

# Hand in Hand Guidance for West Virginia Families

*Together we will provide the best education for  
all WV students with exceptionalities*



***Office of Special Education and Student Support***

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# A Message to Families

Our greatest hope for students with exceptionalities is that families and schools work together to find the best educational solutions for students. As we strive to improve the educational outcomes for all students, the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) Office of Special Education and Student Support welcomes and encourages strong partnerships between schools and families which promote and ensure access to a high-quality education for students with special learning needs. The WVDE believes that families should be informed with accurate information, engaged in appropriate learning opportunities, and involved in meaningful exchanges about their child's needs so that they are positioned to support their child's academic success.

This "Hand in Hand" booklet is an informational guide to assist parents, guardians, and other family members when working with West Virginia (WV) educators to support and provide appropriate educational services for children. It is where answers to various questions pertaining to the special education process in West Virginia schools, can be found. However, "Hand in Hand" is not a substitute for West Virginia Board of Education's (WVBE) Policy 2419: *Regulations for the Education of Students with Exceptionalities* which includes all the regulations that apply to special education in WV schools and is aligned with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA). Electronic copies of Policy 2419 and this booklet are available online at [https://wvde.state.wv.us/osp/hand\\_in\\_hand%20sept%202015.pdf](https://wvde.state.wv.us/osp/hand_in_hand%20sept%202015.pdf). Copies may also be requested from the West Virginia Department of Education by contacting 304-558-2696. Alternate formats are available upon request.

As a caregiver, you provide essential information to teachers and administrators, play an important role in decisions made about your child, and are key to supporting high expectations. If you have questions not addressed in this booklet, contact your school or county special education office. Educators want to provide the best education for students with exceptionalities. Let us do this hand in hand.

# Table of Contents

A Message to Families.....	1
<b>Section 1</b>	
Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act.....	3
What is Child Find?.....	3
What is Special Education?.....	4
What is Least Restrictive Environment?.....	4
What are the Exceptionalities?.....	5
What is an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?.....	6
What are Related Services?.....	6
What Can I Do if There is a Disagreement?.....	7
» Facilitated IEP.....	7
» Mediation.....	7
» State Complaint.....	7
» Due Process Complaint.....	8
<b>Section 2</b>	
What Are the Steps in the Special Education Process?.....	9
» Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).....	9
» Student Assistance Team (SAT).....	10
» Conferences.....	10
» Evaluation.....	10
» Eligibility.....	11
» Individualized Education Program (IEP).....	11
» Placement.....	12
» Annual Review.....	12
» Reevaluation.....	13
How Does My Child Transition from WV Birth to Three to Preschool Special Education?.....	13
What Is Secondary Transition?.....	13
How Does the School Discipline Policy Apply to My Child?.....	14
<b>Section 3</b>	
Who Makes Decisions about My Child’s Needs?.....	15
How Can I Be an Effective Member of the School Team?.....	15
What Are My Rights and Responsibilities?.....	15
<b>Section 4</b>	
Frequently Asked Questions.....	17
<b>Section 5</b>	
Difference Between IEP Team Meeting and Parent-Teacher Conference.....	20
Important Dates.....	22
<b>Section 6</b>	
Glossary.....	23
<b>Section 7</b>	
National Resources.....	28
West Virginia Resources.....	34
Family Questionnaire.....	41

# Section I

## Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004, Public Law 108-446, is a federal law that makes available a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to these children. The IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.

IDEA dictates the policies and procedures found in WVBE's *Regulations for the Education of Students With Exceptionalities* (Policy 2419) W.Va. §126CSR16. Policy 2419 governs special education in West Virginia Schools. Policy 2419 applies to preschool, early childhood, middle childhood, adolescent, and adult students whose educational programs require special education and related services.

Infants and toddlers, birth through age 2, with disabilities 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.

Congress established this program in 1986 in recognition of "an urgent and substantial need" to:

- Enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities.
- Reduce educational costs by minimizing the need for special education through early intervention.
- Minimize the likelihood of institutionalization, and maximize independent living.
- Enhance the capacity of families to meet their child's needs.

## What is Child Find?

Child Find is an activity that seeks to "locate, identify, and evaluate" children and youth, ages 3 through 21 years, who may have developmental delays or exceptionalities and may need special education and related services. In accordance with the local education agency IDEA has obligation to find children who may need special education and related services. Child Find activities, when conducted in the school, may include teacher observations, parent observation, and conferences to discuss your child's strengths and may be conducted jointly among community partners such as West Virginia Birth to Three, local health departments, and Head Start. These activities may lead to a request for evaluation, a formal process designed to further explore your child's needs and ways to assist your child. This process requires your consent. This evaluation process may ultimately result in a recommendation for your child to receive special education services.

If you have a concern, you can contact your local school or county Board of Education personnel. They can provide information about Child Find and talk with you about the identification process, if needed. Parents of children not yet enrolled in school may make a referral for evaluation directly to the district special education director.

## **What is Special Education?**

Special education is specially designed instruction that meets the unique educational needs of an eligible child with an exceptionality. Special education services are provided in order for students to access the general education curriculum and school environment. When a child has a disability that does not impact his/her ability to access the general education curriculum or school environment, no special education services are required.

Special education may include the following:

- Instruction in subjects such as reading and mathematics.
- Behavior strategies.
- Physical education.
- Career and Technical Education (CTE).
- Independent living.
- College preparation.
- Speech-language therapy.

If your child requires special education services, you will be involved in decisions about what services, instruction, and equipment are to be provided, as well as where these services will take place. These decisions will be made by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team, and you will be invited to be a member of that team.

## **What is Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)?**

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is based on the idea that the general education environment should be the first choice for educating all students. It refers to a related set of services aimed at providing students with disabilities interaction with students without disabilities, an appropriate education, and the special assistance needed for success in the general education environment. These services may include changes to the curriculum or assessment commonly known as classroom accommodations.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams must address the following LRE considerations:

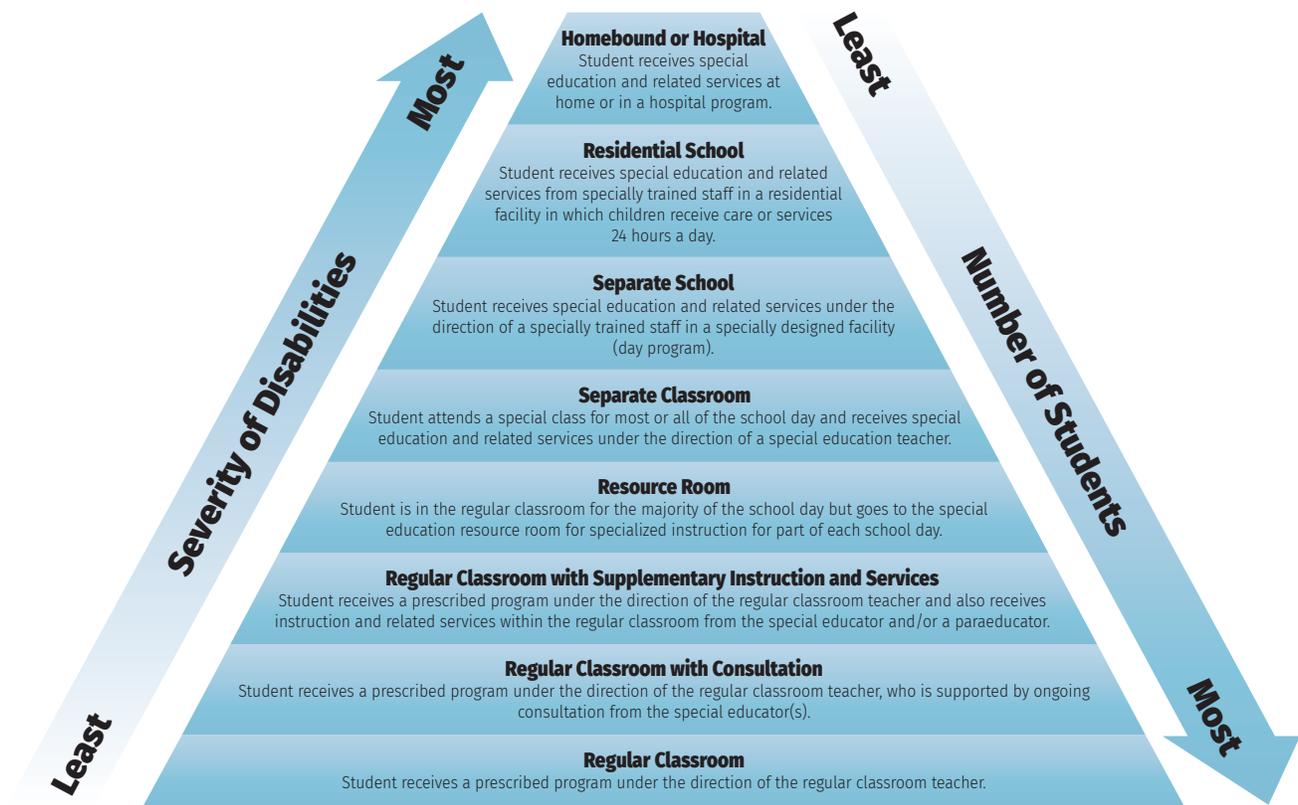
- The services the student needs.
- The supplementary aids and supports needed by the student.
- The environment as well as what occurs in that environment.
- The general education curriculum.
- A review of the appropriateness and educational benefit of each service and environment being considered for the student.
- Nonacademic and extracurricular activities in which non-disabled individuals participate.

