

CARING ABOUT KIDS

PARENT HANDBOOK

Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
Greater Anaheim SELPA
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PARENT HANDBOOK

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PARENT HANDBOOK

CHAPTER 1

- Parent Handbook Introduction
- What is a SELPA?
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- Districts belonging to the Greater Anaheim SELPA

Dear Parent,

This handbook was developed and updated by the members of the Community Advisory Committee for Special Education of the Greater Anaheim Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA), so that you may better understand your role in providing an education for a child with exceptional needs.

As you read our “Special Handbook,” it is our hope that it will help to answer some of your questions about Special Education. We also want to invite and encourage you to participate as a member of the Community Advisory Committee. For information about our Committee and meeting dates **or if you would like more information regarding the Greater Anaheim SELPA** please contact the Greater Anaheim SELPA Office at (714) 828-1766.

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

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WHAT IS A SELPA?

In 1977, Assembly Bill 1250 required all school districts and county school offices to join and form geographical regions of sufficient size and scope to provide for all the special education service needs of children residing within the region boundaries. Each region called a Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) developed a local plan describing how it would provide special education services.

The Greater Anaheim SELPA is a six district SELPA which includes the following school districts:

Anaheim Union High School District
Centralia School District
Cypress School District
Los Alamitos Unified School District
Magnolia School District
Savanna School District

Responsibilities of the SELPA include such things as:

- Ensuring program availability for all disabled children
- Curriculum/Program Development
- Community Advisory Committee Support
- Management Information System
- Interagency Coordination
- Personnel Development
- Budget Review
- Evaluation of Programs
- Program Coordination
- Fiscal Management
- Program Specialties
- Community Awareness
- Compliance Monitoring and Support

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WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)?

As a parent of a child in a special education program or as an interested member of the community you should know that there is a group of parents like yourself, along with educators and community representatives, who meet regularly during the school year. They review programs and procedures, and make suggestions for parent information and support. This is your local Community Advisory Committee (CAC.)

The Community Advisory Committee is composed of:

- Parents of Disabled Children enrolled in public or private non-sectarian schools:
- Parents of other pupils enrolled in school
- Disabled students enrolled in special education programs
- Special Education Teachers, Support Staff or Administrators
- General Education Teachers
- Other school personnel
- Representatives of other public and private agencies / organizations concerned with the needs of disabled students

The primary purpose of the Committee is to facilitate communication and understanding, leading to improved special education programs and related services, and to assist in the development of the Local Plan for Special Education which is submitted to the State Department of Education for approval. Other responsibilities include:

- Advising the administration of the SELPA regarding the development and review of programs and services.
- Informing and advising SELPA staff regarding community conditions, aspirations and goals for disabled students.
- Making recommendations and suggestions for annual priorities to be addressed.
- Supporting activities on behalf of disabled students.
- Facilitating communication between schools, parents, and community.

We work together to develop home and school partnerships to promote success for your child in school through parent education.

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DISTRICTS BELONGING TO THE GREATER ANAHEIM SELPA

ANAHEIM UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

501 Crescent Way
Anaheim, CA 92803
(714) 999-3526

CENTRALIA SCHOOL DISTRICT 6625 La Palma Ave.

Buena Park, CA 90620
(714) 228-3141

CYPRESS SCHOOL DISTRICT

9470 Moody Street
Cypress, CA 90630
(714) 220-6921

LOS ALAMITOS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

10293 Bloomfield Street
Los Alamitos, CA 90720
(562) 799-4700, Ext. 80420

MAGNOLIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

2705 West Orange Avenue
Anaheim, CA 92804
(714) 761-5533, ext. 307

SAVANNA SCHOOL DISTRICT

1330 South Knott Ave.
Anaheim, CA 92804
(714) 236-3816

PARENT HANDBOOK

CHAPTER 2

- Special Education Eligibility
- Description of Program Options

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SPECIAL EDUCATION ELIGIBILITY

Children who meet specific eligibility criteria exhibiting the following problems may qualify for special education. Federal law names and describes the specific disabilities that may make children eligible for special education and related services. They include the following:

- Hard of Hearing
- Hearing Impaired
- Speech or Language Impaired
- Visually Impaired
- Orthopedically Impaired
- Other Health Impaired (in strength, vitality, or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems)

- Autistic-Like Behaviors
- Mental Retardation
- Serious Emotional Disturbance
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Specific Learning Disability
- Deaf and Blind
- Multiple Disability

Children may exhibit a variety of problems including many that are not listed above. For a more complete description of eligible conditions, **contact your district Director of Special Education.**

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DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM OPTIONS

The Greater Anaheim SELPA (Special Education Local Plan Area) makes available a range of educational programs for students with special needs. The **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** Team determines program placement and services for each student based on each student's unique needs as determined by assessment and agreed upon goals. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is also considered and determined for each individual student. LRE means that a student is to participate in as much of the general education program as is appropriate in view of his/her unique educational needs. In other words, your child should not be separated from students without disabilities any more than is necessary. Also, your child's program should be located as close to home as possible, meaning that program options are first considered at his/her neighborhood school.

