

Center Joint Unified
School District
Special Education Program
Parent /Guardian
Handbook



Revised October 2024



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SPECIAL EDUCATION ACRONYMS

Special education contains many acronyms. Below is a small sampling. Please don't hesitate to ask about any acronyms you are unfamiliar with.

ABA	Applied Behavior Analysis	IEE	Independent Educational Evaluation
ABC (Data)	Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence	LEA	Local Education Agency (such as a school district)
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	OHI	Other Health Impairment
AT	Assistive Technology	OT	Occupational Therapy or Therapist
BCBA	Board Certified Behavior Analyst	PT	Physical Therapy or Therapist
BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan	PWN	Prior Written Notice
ESY	Extended School Year	SLP	Speech Language Pathologist
FAPE	Free and Appropriate Public Education	SPED	Special Education
FBA	Functional Behavior Assessment	SST	Student Support Team
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	VI	Visual Impairment



WHAT IS SPECIAL EDUCATION?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law that makes available free appropriate public education to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to those children.

The IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more than 8 million (as of school year 2022-23) eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.

Infants and toddlers with disabilities, birth through age 2, and their families receive early intervention services under IDEA Part C. Children and youth ages 3 through 21 receive special education and related services under IDEA Part B. **(Source: United States Department of Education. <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/about-idea/>)**

Special Education is an individualized education program (IEP) designed to help children reach their highest potential. Children receive special education instruction and services according to their specific needs. Children are placed in special education programs only after resources of the regular education program have been considered and utilized when appropriate.

IDEA DISABILITY CATEGORIES

To be eligible for special education and related services, a child must be in the age range of birth to 22 years of age and meet the criteria in two areas outlined in federal law: (1) the child must be identified as a child with a disability in one or more of the 13 categories defined below, and (2) the child's disability must adversely affect his or her educational performance.



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Autism	<p>A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, and that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with "autism" are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines and unusual responses to sensory experiences. (a) Autism does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance, as defined in paragraph (B)(10)(d)(v) of this rule. (b) A child who manifests the characteristics of autism after age three could be identified as having autism if the criteria in paragraph (B)(10)(d)(i) of this rule are satisfied.</p>
Deaf - Blindness	<p>Concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.</p>
Deafness	<p>A hearing impairment that is so severe the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.</p>
Emotional Disturbance	<p>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 child's educational performance: (a) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors. (b) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers. (c) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances. (d) A general pervasive mood of</p>



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	unhappiness or depression. (e) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. (f) Emotional disturbance includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined they have an emotional disturbance under paragraph (B)(10)(d)(v) of this rule
Hearing Impairment	An impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance but is not included under the definition of deafness in this rule.
Intellectual Disabilities	Significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term "intellectual disability" was formerly termed "mental retardation".
Multiple Disabilities	Concomitant impairments (such as intellectual disability, blindness, or intellectual disability orthopedic impairment), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. "Multiple disabilities" does not include deaf-blindness.
Orthopedic Impairment	Severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by a congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease (for example, poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis) and impairments from other causes (for example, cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures).



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Other Health Impairment	Having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment that: (a) is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette syndrome; and (b) adversely affects a child's educational performance.
Specific Learning Disability	A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.
Speech or Language Impairment	A communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance.
Traumatic Brain Injury	An acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment or both that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech.



	The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma
Visual Impairment , Including Blindness	Including blindness, means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. – The term "visual impairment" includes both partial sight and blindness. – The term "visual impairment" does not include a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes, such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

Reference from: California Department of Education

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/documents/altassessmentdecision.pdf>

CHILD FIND



The Child Find process requires the Center Joint Unified School District (CJUSD) to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities in its jurisdiction. This obligation includes all students who attend private (including religious) schools, migrant or homeless students, students who are wards of the State, and students with suspected disabilities who are not advancing in grade level. (20 USC 1412 (a)(3)(A), 20 USC 1412 (a)(10)(A)(ii)(I), 34 CFR 300.111, 34 CFR 300.131, 34 CFR 300.111(c)(2), 34 CFR 300.101(c), 30 EC 56301.) This applies to persons aged from birth to 21 years of age.



If you suspect your student needs an assessment, please get in touch with your site principal or one of the following special education Program Specialists:

**Ages birth to five
years old**

Chris Berger -
cberger@centerusd.org

**Elementary
School Ages**

**Tracie
Daubenmire -**
daubenmire@centerusd.org

**Middle School
through age 21**

Jessica Elmer -
jelmer@centerusd.org

ASSESSMENT

REFERRAL: Parents of children attending school are encouraged to talk with school staff when their child is not progressing. The vehicle for discussing these concerns is the Student Study Team (SST). The SST is a **regular education function**. The team includes teachers, administrators, parents, and support staff. The team's task is to explore all available resources and make recommendations.

Referral for Assessment: Requests for special education assessments typically come from the SST team. However, parents, teachers, or other school personnel may also request assessments by providing their written assessment request to the site principal.