With your input, your school district will ensure that special education services are delivered in a setting that is as similar as possible to the education provided for all children who are your child's age.

Students may receive different services at multiple points along the continuum based on the IEP.

## Continuum of Services Diagram The Least Restrictive Environment for Learning

The general education classroom is the least restrictive environment (LRE) where your child can receive his/her education. It is the IEP's Team's responsibility to ensure that your child receives his/her education in the LRE that best fits his/her needs.



## What are the Exceptionalities?

In West Virginia, the term "students with exceptionalities" includes both students with disabilities and students who are gifted. It includes the following disability eligibilities:

- Autism (AU)
- Blindness and Low Vision (VI)
- Deaf-blindness (DB)
- Deafness (DF)
- Developmental Delay (PS)
- Emotional/Behavioral Disorder (BD)
- Hard of Hearing (HI)
- Intellectual Disability (ID)
- Orthopedic Impairment (PH)
- Other Health Impairment (OH)
- Specific Learning Disability (LD)
- Speech/Language Impairment (CD)
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Policy 2419 (Chapter 4) defines the eligibility criteria determining whether a child has one of the above exceptionalities. Formal testing (called an evaluation) must be completed by a licensed professional to determine if the eligibility criteria for an exceptionality is met. After the evaluation of a child is completed, the school district will hold an Eligibility Committee (EC) meeting to review the information and decide whether the child has an exceptionality. Families have a right to see the completed evaluation report prior to the meeting.

You will be invited to this meeting. If your child has an exceptionality and needs special education, an IEP Team meeting will be held. The EC meeting and the IEP Team meeting may take place on the same day.

## **What is an IEP?**

The IEP is the heart of the planning process for the special education student. It is a plan that is developed by you and other members of the IEP Team to address your child's strengths and needs.

The initial IEP will go into effect only after you agree to the specific services to be provided and sign the IEP consent for placement. You will be given a prior written notice (PWN) stating that the educational placement for your child will change. In five days or if the district and parent agree to fewer than five days special education and related services will begin. The IEP must be reviewed once each year and may be reviewed by parents and school personnel at any time, if needed.

Remember, the IEP is more than just a written document. It is a planning process in which you are an integral part. You have valuable information about your child that the other members of the team need to develop a good plan. It is only when all partners are involved and sharing information that an effective program can be developed; therefore, this partnership is vital to the whole process.

## **What are Related Services?**

Related services are specific corrective and supportive services provided for children with exceptionalities to help them benefit from their special education program. The need for these services is assessed through the evaluation process with the involvement of individuals who have specialized knowledge in the areas of concern. Based on information from the evaluation, the IEP Team determines whether the need for a related service exists, and if a specific related service is needed for the child to benefit from special education, this service will be included in the IEP.

Related services are provided at no cost to the family and may include, but are not limited to the following: transportation, audiology, interpreting services, speech/language pathology, psychological services, physical therapy, occupational therapy, clean intermittent catheterization, recreation, counseling services, orientation and mobility services, social work services in schools, school health services, school nurse services, medical services for evaluation purposes only, and parent counseling and training.

For some children, support will also include certain types of assistive technology. Assistive technology is a type of related service that allows for the use of equipment that will aid the child's functioning. The need for such assistance is determined through assessments and recommendations from the IEP Team. The provision and use of such equipment will be included in the child's IEP.

Your role as a parent is very important in determining if related services are necessary for your child. You can help by providing information from medical records, developmental information, and information about your child's family relationships, behavioral patterns, and routines at home.

## **What Can I Do if There is a Disagreement?**

Education is a fundamental right of all children. Protecting the educational rights of all children is an important responsibility of schools and families, requiring active and effective participation of parents, and children when appropriate, in educational decision making. Children whose educational needs are affected by an exceptionality receive specific protections under federal and state laws and policy.

The IDEA and Policy 2419 provide "procedural safeguards" to ensure parent participation in the special education process and to ensure the child's right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE). You should receive a booklet outlining these protections from the school. If you disagree with the eligibility or IEP decisions made for your child, processes for resolving disputes are available.

Prior to considering the following options, you should make reasonable efforts to resolve your concerns at the school or county level. You could schedule a conference with school personnel to discuss your concerns, make an appointment with the county director of special education and/or the county superintendent of schools, and/or contact an agency or organization that provides information to parents of children with exceptionalities.

### **Facilitated IEP**

A Facilitated IEP (FIEP) Team meeting is a voluntary early dispute resolution option utilizing an impartial facilitator to guide the IEP process during the meeting and to assist members of the IEP Team to communicate effectively. A student's IEP is developed by a collaborative team whose required members share responsibility for the process, content, and results. An IEP Facilitator provides assistance to the IEP Team before a potential conflict develops into a more serious dispute. The IEP Facilitator is an impartial third party, not a member of the IEP Team, and has no stake in decisions made by the team. A request for a Facilitated IEP may be sent to the Office of Federal Programs, West Virginia Department of Education

### **Mediation**

A parent or school district may request mediation of a dispute in any matter under IDEA relating to a child's education. Mediation is voluntary, at no cost to parents or the county school district, is not used to deny or delay a parent's right to a due process hearing, or to deny any other rights. A written mediation request may be sent to the Office of Federal Programs, West Virginia Department of Education.

### **State Complaint**

Any interested person may file a complaint, if the person believes the school or district has not followed the special education regulations and procedures in IDEA or Policy 2419 regarding a specific child or children or has violated rights regarding the school district's proposal or refusal to initiate or change the identification, evaluation or educational placement of the child, or the provision of FAPE. This includes parents of eligible children, organizations, groups, school district employees,

and individuals from West Virginia or another state. A complaint must be written and signed and must include a statement that one of the above requirements has been violated, the facts on which this statement is based, the name of the county school district or public agency and school, the child's name and address, a description of the problem including related facts, and a proposed resolution, if known. A written complaint may be sent to the Office of Federal Programs (OFP), West Virginia Department of Education. In addition, you will need to send a copy of the letter of complaint to the county special education director. The OFP will investigate and issue a letter of findings. If noncompliance is found, the district will be told to correct it.

## **Due Process Complaint**

The parent or a school district may initiate a due process complaint regarding the school district's proposal or refusal to initiate or change the identification, evaluation or educational placement of the child, or the provision of a free appropriate public education by submitting a written request for a due process complaint to the Office of Special Education and to the school district's superintendent. The written request submitted by the parent, district, or the party's attorney must include the name of the child, address of the residence of the child, name of the school and county, description of the facts related to the problem, and proposed ways to resolve the problem, if known.

A due process hearing is similar to going to court. The parent and school district will present evidence, cross examine witnesses, and have a right to an attorney. A hearing officer will issue a written decision. Legal counsel is not required; however, a parent who wishes to obtain legal counsel should do so prior to filing a due process complaint to ensure the correct process is followed.

Information about Facilitated IEP, State Complaint, Mediation, and Due Process complaints may be obtained from the Office of Federal Programs, West Virginia Department of Education:

1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East  
Building 6, Room 700  
Charleston, WV 25305

or phone (304) 558-7805.

## Section 2

### What Are the Steps in the Special Education Process?

This section of the guidance document describes the steps in the special education process with each step building on the previous one. It is important to know how the process works so that all participants can be effective partners.