The following are program options (ages 3 - 22 as appropriate and needed):

Early Intervention Program

This program is designed to provide early intervention services to infants and toddlers (birth to age 3) who have low incidence disabilities (i.e., vision, hearing, or orthopedic problems). The primary purpose of the Early Intervention Program is to enhance the development of the infant. To meet this purpose, the program is focused upon the infant and his or her family and includes home visits, group services, and family involvement activities.

Pre-School Intervention Program

Pre-school age children with special needs may be served in several ways:

- Designated instruction and services to support regular preschool placement
- Designated instruction and services only
- Special Day Class
- Special Day Class with designated instruction and services

General Education Program

A student with special needs can be placed in a general education classroom (also known as inclusion) for any part or all of the school day with necessary support services if it is determined that his/her educational needs can be met in that setting.

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DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM OPTIONS (continued)

Related Services

Support services (related services) are provided to students with special needs when they are required to help support his/her special education program.

DIS services include, but are not limited to the following:

- Speech and language therapy
- Audiological services
- Orientation and mobility instruction
- Instruction in the home or hospital
- Adapted physical education
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Counseling and guidance services
- Psychological services other than assessment and development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Parent counseling and training
- Health services
- Specialized services for low-incidence disabilities such as readers, transcribers, and vision/hearing services
- Transportation

Specialized Academic Instruction

A student may be eligible for a specialized Academic Instruction when the Individual Education Program (IEP) Team determines that his/her educational needs cannot be satisfactorily met in general education classes with appropriate interventions. Specialized Academic Instruction includes the adapting, as appropriate to the needs of the child with a disability, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum based on each students IEP goals. Specialized Academic Instruction can be provided to students individually and/or in small groups, for specific periods of time during the school day, in a variety of settings by qualified personnel, to be determined by the IEP team.

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DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM OPTIONS (continued)

Specialized Academic Instruction (continued)

Traditionally in California, when a student requires Specialized Academic Instruction to an intense degree or for the majority of the school day, these services are provided within the context of a Special Day Class (SDC). When a student requires Specialized Academic Instruction for less than half their instructional day, traditionally these services are provided by a Resource Specialist.

However, school districts may provide Specialized Academic Instruction in a variety of settings utilizing a variety of models.

County Schools

County Schools provide comprehensive services for special education students.

Non-Public, Non-Sectarian School Services

This placement is considered only when a student's needs cannot be met within public school programs.

State Schools - (Students who are Deaf/Blind)

This placement is considered only when no appropriate placement is available within, but not limited to, the Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) and when a residential placement is needed for the children to meet his/her educational goals.

Other

Special education instruction may also occur in settings other than classrooms where specially designed instruction takes place, (e.g., home instruction, residential placement).

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CHAPTER 3

- Student Intervention Teams
- Referral and Identification Process
- Assessment
- Individualized Education Program
- Time Lines

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STUDENT INTERVENTION TEAMS

also known as Student Study Teams (SST)

Prior to special education if a student currently enrolled in school is having a problem which has not improved with teacher interventions (e.g., modified assignments, parent contact, etc.), he/she is referred to the Student Intervention Team (SIT). The purpose of the SIT is to focus on a student's needs and strengths, and recommend interventions to be tried. The SIT may refer a student for special education assessment only after all resources of general education have been considered and, where appropriate, utilized.

The composition of the SIT may vary from school to school, but the team will always include parents, and sufficient staff to review a student's needs. The teacher who is referring the student is always a member of the team while that student's needs are being reviewed. The school principal or designee chairs the SIT meeting.

Please contact your school principal for information specific to your school site.