Permission to Assess: The evaluation cannot be completed without written consent. Parents are informed of their due process rights and the contents of the proposed assessment plan and asked to give written permission to assess their child. Once the school receives written consent from the parent, it has sixty days to complete the initial assessment and hold the IEP meeting to discuss the evaluation results.



THE IEP TEAM

Decisions in IEP meetings are made by the IEP team. The IEP team consists of the following members:

- Parents/guardians
- Student - Once a student turns 18, they may elect to attend the IEP independently.
- General education teacher
- Administrator
- Special Education teacher

Other members may also be included, such as:

Related Services such as speech, physical therapists, etc.	Interpreter / translator	Individuals invited by the parent/guardian	Outside agencies such as ALTA
Counselors/Therapists	School nurse	Program Specialist	Director of SpEd
Attorney's	Advocates	Psychologists	

Excusal - Team members can be excused from the meeting only with written agreement from both the parent and the district before the IEP meeting.

COMPONENTS OF THE IEP

- Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance
- Annual Goals and Measuring Progress
- Extended School Year (ESY)
- Special Factors



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- Accommodations and Supplementary Aides and Services
- Assessments
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and Placement Options
- Specialized Academic Instruction and Related Services

ROLE OF THE PARENTS/GUARDIANS

It is important for you to participate and be informed before, during, and after the IEP meeting to help plan your child's education. You can:

- Provide information on the student's strengths and weaknesses at home
- Provide background information regarding your child
- Offer some possible suggestions to motivate and stimulate your child
- Ask someone to accompany you to the IEP meeting if you wish
- Ask questions to understand terms if you are unfamiliar with them
- Make sure all areas are addressed that you feel are important
- Be sure to keep all documents from your child's IEP team meeting

PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

Special Education Rights of Parents and Children Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B, and the California Education Code can be found on the Center Joint



Unified School District website or by clicking this link: [Notice of Procedural Safeguards](#).

TRANSFER OF RIGHTS ONCE A STUDENT REACHES AGE 18

- When an individual reaches the Age of Majority (18), they are considered an adult.
- Once 18, education rights are automatically transferred from the parent to the student by law.
- At 18, students can make their own legal decisions and can choose to invite their parents/guardians as members of the IEP.

If a conservatorship is awarded through the probate court, please provide documentation to the school as soon as possible.

If you need assistance with the conservatorship process, please visit

[Helping a Person with an impairment or disability](#)

VOCABULARY

Informed Consent	a parent's written permission to assess or place a child in a special education program.
Integration	the joining of two groups that were previously separated, in this case, non-disabled children and children with disabilities. A child who is placed in a special day class (SDC) has opportunities to interact and learn with non-disabled peers. These interactions can occur in the regular education classroom or during non-academic activities such as recess and lunch.



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Intellectual Disability (Formerly MR)	a disability; a delay in a child's ability to learn and to function independently in his/her everyday environment; the disability can be mild/moderate or severe/profound; previous terms used include Educable Mentally Retarded (ER) and Trainable Mentally Retarded (TMR).
Language Delay	a lag or slowness in the development of a child's ability to use or to understand language.
Learning Disability (LD/LH)	a disability; problem using language, remembering, concentrating, following instructions, reading, calculating, or learning through listening or looking.
Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)	a term meaning that children with disabilities must be educated (to the maximum extent appropriate) with children who are not disabled.
Mainstream/Inclusion/Integration	terms meaning that children with disabilities spend as much time as is appropriate in a regular education classroom.
Mediation	an informal meeting that is held when parents and school district personnel cannot agree on a child's educational program; this step comes before a due process hearing.
Multidisabled	a disability; a child with two or more disabilities.
Occupational Therapy (OT)	a related service provided by a licensed occupational therapist who assists children with fine motor activities and everyday tasks like eating, dressing, and hand use.
Orientation and Mobility (O & M, O/M)	a related service provided by an orientation and mobility specialist who teaches children with visual impairments how to know their position in space and how to move from place to place.
Orthopedic	a physical disability; a child's difficulty getting



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Impairment (OI)	around his/her environment without adaptive equipment.
Parent Counseling/Parent Training	a service in which parents receive help in understanding the special needs of their children.
Development Disorder (PDD)	a neurological disorder that causes difficulty in talking, playing with other children, and relating to others, including their family.
Placement	when a child is assigned to a special education classroom or to other special education services; placement occurs after the IEP is written.
Program Specialist	a specialist who is knowledgeable about special education and available programs and is responsible for assuring that children receive needed services and full educational opportunities.
Psychological Services	related services provided by a school psychologist, which include educational assessment and support for children and parents.
Related Services/Designated Instructional Services (DIS)	a term referring to support services children may need in order to benefit from their educational program.
Resource Room	a special education classroom for children who are in a regular classroom for more than half of the school day.
Self-Contained Classroom	a special education classroom where children receive instruction in all developmental and academic areas.



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