#### 1. Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a flexible process that ensures all students not only have access to high-quality instruction, but also that they are prepared for learning beyond high school or for careers. It incorporates best practices in pedagogy such as personalized learning and differentiated instruction. It is a tiered support system that uncovers students' challenges, meets them where they are, and takes them, step-by-step, to their individual goals. Designed for all students, whether they are considered at-risk, exceeding grade-level expectations, or at any point along the continuum, MTSS provides the flexibility necessary for students to achieve and sustain significant academic and personal progress. MTSS should not be misunderstood as only a pathway to special education.

The makeup of the school team and the people who provide instruction to the student will vary as the student's needs change. The district and school level administrators primarily provide leadership, direction, resources, and guidance for the MTSS process. Classroom and special education teachers will focus on how best to deliver appropriate, standards-based content to the student.

Parents, families, and guardians will share information with the teachers and other team members regarding their child's needs, will provide insight into the student so instruction can be properly customized, and will support student learning at home.

Some of the concerns you may wish to address with the school team are:

- Difficulty staying on task.
- Persistent difficulty in following directions.
- Frequent outbursts for no apparent reason.
- Difficulty manipulating sounds in words (e.g. rhyming).
- Difficulty in understanding what is read.
- Difficulty expressing ideas in spoken or written form.
- Experiencing complex medical problems.
- Inability to talk as well as children of the same age.
- Demonstrating little interest in toys or stories for children of that age.
- Demonstrating puzzling behaviors.
- Inability to play with other children.
- Finishing work much more quickly than classmates.
- Asking frequent how and why questions.

Specialized instruction and support will also be provided by the following as necessary: Title I teachers, speech-language pathologists, gifted teachers, school counselors, school psychologists, and/or school social workers.

At any time during the MTSS process, you have the right to request an evaluation for special education, if you believe this is what your child needs. This request should be made in writing to the Student Assistance Team (SAT) at the school. The SAT has 10 school days to decide whether the evaluation will be conducted and provide you written notice of its decision.

## **2. Student Assistance Team (SAT)**

The SAT is a group of trained school personnel who meet to problem-solve concerns of individual children brought to them by teachers or parents. They may recommend interventions, or review and change instruction or interventions already being provided for the children.

The SAT is required to allow families to review recommendations made by the team regarding their child's program and to provide feedback to the team about those recommendations.

The SAT may receive referrals for a variety of concerns; however, when the SAT receives a written request for initial evaluation for special education, it is required to meet within ten school days. If the referral is from school personnel, the SAT may review existing interventions or try new ones. During the intervention period, observations of your child at home, knowledge about his or her development, your expectations at home, and an understanding of how your child learns can be important contributions and should be shared with school representatives. For some children who need immediate referral, such as children who are deaf or blind or have significant disabilities, the SAT should not wait the standard 45 days but should proceed to the evaluation process.

The SAT will meet to review the results of the interventions within 45 days. If a parent requests an evaluation for special education, the SAT must decide in its first meeting (within ten school days) whether the evaluation will be conducted. The parent receives the answer to the request in writing.

## **3. Conferences**

At the end of the intervention period, the SAT must invite parents to review recommendations made and hold a conference with you to discuss your child's progress. If the interventions have not been successful, then a referral for a multidisciplinary evaluation may be made. You, as a member of the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MDET), and your child when appropriate, may work with the school to plan a comprehensive individual evaluation for your child. The individual evaluation is recommended when the team suspects that your child's educational performance is different from typical peers and that special education services may be needed. When working with the MDET, you will contribute to the development of the evaluation plan. This plan is designed to gain insight, through a series of assessments and observations, into the suspected area which may be influencing your child's educational strengths and needs.

## **4. Evaluation**

Evaluations are specific tests, observations, and other activities designed to collect information which will help in determining whether your child needs special education. You will be asked to share your knowledge about your child's development, your expectations at home, and information about how your child learns. You will be asked to sign the permission form giving your consent to conduct the evaluation. It is important for you to ask enough questions so that you really understand the evaluation process. The evaluation will be completed by a trained team of professionals. It will include

more than one test or measure and be administered in your child's native language or mode of communication. The evaluation period may require up to 80 calendar days from the date that you give written consent.

The results of the evaluation will provide information about your child's educational strengths and needs and help determine whether special education is necessary.

## **5. Eligibility**

After the evaluations are completed, you and other members of the Eligibility Committee (EC) will meet to review all the information. At this point, ask enough questions so that you really understand the results. During this meeting, the EC will help determine if your child is eligible for special education. This decision is made by comparing the evaluation results to the eligibility criteria for the suspected exceptionality and determining if your child needs specially designed instruction.

In WV schools all evaluations must be completed, and an eligibility committee meeting must take place within 80 calendar days from the date that the school receives parent written consent.

The eighty-day timeline will not apply to a district if:

1. The parent repeatedly fails or refuses to produce the student [34CFR§ 300.301 (d)].
2. The student changes district of enrollment during evaluation process [34CFR§300.301(d)].
3. Districts are closed due to circumstances resulting in a state of emergency determined by the Governor of West Virginia.
4. Districts are closed due to weather conditions determined by the county superintendent.
5. The 80 days fall during summer break.

### ***What if my child is not eligible for special education?***

If your child is determined not eligible for special education services by the EC but continues to have difficulties, several alternatives may be considered. Instruction and scaffolding provided through MTSS may be appropriate. Some children who do not need an IEP may have a disability under Section 504 and may receive services through a Section 504 Plan. Other recommendations may include services such as tutoring, English as a second language, guidance counseling, counseling by school personnel or professional agency personnel, social work services, school health services, or community services.

## **6. Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

If your child is eligible for special education, you will participate in the IEP Team meeting to develop a written plan for your child, the IEP. The IEP process must be completed within 30 days after a child has been determined eligible for special education services.

### ***Who develops the IEP?***

The IEP Team is a group of people working with you to form a complete view of your child's learning needs and to recommend appropriate educational services. The IEP Team includes:

- A representative of the public agency who is a qualified supervisor or provider of special education services.
- At least one general education teacher of the child.
- At least one special education teacher or provider.
- The parent(s) of the child.
- The child, if appropriate.
- Other individuals, selected by you or the school, who have knowledge about the child.
- An individual who can explain the evaluation results.

### ***What is included in an IEP?***

The IEP includes:

- Your child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance.
- A statement of how the child's disability affects his or her learning and access to the general curriculum.
- Measurable goals, or statements that describe what your child can reasonably expect to accomplish in a year.
- Specific services to be provided, including supplementary aids and services in general education, special education services, related services, and extended school year determination.
- An explanation of the extent to which your child will not participate with non-exceptional peers;
- Performance evaluation procedures and criteria.
- The date when services are to begin and how long they will continue.
- A statement explaining how the child will participate in the statewide and district-wide achievement testing.
- A statement of how and when parents will be informed of progress toward annual goals.
- A statement of transition service needs and post-secondary goals for a child with a disability and for children identified as Exceptional Gifted in grades 9-12, beginning at age 14.
- A statement of needed transition services, including, if appropriate, a statement of interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages beginning at age 14.
- A statement (at least one year prior to a child reaching the age of 18) that the child has been informed of his or her rights that will transfer to the child at age 18.
- The child's placement in consideration of the least restrictive environment.
- Signatures of all those attending the meeting.

Your ideas (and your child's when appropriate) about what you want your child to learn in the next year will be considered in developing the IEP. The initial IEP goes into effect only after you agree and sign consent for initial placement. The IEP may be reviewed when concerns arise regarding the services being provided.

## **7. Placement**

Placement refers to an appropriate learning environment for your child. This includes a variety of options on a continuum of services from support in the general education environment to community settings for preschoolers. The IEP Team must consider placement in the general education setting first. IDEA requires that children with disabilities participate in the general education curriculum to varying degrees with some accommodations and modifications. This will help to ensure that special education

is provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The LRE is the setting that gives your child as much contact as possible with typically developing children the same age while meeting your child's learning and behavioral needs. Special education may be delivered in a general or special education setting depending upon the unique characteristics and needs of your child.

## **8. Annual Review**

Your child's progress in achieving the goals on the IEP must be reviewed and revised each year at the annual IEP review meeting. Your observations about any changes in your child's education, both positive and negative, should be shared at this time. You can prepare for this meeting by reviewing your child's current IEP and listing ideas that you would like to have included in the development of the next IEP. You may also ask to have this plan reviewed at any time during the school year. You (and your child when appropriate) will participate in this annual review process.