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REFERRAL AND IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

How it all Happens

A referral for identification of an individual (ages 0-21) with a possible special need may come from the following:

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Parent/Legal Guardian | Administrator |
| Student Study Team | Physician |
| Community Agency | Concerned Person |
| Teacher | |

In order to provide special services, the following process has been established to conform with federal and state regulations:

STEP 1 REFERRAL

A written referral should be made to your school principal or psychologist requesting an assessment. Within 15 days of your request, the district will provide an assessment plan for your approval. You have at least 15 days to approve the assessment plan. Upon your written approval of the assessment plan, the district has 60 calendar days to complete the assessment, conduct an Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team meeting, and to determine eligibility for services. This timeline is extended by periods of school holiday or vacation, if a child is not available, or if a child transfers to another school district. Parents are equal members of the team.

STEP 2 ASSESSMENT

Upon receipt of the approval for assessment, a case manager (usually the school psychologist or resource teacher) who will consult with the parents will be assigned. At this time, arrangements will be made to have the student's strengths and possible needs evaluated.

STEP 3 INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) Team Meeting

During this meeting, assessment results will be shared with the parent and/or representative, and student as appropriate. Parents are essential members of this team. If it is determined by the IEP team that special education placement is needed for your child, an educational program will be developed to meet your individual child's needs.

STEP 4 APPROPRIATE SERVICES

Once the special needs of your child have been identified and the Individualized Education Program is developed, the next step is determining appropriate services. You and the school team will consider where the student's needs can appropriately be met (i.e. regular class with special assistance, part-time special services, full-time special services, nonpublic school placement). Parent approval is required.

STEP 5 IEP REVIEW

Your child's program will be reviewed by an IEP team at least once a year to determine how well the program is meeting the child's needs. You may request a review at any time by contacting your child's teacher, principal or school psychologist.

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ASSESSMENT

The assessment information determines whether there is a difference between what your child is able to do and what he/she is actually doing -- the difference between their potential ability and their current achievement. The data also discovers the reason for the difference and the disability area (e.g., Specific Learning Disability, Communicatively Disabled, etc. -- see Appendix). To qualify for special education services, the disability must be preventing the student from succeeding in school.

The following rules are only some of which apply to initial evaluations/assessments for revision of an IEP:

- Parental consent must be obtained prior to assessment.
- Evaluation is by a multidisciplinary team, and assessment is in all areas related to the child's suspected disability including, where appropriate, vision, hearing, motor abilities, self-help, mobility skills, career and vocational abilities and interest, and social and emotional status.
- Tests must be validated for the specific purpose used and be given by trained personnel. Tests must accurately measure a child's aptitude or achievement and assess specific areas of educational need rather than provide a single score and/or reflect the child's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills. No single procedure or test is to be used for determining eligibility and an appropriate educational program for a child.
- The assessments must be given in the child's native language and/or other mode of communication. If this is not feasible, an interpreter must be used.
- Assessment/evaluation materials must be selected and administered so as not to be racially, culturally, or sexually discriminatory.
- The school must provide the parents a copy of the assessment findings if the parents request one. It is best to request that a copy be sent to you before the IEP meeting so that you can consider the results in planning for the meeting.
- If you disagree with the assessment, you may request another district assessment or obtain an independent assessment. An independent assessment must be considered by the district, and upon request, must pay for the cost of the private assessment unless it can show, through a hearing which it requests, that the district's assessment was accurate, complete, and met the legal requirements described above. A parent is entitled to only one (1) independent education evaluation at public expense each time the district conducts an evaluation.
- Generally, a reevaluation is required every three (3) years. However, if the IEP Team determines that no additional data is needed to determine whether your child continues to be a child with a disability and to determine the child's educational needs the school district will notify you as to the reasons the school district believes a reevaluation is not necessary. After receiving this notice, you may request a reevaluation of your child. If the school district does not receive a reevaluation request from you, the school district will not conduct a reevaluation of your child.

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ASSESSMENT (Continued)

- ! A copy of a notice of parent rights will be given to you 1) upon initial referral or your request for evaluation, 2) once a school year; 3) upon the receipt of the first filing of a state or due process complaint; 4) when a decision is made regarding a disciplinary change of placement; or 5) upon your request. The notice must explain all the procedural rights of a special education student under federal and state special education law. You have the right to request help from your district in understanding the content of these written procedural safeguards.

What happens if I disagree with the results of the assessment and/or the recommendations of the team?

If you disagree with the school's assessment, you are entitled to a second opinion from a qualified person, or you may obtain an independent evaluation. Your school psychologist can assist you with this process.

How can I obtain a copy of the Assessment Report?

