

- ▶ For school age children, if the parent does not consent to the request for an initial evaluation within 30 calendar days, the school district must provide the parent an opportunity to discuss the need for an evaluation. If the parent still refuses to consent, the school district may use mediation or an impartial hearing to permit the district to conduct an evaluation of the student without the consent of the parent. If the parent refuses to consent for initial special education programs and services, the district may not request mediation or an impartial hearing. In this situation the student would remain in the general education program without special education services. Parents should carefully consider the school district's reasons for recommending special education services and seek additional information, if needed, prior to making a decision to decline these services for their child.
- ▶ For 3- and 4-year-old children, the school district may not use due process procedures (mediation or an impartial hearing) if the parent refuses to give consent to an initial evaluation or refuses special education services.

20. What happens if a parent or teacher believes the student's program or placement is no longer appropriate?

The student's teacher or parent may request a review by the committee of the program or placement described in the IEP. The child's special education and general education teachers are important persons to assist the parent in this collaboration and discussion. The student would remain in the current placement pending a new recommendation of the committee, unless the board of education and parent agree otherwise.

21. What planning should occur for young adults with disabilities?

It is important to plan ahead so that teenagers with disabilities can learn skills necessary to live, learn and work in the community as an adult. This is commonly referred to as "transition services planning." Prior to the year a student turns 15, and thereafter, the committee will assess a student's needs, preference and interests. Programs and services will be planned to help a student achieve his or her post secondary goals. These programs and services must be provided in the school year the student turns 15. Children with disabilities should be encouraged to attend the committee meeting when transition planning is discussed.

22. What help is available for children who may not need special education but may require other accommodations to learn?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal civil rights law that requires school districts to provide students who are "qualified disabled" with "reasonable accommodations" necessary to ensure access to all public school programs and activities. A child would be considered "disabled" under Section 504 if the student has "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities such as walking, seeing, speaking and learning."

Some children may not require special education services but do need other accommodations or services because of their disability. For example, a student who has juvenile arthritis may need physical accommodations such as a computer or word processor to participate in school programs and activities, but does not need "special education" provided through an Individualized Education Program. A team of teachers and specialists in each school district is responsible for evaluating the student and developing and annually reviewing a Section 504 Accommodation Plan, describing the supports and services for each child. Parents should be invited to participate in the meeting to develop this plan.

Questions about Section 504 should be directed to your school district's Section 504 coordinator. The school building administrator usually has direct responsibility to ensure the Section 504 accommodation plans are implemented.



23. What support services are available to children who are not considered to have a disability, but still have problems learning?

School districts provide a range of general education support services to address the learning and behavioral needs of students. These supports may include remedial classes in small groups, Academic Intervention Services (AIS), speech improvement services, counseling, enrichment skill training classes, reading recovery programs, and occupational therapy and other related services. All students who are at risk of not meeting state learning standards or who score below the state minimum on a state test in grades 3-8, or below the passing grade on any Regents examination required for graduation, have the right to receive AIS. The building administrator is usually responsible for the implementation of these programs and services. Additional information on AIS is provided in the *Guide to Academic Intervention Services* available on the PTA® and NYSUT Web sites.

24. May students with disabilities be suspended or removed from their educational placement for violating the school's code of conduct?

Yes. School district procedures for the discipline of students with disabilities must comply with New York State laws and regulations. Each school district's code of conduct must contain a separate section on disciplinary measures when students with disabilities are involved. Each school district is required to distribute copies of a summary of the code of conduct to all parents or guardians. Each teacher must receive the entire code of conduct.

25. *What can be done if a school district is not complying with federal and state law on special education?*

Parents and teachers have the right to submit a written complaint to the State Education Department if they believe that their school district has violated federal or state special education law or regulations. (Teachers should discuss this procedure with their local union leaders prior to submitting such a complaint.) The complaint must be sent to:

**Coordinator, Statewide Special Education Quality Assurance
Office of Vocational and Education Services
for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID)**

One Commerce Plaza, Room 1624 • Albany, New York 12234
www.nysed.gov/vesid • (518) 486-6366

26. *Where can I find more information?*

A number of national and statewide organizations provide information to parents and educators. A partial list includes:

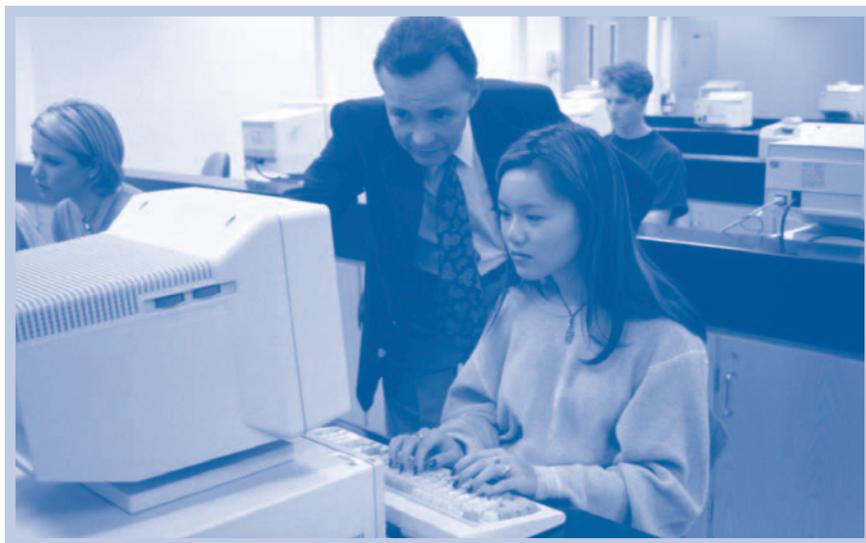
National Organizations

- **FAPE:** The Families and Advocates Partnership for Education provides families, advocates and self-advocates with information about IDEA. Web site: *www.fape.org*
- **IDEAPractices:** Features materials and resources that describe legal requirements and effective practices and provide guidance for supporting achievement for children with disabilities under IDEA. Web site: *www.ideapractices.org*
- **U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP):** Provides extensive information on IDEA. Web site: *http://idea.ed.gov*
- **The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC):** The largest international professional organization dedicated to improving outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities, students with disabilities and/or the gifted. Web site: *www.cec.sped.org*
- **National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD):** NCLD provides information to parents, professional and individuals with learning disabilities. Web site: *www.ncld.org*
- **The National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY):** This national information and referral center provides information on disabilities and disability-related issues for families, educators and other professionals with a special focus on children and youth with disabilities. Web site: *www.nichcy.org*
- **The Educational Resources Information Center Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education (ERIC):** A national clearinghouse featuring digests, bibliographies and a searchable database. Web site: *www.eric.org*



Organizations in New York state

- ▶ **New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc.**® (NYS PTA®) One Wembley Court; Albany, NY 12205; (518) 452-8808; (877) 5NYSPTA. Web site: www.nyspta.org
- ▶ **New York State United Teachers** (NYSUT) 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham NY, 12212-5008; 1-800-342-9810. Web site: www.nysut.org
- ▶ **New York State Education Department Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities Life Long Services Network:** Information and referral services for children with disabilities and their parents and resources and professional development for educators. Web site: www.vesid.nysed.gov/lsn



- ▶ **Bilingual Special Education Resources Network:** Assistance in the education of students who speak a language other than English. (ages 3-21)
- ▶ **Deaf/Hard of Hearing/Deaf Blind:** Information and services for children and adults. (ages birth-adult)
- ▶ **Early Childhood Direction Centers:** Information and referral for children. (ages birth-5)
- ▶ **Independent Living Centers:** Peer model services and community advocacy for all people with disabilities. (ages birth-adult)
- ▶ **Mediation Services:** Dispute resolution in special education identification and placement. (ages 3-adult)
- ▶ **Parent Centers:** Specific assistance to parents of children with disabilities. (ages birth-21)
- ▶ **Special Education Training and Resource Centers:** Professional development and assistance for school professionals. (ages 3-adult)
- ▶ **Talking Book and Braille Library:** The New York State Talking Book and Braille Library provides recorded and Braille books to adults and children who, owing to a disability, can't read, print, or hold a book, or turn its pages. (ages birth-adult)
- ▶ **Technology Resources for Education (TRE):** Training, information and administrative services regarding the provision of assistive technology devices. (ages birth-21)
- ▶ **Transition Coordination Sites:** Assistance in preparing youth with disabilities for living, learning, working and participating successfully in the community as adults. (ages 15-21)

Helpful Acronyms

Often educators and others will use an abbreviation (acronym) to describe a term such as a service, disability or agency. The following is a list of commonly used acronyms:

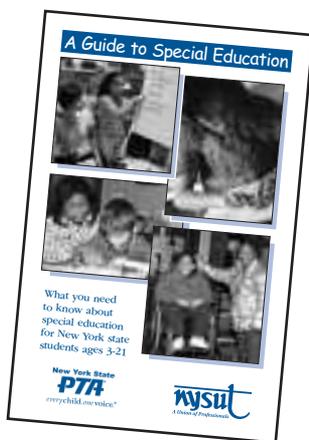
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADD/ ADHD	Attention Deficit Disorder/ Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder
APE	Adaptive Physical Education
AE	Age Equivalent
AIS	Academic Intervention Services
ASL	American Sign Language
AT	Assistive Technology
BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan
BOCES	Board of Cooperative Educational Services
BOE	Board of Education
CPSE	Committee on Preschool Special Education
CSE	Committee on Special Education
DD	Developmental Disability
ED	Emotionally Disabled
ESY	Extended School Year Services
FAPE	Free and Appropriate Public Education
FBA	Functional Behavioral Assessment
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
IAES	Interim Alternative Educational Setting
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Program
IEE	Independent Educational Evaluation
IHO	Impartial Hearing Officer
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
LD	Learning Disabled
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
MR	Mentally Retarded
NCLB	No Child Left Behind Act
OHI	Other Health Impaired
OT	Occupational Therapy
PDD	Pervasive Developmental Disorder
PT	Physical Therapy
RTI	Response to Intervention

Helpful Acronyms continued...

SED	State Education Department
SEIT	Special Education Itinerant Teacher Services
SETRC	Special Education Training Resource Centers
SI	Speech Impaired
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
TDD	Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
VESID	Office of Vocational & Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities
VI	Visually Impaired
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation

Ordering Information

To order additional copies of the guide, please contact NYSUT. Ask for Publication #109, *Guide to Special Education*. Per copy cost: 25 copies or fewer, 30 cents each; more than 25 copies, 25 cents each. Please allow 2-3 weeks for delivery. For more information or to comment on the *Guide to Special Education*, please contact either organization below.



New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc.® (NYS PTA®)

One Wembley Court, Albany, NY 12205-3830
1-877-5NYSPTA • 518-452-8808
Web site: www.nyspta.org

New York State United Teachers (NYSUT)

Educational Services Department
800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, NY 12110-2455
1-800-342-9810 • 518-213-6000
Web site www.nysut.org

Parent/Teacher Checklist

Child's name: _____ Date of birth: _____

Parent(s) name(s): _____

Grade: _____ Teacher(s) name(s): _____

Date/Time and Place of
meeting: _____

A. REFERRAL:

- Who submitted referral?
- What are the reasons for the referral?
- What interventions were used to address the learning problem related to the referral?

B. EVALUATION:

<u>List of evaluations completed</u>	<u>Who performed them</u>	<u>Results</u>
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- What general questions do I have regarding the types and results of the evaluation?
- What are the abilities and strengths of this child?
- How does the child learn best?
- What are the child's unique needs?
- What academic and/or behavioral skills (study, organizational) does the child need?
- How does the child spend his or her free time?
- How does this child communicate best?

- How does this child get along with others including family members, other students and teachers?
- How does this child feel about himself or herself?
- Does the child behave differently at school than at home? If so, describe.

C. CPSE/CSE RECOMMENDATION:

- Who will be attending the meeting and what are their respective roles on the Committee?
- What are the reasons for eligibility/ineligibility for special education?
- What measurable goals and objectives, if necessary, should be recommended for this child, and how will they be measured?
- Does the student's behavior impede the learning of the student and/or other students and what positive behavior interventions could address this behavior?
- What special education programs, services and supports were recommended to help the child meet his or her goals and progress in the general education curriculum, and when will they begin?
- Will the student require specific related services to address his or her unique needs?
- If appropriate, what are the child's post secondary goals which will guide planning for transition services as an adult?
- Where will the child's educational program be provided and what are the reasons for such placement?
- What testing accommodations will be used?
- Who is responsible for making sure that these test accommodations will be implemented?
- What parent/teacher supports were recommended?
- Was the parent fully informed of his/her parental rights?
- What general questions/concerns are there about: teacher/parent input to program, mainstreaming, inclusion, related services, socialization, curriculum, assessments (state, district and classroom), books and exams?
- How will parents be informed of their child's progress?
- What do parents need to provide at home related to the child's education?