## **9. Reevaluation**

A reevaluation is conducted every three years. The IEP Team will review existing evaluation data on your child, including information provided by you, current classroom-based assessments and observations, observations by related service providers, and with input from you, will identify what additional data, if any, are needed. If additional evaluations are needed to re-determine eligibility, your consent is requested. If you do not respond, the reevaluation may be conducted without your consent after the district has made reasonable measures to obtain your consent. Your child may be evaluated more frequently if conditions warrant. The EC will review the evaluations to determine if your child continues to be eligible to receive special education. You will receive a report of the decision and the evaluation reports.

## **How Does My Child Transition from WV Birth to Three to Preschool Special Education?**

Your child may be identified as having special needs between the ages of birth to 3 years old. The West Virginia Birth to Three system administered by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (WVDHHR), Office of Maternal, Child, and Family Health provides services to meet the needs of the child and family. These services will be addressed on an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

It is important that you are involved in your child's transition planning from the WV Birth to Three system to the Preschool Special Education Program. You can help by collecting and sharing educational and medical information with your child's service coordinator.

When children transition from the WV Birth to Three Programs, a determination must be made regarding continued eligibility for special education according to WV Policy 2419 eligibility criteria. Each school district should have in effect an interagency agreement with the WVDHHR that outlines the obligations of each agency to ensure a smooth and effective transition of children assisted under the WV Birth to Three Program into a school program.

Prior to your child's entry into the special education program, a meeting will be arranged by the service coordinator with local school district personnel. You will be a member of this team which will decide what follow-up actions will be necessary for the transition to occur.

When a child is eligible for preschool special education and is transitioning from WV Birth to Three Program, the special education and related services for the eligible preschool child shall be provided as of the child's third birthday. The West Virginia Birth to Three service coordinator is responsible for scheduling, at least 90 days prior to the child's third birthday, a transition conference meeting to discuss preschool transition. A Transition Plan must be developed to assure that when a child turns 3 years of age either an IEP or IFSP is in place to meet the needs of the child.

## **What Is Secondary Transition?**

Secondary transition is a coordinated set of activities for a child that promotes movement from school to post-school activities and is based on the child's needs, preferences, and interests. The ultimate goal of the transition process is meaningful employment and/or participation within the community, with a quality life for all individuals with exceptionalities. Secondary transition planning for your child will involve special education staff and related service providers along with you and your child. The planning process is designed to ensure that your child will be provided the necessary skills and services to make a smooth transition from school to adult life. Beginning at 14 years old, and each year thereafter, you and your child will be involved in developing a Transition Plan that is part of the IEP. The Transition Plan will address what skills and services will be provided for your child to be successful upon leaving school in the following areas:

- Employment.
- Post-secondary training and education.
- Independent living.
- Community participation.
- Adult services.

Your involvement in the decision-making process, concerning both family and the child's expectations, will help in building a solid transition for your child upon leaving school.

## **How Does the School Discipline Policy Apply to My Child?**

All county boards of education have adopted safe and supportive schools policies with stated interventions and consequences for unacceptable behavior. These policies are based on WVBE Policy 4373: *Expected Behavior in Safe and Supportive Schools*. Requirements for removals for less than 10 days in a school year are the same for all children with or without disabilities. Children with disabilities may be removed for more than 10 days but only after following the steps identified in Policy 2419: *Regulations for the Education of Students with Exceptionalities*.

## Section 3

### **Who Makes Decisions about My Child's Needs?**

You will be working with the school IEP Team in making decisions about your child's needs. Every child in special education must have an IEP. The IEP is a written plan, developed by an IEP Team, describing the specially designed instruction needed to meet the needs of the individual child. Parents are part of the IEP Team and are encouraged to participate in the development of their child's IEP.

### **How Can I Be an Effective Member of the School Team?**

During the course of your child's school experience, concerns or problems may arise that require resolution but do not require formal mediation or a due process hearing.

The first step in solving concerns is to ensure that everyone understands the problem or concern. Requesting a meeting or conference with the person most directly involved with your child is an excellent starting point in resolving the matter. Talk with your child's teacher, case manager, and/or school principal to discuss and resolve the concern.

Each member of the family/school partnership must learn to recognize all potential communication barriers and to develop strategies for overcoming each of them. With this kind of preparation, it is possible to resolve issues and to maintain an open communication among all partners in a child's life.

#### ***Frequent issues involve:***

- Classroom concerns;
- Evaluation or eligibility for special education services;
- Implementation of your child's IEP; and
- Appropriateness of your child's program.

Fostering feelings of trust and respect is an important goal for partners and educators. Attention to successful communication methods is an important way to achieve this goal. Keep the lines of communication open.

### **What Are My Rights and Responsibilities?**

In planning for the education of your child, you have the right to be heard and respected. We all need to take care of ourselves and feel that it is all right to be concerned about our family and children. We need to remember that we have the right to question; likewise, we need to remember that with this right comes responsibilities. We need to be willing to accept and respect others and their opinions, let others be able to state their opinions, and to provide information.

These rights do not change when a child is determined to need special education. However, you do receive additional rights and responsibilities, which help to ensure that the needs of your child are addressed and that you are involved.

***These rights include:***

- The right to be considered a full participating member of the IEP Team when planning for your child.
- The right to provide information about your child that can be used in developing interventions, evaluation, planning, and educational programs.
- The right to ensure that your written permission is given before any formal evaluations are begun.
- The right to consent before initial placement of your child into special education services.
- The right to receive written notice prior to any changes in placement for your child.
- The right to a complete evaluation, which includes more than one test or procedure and is completed by trained personnel from various educational and/or medical areas of expertise, to receive copies of those results, and to have those results explained in a language you understand.
- The right to access your child's records, and have someone available to explain the records, if requested.
- The right to confidentiality of all records about the child.
- The right to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) that addresses your child's individual needs.
- The right to request an independent evaluation at no cost to yourself if you disagree with the district's evaluation results.
- The right to be involved in the development of your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- The right to receive transportation and other related services necessary for the child to benefit from his or her special education services.
- The right to a state complaint, mediation, and due process if differences regarding your child's program or services cannot be resolved by other means.
- The right to revoke consent for the provision of special education services at any time.

***With each of these rights comes the following responsibilities:***

- The responsibility to be involved.
- The responsibility to participate in meetings regarding your child and be ready to discuss issues of concern that you have.
- The responsibility to ask questions and be sure you understand what is happening.
- The responsibility to provide all the relevant information that is needed in planning and program development.
- The responsibility to inform school personnel about any changes in your child's life, both positive and negative, including areas of growth, changes in family situations, health, medication, and other pertinent changes.
- The responsibility to educate yourself regarding the rules and regulations governing special education services.

## Section 4

### Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

#### **Who do I contact if I believe my child needs special help?**

The first step is to contact the teacher or principal of your child's school and ask that a Student Assistance Team (SAT) meeting be held. If you need further assistance or information, call the director of special education of your county school district.

#### **What are my rights when the school recommends a multidisciplinary evaluation for my child?**

Your consent in writing is required before the school may individually evaluate your child the first time. The school must first notify you, explaining what kinds of tests they want to give and why they think it is necessary. Initial evaluations of children may not be conducted without parental consent except by a final decision of an impartial hearing officer or by order of a court.

#### **Who will decide if my child will receive special services?**

Following a complete evaluation of your child, you will be invited to participate as a member of the Eligibility Committee (EC). At this committee meeting, the evaluation results will be thoroughly explained to you by specialists and educators. The results of the evaluations, as well as information you have provided to the committee about your child, will indicate if your son or daughter has special needs that require special education programs and services.

#### **Why is my child's doctor's or therapist's diagnosis not enough to make my child eligible for special education?**

Specific criteria are needed to establish student eligibility for special education. The Eligibility Committee (EC) uses information from a variety of sources. The EC does consider doctor and therapist evaluations and recommendations with all the student's data and evaluations to determine whether the student meets or continues to meet eligibility criteria. (See Policy 2419 Chapter 4.)

#### **Why do I have to attend Student Assistance Team (SAT) meetings when I have already given written consent for my child to be tested for special education?**

When a learning problem is suspected, the school must first attempt instructional interventions instead of immediately looking for a possible disability. Observing a student's learning patterns, asking the student about his/her learning challenges, re-teaching, teaching using different resources, and responding to a student's needs are all pre-referral activities focused on instructional remedies. Only when an SAT is satisfied that all pre-referral activities within the general education classroom have been exhausted and are proven to show little to no improvement in the student's academic performance will the team request testing. Schools are legally bound to keep data (monitor and document) on how well a student responds to instructional interventions (pre-referral remedies). A review of that data is a part of the basis for determining the student's instructional programming. The SAT meeting process is where formal discussions take place regarding that data. Without that process, too many students would be found eligible for special education without justification. (See Policy 2419 Chapter 2. D.)