Upon request, a copy of the assessment report will be given to you for your review prior to the IEP Team meeting, if possible.

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INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM

You are an important member of the IEP Team. After your child's assessment has been completed, you will be asked to attend an IEP team meeting. The results of the assessment will be discussed. If your child meets the eligibility requirements for special education services, an IEP (Individualized Education Program) will be designed and written to meet your child's unique learning needs. Your written approval is required before the IEP is implemented. Your ideas and priorities are important because you know your child best.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting

The purpose of the initial IEP meeting is to review the assessment and determine the child's eligibility. If the child is eligible, the IEP is developed, and it is implemented upon the parent's written consent. The IEP is reviewed at least annually or sooner upon written request by a parent or a teacher.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

- An IEP specifies in writing the commitment of the school district to provide the services needed to assist your child in working toward his/her goals (but does not guarantee that your child will make the growth anticipated or described in the IEP).

- Your child should have only one IEP in effect at any one time.

- Your child's IEP should include, but is not limited to, all of the following:
 - A statement of your child's present levels of performance, both strengths and weaknesses
 - A statement of annual goals, and benchmarks if appropriate.
 - A statement of the specific education and related services to be provided to your child
 - An explanation of the extent, if any, your child will not be able to participate in the general education environment, and rationale.
 - The projected date services will begin and how long they will be expected to continue
 - Appropriate, objective criteria and evaluation procedures and schedules for determining, on at least an annual basis, whether the goals are being achieved.

- **Vocational Education** goals may be included in an IEP. These may include pre-vocational education, career awareness and development, work/training programs, and travel training. Preparing students with special needs for employment is the long-term goal of vocational education.

Individualized Transition Program (ITP)

The ITP is included with a student's IEP by age of 16. The ITP is designed to develop a long-range plan for the student's movement into the adult world.

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INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (continued)

- **Transfer of Parent Rights at Age of Majority** requires that notice of their rights be given to student and parents one year prior to student's 18th birthday, and that rights are transferred to student when he/she turns 18.

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team

An IEP must include the following people:

- ★ The parent/legal guardian
- ★ Regular Education teacher
- ★ Special Education teacher
- ★ A representative of the school district who
 - ✓ is qualified to provide or supervise the provisions of special education
 - ✓ knows about the regular curriculum
 - ✓ knows about available district resources
- ★ An individual who can interpret the instructional evaluation results
- ★ Other individuals who have special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel, as appropriate
- ★ The child with a disability, when appropriate

The school/district is required to notify the parent in writing regarding who will attend the IEP meeting. You and the school district may agree in writing that the attendance of an IEP team member is not necessary.

Developing the Individualized Education Program (IEP)

- The IEP team will review the findings of the assessment and establish your child's present level of performance in the areas of need. Be certain to ask questions if you do not understand the test results or if any terms are unclear. You may request a copy of the assessment report prior to the meeting. If this is not possible, you may request more time to review the report at the meeting.
- **Goals** should be written for each area where the team has identified a need.
- **Benchmarks** need to be developed for students taking alternate assessments aligned with alternate standards.

Goals describe how the team wants a student's competence to improve after instruction, usually over the period of one year.

Benchmarks are incremental steps to be taken to reach the goals. They should be specific, meaningful, observable, and measurable. The benchmarks or short-term objectives should be based on a particular activity and easy to understand. The objectives should clearly state who will measure the results and how they will be measured.

- You will need to let the rest of the team know whether or not you agree with the written goals and benchmarks or short-term objectives that have been generated.

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INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (continued)

- All possible program options should be explored, taking into consideration the least restrictive placement option that will allow your child to benefit from the agreed-upon goals and benchmarks.
- After the team has selected a appropriate services, the parents need to give written consent for services.
- Appropriate Designated Instruction and Services (DIS) and related services are identified, indicating specific frequency and duration of services to be provided.
- If you are unable or choose not to attend the IEP meeting, the other members of the team will meet on the scheduled day and develop the program. A copy of the completed IEP will be sent to you for your review and signed consent.
- **Your signed permission on the IEP form is needed before services can start.** You or any other member of the team may suggest that the IEP meeting be completed at another time.
- Parents are provided with a copy of the IEP. You can request that your copy be in your primary language.

Partial Implementation of the Individualized Education Program (IEP)

If you do not agree with all the parts of the IEP, you may sign for only those portions of the program with which you do agree. The portions agreed to will be implemented without delay. You have the right to write a statement of disagreement and include in it the IEP. If you sign the IEP and later decide you disagree with any part of it, you may withdraw consent at any time after giving written notification to a school administrator.