## **What services can I expect if my exceptional child attends a private or parochial school?**

No child with an exceptionality who attends a private school has an individual right or entitlement to receive some or all the special education and related services that the child would receive if enrolled in a public school; however, each public agency consults with private school representatives to determine how the needs of the children with disabilities will be met. Contact your school district for more details.

## **What are some of the possible education placements available?**

- General Education Program: Full-time
- General Education Program: Part-time
- Special Education Program: Separate Class
- Special Education Program: Special School
- Special Education Program: Out-of-School Environment
- Special Education Program: Residential Facility

For children ages 3 through 5 years, placement is documented as one of the following:

- Regular Early Childhood Program for varying amounts of time with special education services provided in that program.
- Regular Early Childhood Program for varying amounts of time with special education services provided in another location.
- Special Education Classroom.
- Separate School.
- Residential Facility.
- Home.
- Service Provider Location.

The appropriate placement depends upon the child's needs and includes spending as much time as possible in the regular school setting with typical peers. Being separated from a general classroom is appropriate only when the child's special needs cannot be met with supplementary aids and services in the general education class.

## **What if my school district does not have a program for my child?**

School districts must provide services for all children with exceptionalities. Therefore, it may be necessary for your school district to initiate additional services or contract with a nearby county school district or private or public agency to provide appropriate services for your child. It is still your school district's responsibility to see that your child receives a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

## **What is an appropriate education for my child?**

An appropriate education for all children is based on access and participation in the general curriculum. In West Virginia, the general curriculum is the West Virginia Next Generation Content Standards and Objectives. When educators and parents meet together in an IEP Team meeting, the team must develop an IEP that describes the special education and related services needed by your child. These services must allow him or her to make progress in learning the content standards and

must be delivered in the least restrictive environment. The least restrictive environment may be a general education class all or part of the day, or possibly a separate class, depending on your child's special needs.

### **What is the responsibility of my school district if my child requires special transportation?**

The school district is required to provide transportation services to any child with a disability who requires special transportation because of his or her special needs. The West Virginia Board of Education has established regulations for special transportation. These regulations apply to school districts and outline the specific responsibilities of both the school district and parents for transporting children with special needs.

### **What if I disagree with the school district's decision concerning my child? What is the best approach to resolving the problem?**

If you disagree with your child's evaluation, IEP, or implementation of services, or any decisions of the Eligibility Committee or IEP Team, you may use one of the dispute resolution processes:

- Facilitated IEP Team meeting.
- State Complaint.
- Mediation.
- State Complaint.
- Due Process Complaint.

You may want to discuss your options with a local Family Engagement Resource Center (formerly PERC), or contact the Office of Special Education and Student Support at 1-800-642-8541 or 304-558-2696 for more information.

## Section 5

### Difference Between IEP Team Meeting and Parent-Teacher Conference

If your child has an IEP, having both an IEP Team meeting and a parent-teacher conference can be confusing. It may feel like both cover the same ground.

The reasons for each meeting are not the same. The people in the room are different, and the conversation focuses on different aspects of your child's education. Here are the differences between IEP Team meetings and parent-teacher conferences.

	IEP Team Meeting	Parent-Teacher Conference
<b>The purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To review, revise, and update your child's IEP. An IEP meeting can also be held to determine special education eligibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To discuss your child's academic and social progress in school.</li> </ul>
<b>How long</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It depends on what is being discussed. A meeting can be 30 minutes, or it can last an hour or more.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools typically schedule 10 to 20 minutes for a parent-teacher conference.</li> </ul>
<b>Which students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students with IEPs, or students being eligible for special education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All students.</li> </ul>
<b>Who attends</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your child's school must invite you to every IEP Team meeting. Several other people are also required to attend:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your child's general education teacher(s).</li> <li>A special education teacher or case manager.</li> <li>Someone from the district who can approve the resources in an IEP plan.</li> <li>Other service providers who work with your child.</li> <li>A professional who can interpret evaluation results (if there are evaluations to discuss).</li> <li>Your child, depending on his age (14 years) and whether you want your child to attend (below 14 years)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Together, this is the IEP Team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You and your child's teacher will attend the parent-teacher conference. A second teacher or administrator may also be there.</li> <li>Some schools are also moving toward student-led conferences. So, your child might attend with you. Depending what's being discussed, your child might attend all or part of the conference.</li> </ul>

	IEP Team Meeting	Parent-Teacher Conference
<b>When they happen</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal law requires schools to hold annual IEP Team meetings. But you can request an IEP Team meeting at any time. The special education teacher or IEP case manager can also ask for one.</li> <li>• These conferences continue for as long as your child has an IEP.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typically, schools offer one parent-teacher conference in the fall and another in the spring. In some schools, it's held at the same time as an IEP Team meeting for students with IEPs.</li> <li>• However, you can ask for a meeting with the teacher at any time. It's important to do this if you have concerns about your child, or if you need to talk through any specific issues.</li> <li>• Parent-teacher conferences continue until the end of high school.</li> </ul>
<b>What's discussed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It depends on the purpose of the IEP Team meeting.</li> <li>• For example, if your child isn't making progress toward IEP goals as expected, you'll talk about why. You'll also talk about what needs to be changed. If your child has recently been evaluated, the team will talk about the results and recommendations.</li> <li>• At the annual IEP Team meeting, the team will talk about how much progress your child made over the last year. You'll also discuss how IEP goals, services, and supports should be adjusted for next year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many parent-teacher conferences follow a set agenda. The teacher provides basic information about test scores and shares work samples. Then, the teacher talks through observations about your child's academics and social life with peers.</li> <li>• It can be helpful to use a parent-teacher conference worksheet to make sure you cover any questions you may have. You can even email your concerns ahead of time. This is important since time may be limited.</li> <li>• You can also download an action plan to help make the most of your limited time.</li> </ul>

Knowing the difference between an IEP Team meeting and a parent-teacher conference can help you make the most of both meetings. Learn how to talk to teachers about learning and attention issues and how to decode teacher comments. And watch an IEP tip video from two moms sharing what they wish they had known sooner about IEP Team meetings.

## Important Dates

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date, Time, Location</b>
Student Assistance Team (SAT) Meetings (See Policy 2419 Chapter 2. Sec.3.C)	
Eligibility Committee (Initial Evaluation) Meeting (See Policy 2419 Chapter 4)	
IEP Team Meetings (This meeting must take place at least once a year. You may request an IEP Team Meeting any time.)	
Reevaluation (A reevaluation is conducted every three years. See Policy 2419 Chapter 3.Sec.2.B.)	

# Section 6

## Glossary

**Acceleration:** Moving through schoolwork faster or earlier than usual.

**ADD:** Attention deficit disorder is a medical condition characterized by a child's inability to focus, while displaying impulsivity, fidgeting, and inattention.

**Accommodations:** Changes that allow a person with a disability to participate fully in an activity. Examples include extended time, different test format, and alterations to a classroom.

**Adapted Physical Education (APE):** Specially designed physical education program, using accommodations designed to fit the needs of students who require developmental or corrective instruction.

**Annual Review:** An evaluation, conducted at least one time per year, for each child with an exceptionality for the purposes of recommending the continuation, modification, or termination of the special education program.

**Assessment:** Evaluation procedures used to identify a child's needs and the family's concerns and priorities about their child's development.

**Assistive Technology Devices and Services:** Equipment and services that are approved to be used to improve or maintain the abilities of a child to function including such activities as playing, communicating, or eating.

**Audiologist:** Person trained to diagnose hearing impairments and provide help for children with hearing impairments including determining the need for, selecting, and fitting of a hearing aid.

**Autism:** A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engaging in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.

**Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP):** Special education term used to describe the written plan used to address problem behavior that includes positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and support. This may include program modifications and supplementary aids and services.

**Career and Technical Education Programs:** Education programs which are directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid or unpaid employment or additional preparation for a career.

**Cognitive:** A term that describes the process used for remembering, reasoning, understanding, and making decisions.

**Consent:** The written approval parents give to have their child evaluated and/or receive services. Consent is always voluntary, and a parent may revoke it at any time.

## **Continuum of Placement Options (See page 3).**

**Cumulative File:** The records maintained by the local school district for any child enrolled in school. The file may contain evaluations and information about a child's exceptionality and placement. It also contains grades and the results of standardized assessments. Parents have the right to inspect these files at any time.

**Deaf-Blindness:** Concomitant (simultaneous) 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.

**Deafness:** A hearing impairment so severe that a child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, and adversely affects a child's educational performance.

**Developmental Delay:** For children from birth to age 3 (under IDEA Part C) and children from ages 3 through 5 (under IDEA Part B), the term developmental delay, means a delay in one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication, social or emotional development, or adaptive [behavioral] development.

**Developmental History:** Steps or stages of a child's growth in such skills as sitting, walking, and talking. This information is gathered as part of the social history requirements.

**Due Process:** A system that guarantees each individual equal protection and treatment under the law by affording notice and consent requirements and other safeguards.

**Emotional Disturbance:** 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:

- An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- A display of inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

The term includes schizophrenia.

**Extended School Year (ESY):** An education program over 180 school days per year, provided if a child has the potential to regress significantly during the summer months.

**Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE):** A legal guarantee that no child can be denied a public education because of a disability; that education must be the appropriate instruction to meet the child's needs.

**Historically Under-Represented Gifted:** Those children whose giftedness may not be apparent due to low socioeconomic status, a disability in accordance with Policy 2419, or a background that is linguistically or culturally different.

**Impartial Hearing:** A formal process at which a family's complaints can be heard by an impartial hearing officer who will resolve the dispute or complaint regarding the child's evaluation, IEP, or certain other issues.

**Intellectual Disability:** Significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently (at the same time) with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Until October 2010, the law used the term "mental retardation." In October 2010, Rosa's Law was signed into law by President Obama, which changed the name of the term to "intellectual disability."

**Individualized Education Program (IEP):** A written plan developed by the IEP Team which specifies the appropriate level of special education programs and services to be provided to meet the unique educational needs of a student with an exceptionality.

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):** The classroom setting that gives the child with exceptionalities as much contact as possible with typically developing peers while meeting the child's learning needs. Placement of students with exceptionalities in special classes or other removal from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that even with the use of supplementary aids and services, education cannot be satisfactorily achieved.

**Mediation:** A method for solving a problem that uses persons trained in helping people resolve their own problems. In mediation, the school district and parent work toward an agreement with which both parties are satisfied.

**Multidisciplinary Evaluation:** A series of procedures to determine a child's abilities. Conducted by a team of trained teachers and specialists, the evaluation determines the child's strengths, weaknesses, and educational needs.

**Observation:** A careful look at the child in school or home to note how the child works and plays in different situations, at different times during the day, and in different activities. The purpose of observation is to learn more about the child.

**Occupational Therapist (OT):** Person trained to build the skills needed in daily living, such as feeding, dressing, play, and fine and gross motor skills.

**Orthopedic Impairment:** A severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by a congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis), and impairments from other causes (e.g. cerebral palsy, amputations and fractures or burns that cause contractures).

**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:

- Is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette syndrome.
- Adversely affects a child's educational performance.

**Parental Consent:** Permission given voluntarily by parents which may be revoked (taken back by the parent) at any time.

**Parent Support Group:** Discussion and information-sharing meetings for parents of children with exceptionalities.

**Physical Therapist (PT):** Person trained to develop a child's strength, endurance, and movement patterns so the child may become as independent as possible.

**Placement:** The setting in which the child receives special education and related services.

**Related Services:** Services required to assist an exceptional child to benefit from special education. These may include:

- Assistive Technology.
- Transportation to and from school.
- Counseling for child and/or family.
- Recreation or special physical education.
- School health services.
- Physical therapy.
- Occupational therapy.
- Speech/language therapy.
- Others.

**Reevaluation:** A reassessment of the child's ability and achievement within a three-year period.

**School Psychologist:** Person trained to do psycho-educational evaluation of children (i.e., intelligence testing, visual- motor assessments, social-emotional assessment, etc.) and to assist parents and teachers in providing help for children.

**Section 504 Accommodation Plan:** An educational plan or modifications for a student suspected of a disability that may not require special education services.

**Special Education Teacher:** Person trained to provide instruction to meet the special learning needs of an exceptional child; special education teachers are qualified (certified) to teach in certain areas of exceptionality (e.g., specific learning disabilities, hard of hearing, intellectual disabilities, etc.)

**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 to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of intellectual disability, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

**Speech/Language Pathologist (Speech Therapist):** Person trained to diagnose speech and language problems and provide help for children in improving speech and language skills.

**Transition Services:** Activities that allow a child to become qualified, educated, and develop employment or living skills in which to take part.

Traumatic Brain Injury: Means 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:** An impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

## Terms You Will Often Hear

**Standards:** Standards are general statements of what students should know or be able to do as a result of their public-school education. Standards refer to what teachers teach in the classroom, the subject matter, the skills and knowledge, and the applications. They specify that "by the time students reach a particular grade, we expect them to be able to do [these specific things] and demonstrate that they can [use this specific information or knowledge]."

**Inclusion:** The process in schools where students with disabilities have opportunities to learn alongside their nondisabled peers in the general classroom.

**Co-Teaching:** When a general education teacher and a special education teacher work together to teach in the same classroom at the same time. They both are fully responsible for every student in the classroom. Both students with and without disabilities are in the co-taught class together.

# Section 7

## National Resources

### **Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

3417 Volta Place, NW Washington, DC 20007

P: (202) 337-5220

TTY: (202) 337-5221

F: (202) 337-8314

<http://www.agbell.org>

*National organization for parents and teachers interested in children with hearing impairments which provides information on home training, amplification and has large library on deafness.*

### **American Foundation for the Blind**

11 Penn Plaza, Suite 1102

New York, NY 10121

P: (800) 232-5463

P: (212) 502-7600

F: (888) 545-8331

<http://www.afb.org>

*Private agency that provides information and referral services for the public.*

### **American Speech-Language-Hearing Association**

2200 Research Boulevard

Rockville, MD 20850-3289

P: (800) 498-2071 (Professionals and Students) P: (800) 638-8255 (Public)

TTY: (301) 296-5650

<http://www.asha.org>

*An educational and professional organization for speech, language, and audiology providing clinical referral services for those seeking clinical services. Free public information literature is available on request from the association.*

### **Association for the Gifted**

4936 SW 91st Terrace, M302

Gainesville, FL 32608

P: 1-765-749-4208

<http://www.cectag.org>

*Organization of parents, educators, and other professionals that advocates for children who are gifted and that also provides informational services.*

**The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH)**

1025 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 300

Washington, DC 20005

P: (202) 540-9020

F: (202) 540-9019

<http://www.TASH.org>

*An organization of parents, educators, and other professionals, which provides information, support, and coordinates a parent-to-parent network of communication for individuals with severe disabilities.*

**The Arc (The Arc) of the United States**

1825 K Street, NW, Suite 1200

Washington, DC 20006

P: (202) 534-3700

(800) 433-5255

F: (202) 534-3731

<http://www.thearc.org>

*The Arc is the largest national community-based organization advocating for and with people intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and serving them and their families.*

**Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America**

8201 Corporate Drive, Suite 1000

Landover, MD 20785

P: (800) 727-8462

<http://www.aafa.org>

*A national information service organization for individuals with asthma and allergic diseases.*

**Autism Society of America**

4340 East-West Hwy, Suite 350

Bethesda, MD 20814

P: (800) 328-8476

<http://www.autism-society.org>

*National organization with information on the education and welfare of children and adults with severe needs in communication and behavior.*

**Cadre.Org**

576 Olive St., Ste. 300 Eugene, OR 97401

P: (541) 359-4210

<https://www.cadeworks.org>

*The Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE) works to increase the nation's capacity to prevent and resolve special education and early intervention disputes.*

**Center for Parent Information & Resources**

c/o Statewide Parent Advocate Network (SPAN)

35 Halsey Street

4th Floor

Newark, NJ 07102

P: (973) 642-8100

<http://www.parentcenterhub.org>

*National organization working with families of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities, birth to 26.*

**Clearinghouse on Disability Information – OAS, CMMS**

U. S. Department of Education

550 12th Street, S.W., Room 5133

Washington, DC 20202-2550 (202) 245-7307 (Voice)

(202) 205-5637 (TTD) (202) 245-7636 (FAX)

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/codi.html>

*The Clearinghouse provides information to people with disabilities or anyone requesting information, by doing research and providing documents in response to inquiries.*