Preparing for the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting

- Respond to the IEP notification. Parents are urged to attend! You are expected to be an equal participant along with school personnel in developing, reviewing, or revising your child's IEP. You may reschedule the meeting to a mutually agreeable alternate time/day.

Tips for success:

- Have a positive attitude. Effective problem solving is dependent upon sharing common goals regarding the student and open communication between team members.
- Remember that your child is the focus of the IEP process. Involve him/her whenever possible.
- Have goals and benchmarks in mind and let the team know what they are.

PARENT HANDBOOK

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (continued)

After the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting

- Review the meeting with your child (if appropriate).
- Maintain communication with your child’s teacher.
- Observe your child’s school program on a regular basis.
- Periodically check the IEP against school work for consistency.
- Monitor homework.
- Evaluate progress.
 - Are you receiving periodic reports on progress or problems?
 - How is your child progressing?
 - Do you think the program is working?
 - Are there changes you would like to make? If so, can they be accomplished informally, or do they require a more formal agreement or a new IEP?
 - How does your child feel he/she is doing?
 - Is your child happy at school?
- Locate important documents regarding your child (school and medical files, including recent assessments) and make sure they are up to date. (Refer to the “*Building Your Child’s Home File*” section of this handbook.) You have the right to request a copy of your child’s school records to keep in your child’s file at home.
- Write down questions, concerns, and suggestions to take to the meeting.
- You may wish to visit possible program options, prior to the IEP meeting.
- The IEP meeting may be tape recorded, if you notify the team at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

For checklists to help you prepare for your child’s IEP meeting and for more information on the IEP process, refer to the “Resources” section of this handbook.

Your Role During the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting

- Meet the team working with your child.
 - Listen.
 - Share your child’s needs, strengths, and what motivates him/her.
 - Give input and feedback.
 - Ask questions.
 - Take notes.
 - Be an equal partner in decision making.
-

PARENT HANDBOOK

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (continued)

Parent Preparation for IEP Team

1. Your understanding of diagnostic (assessment) information will be one of your most valuable tools in judging the progress your child makes in a particular program.
2. Jot down the questions you have before coming to the meeting. Ask if your child wants something brought up at the meeting. If mature enough, your child may attend with you.
3. You are welcome to bring others to the meeting with you-someone who has worked outside the school system with your child, a friend, or another parent who has attended an IEP meeting.
4. **DO NOT HESITATE TO ASK QUESTIONS.** If you do not understand the meaning of some terms, ask for clarification.
5. There is usually a limited amount of time for your meeting because of other appointments. However, please feel free to ask for an additional meeting if you want more information.
6. If you aren't sure about the papers you asked to sign, you may take them home for further study. You may call to ask further questions or to schedule another meeting.
7. Your signature is not binding; it is an indication that you have read the paper and understand the contents, and agree or disagree with your child's placement in whatever service and/or program has been recommended. If you feel a significant change needs to be made, you may request that the IEP Team reconvene to consider these changes – at any time throughout the year.
8. The goal of team planning is to decide how the most appropriate services and/or programs can be coordinated to help your child to learn in the way that he or she learns best. One of the most important things you can do is to maintain a close relationship with the teachers so that you have a better understanding of what your child is doing in the classroom and of what the teachers expect of your child throughout the year. Keep communication going between school and home.

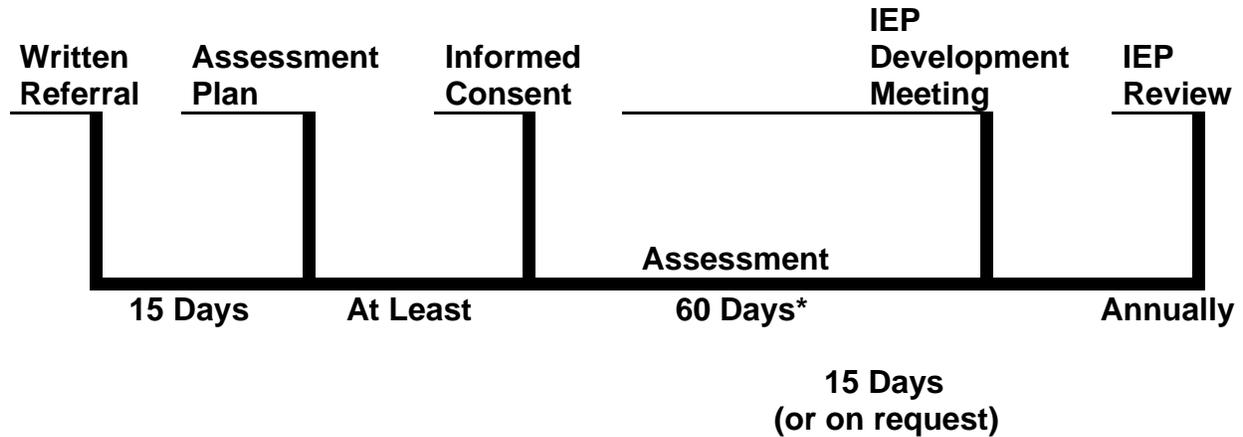
Suggestions for Parents Concerning Your IEP Meeting