**The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities**

1825 K Street, NW, Suite 1200

Washington, DC 20006

P: (202) 567-3516

F: (202) 408-9520

[info@c-c-d.org/](mailto:info@c-c-d.org/)

*A coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration, and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.*

**The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)**

2900 Crystal Drive, Suite 1000

Arlington, VA 22202-3557

P: (888) 232-7733

TTY: (866)915-5000

<http://www.cec.sped.org>

*International professional organization dedicated to improving educational outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities, students with disabilities, and/or the gifted.*

**Epilepsy Foundation of America**

4351 Garden City Drive

Landover, MD 20785

P: (800) 332-1000

P: (301) 459-3700

F: (301) 577-2684

<http://www.efa.org>

*A national agency for people with epilepsy. Provides free information on epilepsy and its consequences and educational materials on individuals and groups dealing with seizure disorders. Provides referral services, monitors related legislative activity, and is a strong advocate to help obtain needed services and rights for those with epilepsy.*

**Learning Disabilities Association of America**

4156 Library Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15234  
P: (888) 300-6710  
P: (412) 341-1515  
F: (412) 344-0224

<http://www.ldanatl.org>

*National organization with chapters in every state; provides information on advocacy, publications, and new developments related to children with learning disabilities.*

**Lighthouse International**

111 East 59th Street  
New York, NY 10022-1202  
T: (212) 821-9200 / (800) 829-0500  
P: (212) 889-3141  
F: (212) 821-9707  
TTY: (212) 821-9713

<http://www.lighthouse.org/>

*Provides free learning materials for parents to help their children, including large print books and a monthly newsletter to keep families informed on the new techniques used with the visually handicapped.*

**National Down Syndrome Congress**

30 Mansell Court, Suite 108  
Roswell, GA 30076  
P: (800)-232-6372  
P: (770)-604-9500  
F: (770)604-9898

<http://www.ncscenter.org>

*National information service for and by parents of children who have Down Syndrome; publishes a monthly newsletter on new information of special interest.*

**National Down Syndrome Society**

666 Broadway Avenue, 8th Floor  
New York, NY 10012  
P: (800) 221-4602  
P: (212) 460-9330  
F: (212) 979-2873

<http://www.ndss.org>

*Provides information and referrals to parents of infants and young children with Down Syndrome and to the professionals who help them. Publishes biannual newsletter.*

**National Easter Seal Society**

233 South Wacker Drive, Suite 2400

Chicago, IL 60606

P: (800) 221-6827

P: (312) 726-6200

TTY: (312) 726-4258

F: (312) 726-1494

<http://www.easter-seals.org>

*National organization to provide rehabilitation services to persons with physical handicaps. Local societies are throughout the country.*

**National Hemophilia Foundation**

116 West 32nd Street, 11th Floor

New York, NY 10001

P: (212) 328-3700

F: (212) 328-3777

HANDI Phone: (800) 42-HANDI

HANDI Fax: (212) 328-3799

<http://www.hemophilia.org>

*Provides free literature on hemophilia and the handicapping conditions that can result from this disease. Provides referral services and was directly responsible for the establishment of 23 diagnostic centers for hemophilia across the country that provide training and rehabilitation.*

**Mental Health America**

2001 N. Beauregard Street, 6th Floor

Alexandria, VA 22311

P: (800)969-6642

P: (703) 684-7722

F: (703) 684-5968

<http://www.nmha.org>

*An organization of parents, professionals and people with mental disorders. Advocates for legislation affecting the rights and treatment of people with mental-emotional disorders. Information and publications as well as a monthly newsletter are available.*

**National Center on Accessible Educational Materials (AEM)**

200 Harvard Mill Square, Suite 210

Wakefield, MA 01880

P: (781) 245-2212

<https://www.aem.cast.org>

*An organization that provides resources and technical assistance for educators, parents, students, and others interested in learning more about accessible education materials.*

**National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS)**

733 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10017  
P: (800) 344-4867  
P: (212) 986-3240

<http://www.nmss.org>

*The NMSS is a non-profit organization that funds research, advocates for social and political change, provides education, and sponsors services that help people with multiple sclerosis and their families.*

**Spina Bifida Association of America**

4590 MacArthur Blvd., NW, Suite 250  
Washington, DC 20007  
P: (800) 621-3141  
P: (202) 944-3285  
F: (202) 944-3295

<http://www.sbaa.org>

*National association to distribute information to parents and professionals; has local chapters throughout the country.*

**United Cerebral Palsy**

1825 K Street NW Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20006  
Phone: 800.872.5827 / 202.776.0406

<http://www.ucp.org>

*National association for information and service needs to for families with a child with cerebral palsy.*

**Understood.org USA LLC**

32 Laight Street, 1st Floor  
New York, NY 10013-2152

<https://www.understood.org/en>

*The organization's goal is to help parents whose children, ages 3-20, are struggling with learning and attention issues. With knowledge, parents can make effective choices that propel their children from coping to thriving.*

## West Virginia Resources

### **Appalachian Reading Center, Inc.**

Lori Dubrawka, Executive Director

304-744-8188

429 3rd Avenue

S. Charleston, WV 25303

Beckley Office

211 Sunset Drive

Beckley, WV 25801

Parkersburg Office

923 Emerson Ave.

Parkersburg, WV 26104

[www.appalachianreading.org](http://www.appalachianreading.org)

*Non-profit agency that provides remediation for students with language-based learning disabilities.*

*Individualized tutoring for students with dyslexia and other problems provided.*

### **The Arc of Harrison County**

PO Box 764

Clarksburg, WV 26302-0764

P: (304) 624-3641

<http://arc-hc.com>

*The Arc provides advocacy and services to adults and children with intellectual disabilities. Its services range from advocacy and residential program to family support. The center provides the training and assistance necessary to enable a person to achieve independence and regain self-esteem.*

### **The Arc of Mid-Ohio Valley**

912 Market Street

Parkersburg, WV 26101-4737

P: (304) 422-3151

P: 1-877-334-6581

<http://www.arcwd.org>

*The Arc provides advocacy and services to adults and children with intellectual disabilities. Its services range from advocacy and residential program to family support. The center provides the training and assistance necessary to enable a person to achieve independence and regain self-esteem.*

### **The Arc of Ohio County**

439 Warwood Ave

Wheeling, WV 26003-6839

P: (304) 277-1466

*The Arc provides advocacy and services to adults and children with intellectual disabilities. Its services range from advocacy and residential program to family support. The center provides the training and assistance necessary to enable a person to achieve independence and regain self-esteem.*

**The Arc of the Three Rivers**

1021 Quarrier St.  
Charleston, WV 25301-2338  
P: (304) 344-3403

<http://www.arcthreerivers.org>

*The Arc provides advocacy and services to adults and children with intellectual disabilities. Its services range from advocacy and residential program to family support. The center provides the training and assistance necessary to enable a person to achieve independence and regain self-esteem.*

**Behavior/Mental Health Technical Assistance Center (B/MHTAC)**

Marshall University  
Old Main 316  
1 John Marshall Drive  
Huntington, WV 25755  
P: (800) 344-5115  
(304) 696-2332

<http://www.marshall.edu.atc>

*The B/MHTAC is funded by the West Virginia Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Student Support and is housed at the Autism Training Center at Marshall University. The Center offers training and technical assistance. The interventions supported by the B/MHTAC are based on national models and research related to multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) and the interconnected systems framework (ISF).*

**Center for Excellence in Disabilities (CED)**

West Virginia University  
959 Hartman Run Road  
Morgantown, WV 26505  
P: (304) 293-4692  
TTY: (888) 829-9426  
Voice or TTY: (800) 518-1448

<http://www.cedwvu.org/>

*A federally designated University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) that is a part of a national network and serves as a resource to the community in the areas of education, research, and services as they relate to the needs of people with disabilities.*

**Healthy Grandfamilies Program**

West Virginia State University  
500 Curtis Complex  
P.O. Box 1000  
Institute, WV 25112  
P: (304) 204-4007

<https://www.healthygrandfamilies.com>  
[bonnie.dunn@wvstateu.edu](mailto:bonnie.dunn@wvstateu.edu)

*Healthy Grandfamilies is a free initiative led by West Virginia State University to provide information and resources to grandparents who are raising one or more grandchildren. The program is designed as a series of nine discussions with three months of free follow-up provided by a Licensed Social Worker.*