1. **ASK QUESTIONS.** Jot down questions you may have prior to coming to the IEP meeting.
2. **KEEP GOOD RECORDS.** Bring with you all results of testing, medical records, information on extra-curricular activities, etc.
3. **STUDY THE FINAL IEP BEFORE GIVING YOUR CONSENT.**
4. **FOLLOW YOUR CHILD'S PROGRAM AND SEE IF IT IS WORKING.**
5. **BE PREPARED TO SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CHILD THAT WILL HELP THE TEAM MAKE GOOD DECISIONS REGARDING HIS/HER EDUCATION.**

PARENT HANDBOOK

TIMELINE

Timeline for Assessment – IEP Implementation



* Days are calendar days—excluding days of school vacation in excess of five days between school sessions.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS TIMETABLE

| 15 Days | 15 Days | not to exceed 60 days | not to exceed 60 days | not to exceed 60 days | not to exceed 60 days | 1 year | |
|---------------------|---|---------------------------|---|--------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Referral Meeting | Assessment | Informed Plan | Parent Consent | Assessment Consent | TEAM Begins | Annual IEP Meeting | TEAM Implementation |
| By student parents | Send Plan to Parent for Consent | | | Healthy Study | Eligibility for Special Education Services | | |
| Reason for referral | Reason for assessment | Notice of Rights | Assessment begins when parent permission received | Class Observations | Development of IEP / Goals Objectives | | Review of IEP |
| Initial screening | Areas to be Assessed | Parent Permission to test | | Psychological Evaluation | Placement Determination | Instruction Specialist(s) Teacher(s) | Teacher(s) Specialist(s) Report(s) |
| | Types of tests or procedures to be used | | | Adaptive Behavior Scale | Related Services | | Modify / Add Goals Objectives |
| | Who will conduct assessments | | | Language Evaluation | Parent Consent | | Parent Consent Notice of Rights |
| | | | | Achievement Test | Notice of Rights | Instructional Assistant(s) | |

This chart shows the timelines involved in the special education process. The school team has 15 days to develop an assessment plan once a referral for special education has been made. The parents then have at least 15 days to give written consent. Once written permission has been received, the school team has 60 calendar days to conduct the assessment and convene the IEP Team to discuss the results, determine eligibility, develop the IEP goals and objectives, and determine placement. The IEP must then be reviewed at least once a year.

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CHAPTER 4

- Building Your Child's Home File
- Who Can Help Me?
- Legal Rights and Protections
- Resolving Differences

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BUILDING YOUR CHILD'S HOME FILE

As a parent of a child with special needs, you will gather a tremendous amount of information about your child from various professional and service agencies. Each time you seek services for your child, you may be asked to supply this information. As the primary decision-maker, observer and advocate for your child, it is to your benefit to keep **complete and up-to-date records**.

Here are suggested items to include in your child's home file:

- Your child's medical history and medical reports.
- A list of medications being given at home and at school as prescribed by your child's physician.
- Your child's developmental and family health history.
- Copies of all your child's school reports, including the cumulative file, confidential file, psychological file and any other papers or records containing your child's name or pertaining to your child that may be in the possession of anyone in your child's school district or Special Education Local Plan Area.
- A brief statement of your child's strengths, weaknesses, and personality characteristics to possibility share at your child's IEP team meeting.
- The Individualized Education Program (IEP) recommendations and school progress reports.
- Copies of test results and recommendations from independent assessments.
- All letters (including handwritten) and notes to and from school personnel.
- All written communications with outside professionals regarding your child's unique needs.
- Dated notes of conversations and telephone calls with school personnel, their phone number and content of call.
- Copies of your child's past and present work.
- Your long-term goals and short-term objectives.
- Each year list your child's:

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Teacher | Special Education Director |
| Special Education Teachers | Psychologist |
| Related Services Personnel | Superintendent |
| School | School Board Members |
| Principal | |
- List the chain of command within the school system, beginning with local, and ending with state and federal. Include addresses and telephone numbers for easy reference.

Purchase a loose-leaf binder, pocket file or small file to collect and maintain your records. Keep your records chronologically, with the most recent information on top. Record-keeping is not mandatory, but good records prove helpful in day-to-day contacts. Bring your records to any and all meetings with school, health or other agency personnel.

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WHO CAN HELP ME?

Your **child's teacher** is the first person on your list. Your child's teacher can advise you on your child's progress, the skills being taught, advise on how to improve study habits and skills, and suggest at-home learning experiences. The teacher can refer you to other professionals when necessary.

Your **school principal** is the educational and policy leader of your school. Check with this person on matters of school-wide operation or policy, to seek information, to make a suggestion or resolve a problem.

Your **school district's Director of Special Education** will answer questions concerning services available for students with exceptional needs. This person can advise you of community resources and activities for your child.

Your **district's Superintendent** recommends major policy decisions to the board of education and is in charge of their implementation.

Your **local School Board** consists of citizens elected by voters to set policy for the entire school district. They meet in public session to conduct the business of the school district.

Your **Community Advisory Committee (CAC)** is composed of parents of children with special needs enrolled in your district, teachers, and other school district personnel to offer advise to parents new to the system and to the school administration on ways to meet the needs of their special needs children. The CAC was an enactment by legislation for the original California Master Plan for Special Education. Beyond the mandate fulfillment, the **Community Advisory Committee** is a collaborative group of parents, and/or educators, and community representatives whose intent is to articulate and promote issues that are important to students with disabilities and their families in regard to SELPA-wide issues. The selection of the members on the CAC shall be made by the participating school districts.

Your **SELPA Director** may advise you about services available for your child in your Special Education Local Plan Area.

Your **physician, pediatrician, or health center** can refer you to other professionals, agencies and organizations.

Your **Local Library** may provide a listing of organizations or groups in or near your community offering support for you and your special child.

See "Resources" Section of this book for more information on who can help me.

PARENT HANDBOOK

LEGAL RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS

In 2004, **The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** amended the Education for All Handicapped Children's Act (PL94-142).

IDEA guarantees four basic rights to all children with disabilities.

RIGHTS UNDER IDEA

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

- Children with disabilities are entitled to a public education, appropriate to their needs, at no cost to their families.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

- Children with disabilities must be educated with students who do not have disabilities as much as possible and as close to home as possible.

Supplementary Aids and Services (Related or Designated Instruction and Services)

- Children with disabilities must be provided the supportive services which are required to assist them to benefit educationally from their special education program; this is determined based on each student's individual needs - NOT on their specific disability.

Assessment

- An assessment must be completed to determine each child's needs. This may be done only with the parent's informed written consent.

In order to assure that these rights are received, this law also includes two protections.

PROTECTIONS UNDER IDEA

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

- This program must be written at least annually for all children with disabilities. It is prepared by a team comprised of those people who assessed the child, appropriate school personnel and the parents.

Due Process

- Due process rights ensure that no changes can be made in a child's program without prior notice to the parents. Further, due process provides a mechanism for the resolution of disagreements.

NOTIFICATION OF PARENTS' RIGHTS

Parents are informed of their due process rights on at least an annual basis.

PARENT HANDBOOK

RESOLVING DIFFERENCES

During the course of the special education process, you and the school district might disagree about some aspect of your child's education. Listed below are some things you can do:

Independent Education Evaluation

If you do not agree with the school district's evaluation, you can obtain an independent evaluation at the district's expense. However, the district may initiate a due process hearing to show that its assessment is appropriate. If the decision resulting from the hearing is that the district's assessment is appropriate, the parent still has the right to an independent assessment, but not at public expense.

IEP Review

If you think that the IEP is no longer appropriate for your child, you can request another IEP meeting at any time. The district must schedule an IEP within 30 calendar days.

Reevaluation

If you think that your child's educational program is inappropriate due to out-dated information in his/her records, you can request a reevaluation before its scheduled time.