**Mission West Virginia**

168 Midland Trail, Suite 1  
Hurricane, WV 25526  
P: (304) 562-0723

<https://www.missionwv.org>

*Mission West Virginia changes the lives of youth and families. The organization promotes positive futures by recruiting foster families, providing life skills education, and creating community connections.*

**Stepping Stones**

400 Mylan Park Ln  
Morgantown, WV 26501  
P: (304) 983-7837  
(800) 982-8799

<http://www.steppingstones.askwhymedia.com/index.html>

*A non-profit organization that provides year-round recreation for children and adults with disabilities.*

**Disability Rights West Virginia (DRWV)**

Litton Building 4th Floor  
1207 Quarrier Street  
Charleston, WV 25301  
P: (304) 346-0847  
F: (304) 346-0867

<http://www.wvadvocates.org>

*The federally mandated protection and advocacy system for people with disabilities in West Virginia.*

**Learning Disabilities Association of West Virginia**

(304) 744-8188

**Mountain State Parents, Child and Adolescent Network (MSP-CAN)**

2351 Garfield Ave.  
Parkersburg, WV 26101  
P: (304) 428-0365

[www.mspscan.org](http://www.mspscan.org)

*A family-driven non-profit organization that promotes reforms in the service delivery system through a continuum of interrelated activities that educate and support parents and inform practitioners, administrators, and policy makers.*

### **Transition Technical Assistance Center (TTAC)**

Community Access, Inc.  
888 Oakwood Road, Suite 320  
Charleston, WV 25314

Jeff McCroskey  
[jeffmccroskey@aim.com](mailto:jeffmccroskey@aim.com)  
[www.communityaccesswv.org](http://www.communityaccesswv.org)

P: (304) 545-1483

*TTAC is funded by the West Virginia Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Student Support and housed at Community Access, Inc. The Center provides a wide array of training and technical assistance throughout West Virginia. It assists local education agencies and the WV Division of Rehabilitation Services (WVDRS) to implement evidence-based practices to ensure students with disabilities stay in school, progress in school, and graduate with the skills needed to succeed.*

### **West Virginia Achieving a Better Life Experience (WVABLE)**

1900 Kanawha Blvd.  
Capital Complex Building #1, Room E-145  
Charleston, WV 25305

P: (304) 558-5000  
(800) 422-7498

<https://wvable.com/>

*WVABLE is made possible by the Achieving a Better Life Experience in West Virginia Act, also known as the West Virginia ABLE Act. The program allows individuals with disabilities the ability to save and invest up to \$15,000.00 per year without losing eligibility for public benefit programs such as Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).*

### **WV Advisory Council for the Education of Exceptional Children (WVACEEC)**

100 Angus E. Peyton Drive  
South Charleston, WV 25303

(304) 796-4937

<https://wvde.state.wv.us/osp/advisorycouncil.html>

*The WVACEEC is mandated by State Code (the legal figure goes before) 18-20-6 and is charged in part with advising decision makers regarding unmet needs of exceptional children which includes students with disabilities and students identified as gifted.*

### **West Virginia Assistive Technology System**

WV University Center for Excellence in Disabilities  
959 Hartman Run Road  
Morgantown, WV 26505

P: (800) 841-8436

P: (304) 293-4692

F: (304) 293-7294

<http://www.ced/wvu.org>

[wvats@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:wvats@hsc.wvu.edu)

*WVATS offers free statewide services to individuals of all ages and all abilities which are designed to ensure West Virginia residents have an opportunity to make informed decisions before purchasing assistive technology devices.*

**WV Autism Training Center**

Marshall University-Behavioral/Mental  
Health Technical Assistance Center (B/MHTAC)  
Marshall University  
Old Main 316  
1 John Marshall Drive  
Huntington, WV 25755  
P: (800) 344-5115  
(304) 696-2332

<http://www.marshall.edu.atc>.

*The Center provides services to families of West Virginia with autism spectrum disorders as well as their educators and others significant in their lives.*

**West Virginia Birth to Three**

350 Capitol Street, Room 427  
Charleston, WV 25301  
P: (800) 642-9704  
P: (304) 558-5388

<http://www.wvdhhr.org/mcfh/birth23>

*System of services and supports for children ages birth to three who have a delay in their development or may be at risk for a delay. The early intervention services are offered at no cost to the families and provided in the child's daily natural environment (home or community).*

**West Virginia Department of Education  
Office of Special Education & Student Support**

1900 Kanawha Boulevard East, Bldg. 6  
Charleston, WV 25305  
P: (800) 642-8541  
P: (304) 558-2696  
F: (304) 558-1634

<http://wvde.us/special-education/>

*The Office of Special Education and Student Support is responsible for improving results for children and youth with exceptionalities, primarily through leadership and financial support to local education agencies for the administration of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA).*

**WV Department of Health and Human Resources (WVDHHR)**

1 Davis Square Suite 100  
Charleston, WV 25301  
P: (304) 558-0684  
<http://www.wvdhhr@wv.gov>

### **WV Developmental Disabilities Council**

110 Stockton Street  
Charleston, WV 25387  
P: (304) 558-0416  
[dhhrwvddc@wv.gov](mailto:dhhrwvddc@wv.gov)

*The Council's mission is to assure the West Virginians with developmental disabilities receive the services, supports, and other forms of assistance they need to exercise self-determination and achieve independence, productivity, integration, and inclusion in the community.*

### **WV Family Resource Networks (WVFRN)**

350 Capitol Street, Room 730  
Charleston, WV 25301  
P: (304) 558-0628  
F: (304) 558-4194  
<https://www.wvfrn.org>

*The Networks are local coalitions of people working to better meet the needs and improve services for children and families in their communities by developing innovative projects and providing necessary resources in the area. West Virginia Resource Networks are defined in WV State Code (legal sign goes before) 49-1-206.*

### **WV Office of Maternal, Child, and Family Health**

350 Capitol Street Rm. 427  
Charleston, WV 25301  
P: (304) 558-5388  
(800) 642-8522  
<http://www.wvdhhr.org/mcfh/>

*Provides leadership to support state and community efforts to build systems of care that assure the health and well-being of all West Virginians.*

### **WV Parent Teacher Association (WVPTA)**

West Virginia PTA  
P.O. Box 3557  
Parkersburg, WV 26103-3557  
P: (304) 420-9577  
F: (304) 420-9577  
<https://www.westvirginiapta.org>

*PTA's mission is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. PTA's network provides parents with the forum and tools to collectively influence decisions that affect children not only at their schools, but also throughout their districts, and within the state.*

**West Virginia Parent Training & Information, Inc.**

99 Edmiston Way, Suite 101-102

Buckhannon, WV 26201

P: (304) 472-5697

(800) 281-1436

F: (304) 472-3524

<http://www.wvpti-inc.org>

*WVPTI is the federally designated Parent Training and Information Center for the State of West Virginia. The programs and services of PTI are based on the concept of parents helping parents. WVPTI, Inc. is committed to empowering parents and families of children and youth with disabilities and special health care needs as advocated and partners in improving education, transition, and health care outcomes for their children from birth to age 26.*

## INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM/504 PLAN PARENT INPUT FORM

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

You are an important member of your child’s team and your input is needed to develop her/his Individualized Education Program or 504 Plan. You will have an IEP or 504 Plan Team meeting this school year during a time convenient for both you and the school staff. The information you provide on this form will help develop the most appropriate IEP or 504 Plan for your child. Your input is extremely valuable. Please take a few moments to complete the following questions and send this form to your child’s special education or 504 Plan case manager/teacher. Feel free to attach any documents or additional comments.

What about your child makes you proud?

When it comes to school, in what subjects does your child do well?

What motivates your child to do well?

Do you have concerns about your child when it comes to learning or attending school?

CUT HERE

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What techniques have you used to address the concern(s) in #4? Were they successful?

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What is/are the most important goal(s) that you would like to see accomplished this school year?

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What are your hopes and dreams for your child's future? What are the hopes and dreams for the future that your child has shared with you?

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Is there additional information you would like to share that would assist in developing the IEP?

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Please check which days you prefer for meetings.		What time of day works best for your schedule?
<input type="checkbox"/> Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> Any time
<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday	<input type="checkbox"/> Morning
<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday		<input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon
		<input type="checkbox"/> After school

If you have questions pertaining to your child's plan, please contact your child's school or the West Virginia Parent Training & Information Center at (304) 472-5697 or at [wvpti@aol.com](mailto:wvpti@aol.com)













Steven L. Paine, Ed.D.  
West Virginia Superintendent of Schools