Information Meeting/Conference

If you have a concern with the school, make an appointment with the person most closely connected with the area of concern. For example, if you are concerned about a situation in a classroom, meet with the teacher. (Refer to "Who Can Help Me" Section of this handbook.)

Complaint Procedure

If you suspect a school of noncompliance with state laws or regulations, and the matter cannot be resolved informally, you can file a complaint in writing with the school district's superintendent using the district's uniform complaint procedures.

MEDIATION AND DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES

If you have a conflict with a school district that cannot be resolved informally, you can request mediation or a due process hearing regarding the identification, assessment, and educational placement of your child or the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Detailed information on how to file, where to file, and timelines are included in your district's Notice of Procedural Safeguards.

PARENT HANDBOOK

CHAPTER 5

- Resources
- Glossary of Terms

PARENT HANDBOOK

RESOURCES

**Autism Society of California
Orange County Autism Society**
5591 Yuba Avenue
Westminster, CA 92683
(714) 799-7500 www.asaoc.org

California Childrens Services (CCS)
200 W. Santa Ana Blvd
Santa Ana, CA 92701
(714) 347-0300
www.ochealthinfo.com

**California Parent Organization
(California Dept. of Education)**
www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/qa/caprntorg.asp (Parent Training and Information Centers, Parent Resource Centers, Family Empowerment Centers, Other Resources)

Greater Orange County CHADD
(714) 490-7022
www.chadd.net

**Department of Rehabilitation
(State of California) Orange**
222 S. Harbor Blvd. #300
Anaheim, CA 92805
(714) 991-0800
www.rehab.cahwnet.gov
(vocational evaluation, training and job placement for adults)

**Developmental Disabilities
Area Board XI**
2000 E. Fourth St. #115
Santa Ana, CA 92705
(714) 558-4704
www.scdd.ca.gov
(legal, civil and service rights resource for people with developmental disabilities)

**Down Syndrome Association of
Orange County**
151 Kalmus Dr., Suite M-5
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
(714) 540-5794
www.dsaoc.org

**For OC Kids
Neurodevelopmental Center**
1915 W. Orangewood Ave. #200
Orange, CA 92868
(714) 939-6118
www.forockids.org

**Epilepsy Alliance of Orange
County**
1500 Adams Ave. #314
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
www.epilepsyalliance.org

**Grandparent Autism Network
(GAN)**
1100 Irvine Blvd., #202
Tustin, CA 92780
(714) 573-1500
www.ganinfo.org

**Learning Disabilities Assn. of
California (Orange County
Chapter)**
P.O. Box 25772
Santa Ana, CA 92799
(714) 547-4206
www.oclda.org

**Mental Health Services
(West County)**
14180 Beach Blvd., Suite 113
Westminster, CA 92683
(714) 896-7556

Orange County Dept. of Education
200 Kalmus Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92628
(714) 966-4000
www.ocde.ca

**Orange County Special Education
Alliance Advocacy Subcommittee**
www.specialedalliance.org
(resources for parents and educators)

Protection & Advocacy Inc.
221 E. Glenoaks Blvd., #220
Glendale, CA 91207-2009
1-800-776-5746
www.disabilityrights.org
(legal rights resource and advocacy services)

Regional Center of Orange County
801 Civic Center Dr. West #100
Santa Ana, CA 92702
(714) 796-5100
(one of 21 regional centers in the state; provides services for individuals with developmental disabilities and for infants who are at risk, Comfort Connection Resource Center)
www.rcocdd.com

**(TASK) Team of Advocates for
Special Kids**
100 West Cerritos Avenue
Anaheim, CA 92805
(714) 533-8275
www.taskca.org
(parent training; workshops on the IEP process, basic rights, law and transition; IEP worksheets and checklists; TASK TECH computer information center)

TACA Talk About Curing Autism
www.tacanow.com
(broad range of resources, information and family support)

UCP of Orange County
980 Roosevelt Ave., Suite 100
Irvine, CA 92618
(714) 200-2626
(early intervention, recreation, respite, support for most developmental disabilities)
www.ucp-oc.org

PARENT HANDBOOK

GLOSSARY

APE Adapted Physical Education

Specially designed physical education program tailored to the needs of students who require developmental or corrective instruction adapted to student need.

Assessment/Evaluation

All functions in the testing and diagnostic process leading to the development of an appropriate, individualized, educational program for an individual with special needs.

CAC Community Advisory Committee

A committee whose membership includes parents of school-age children (a majority must be parents of students with special needs); school personnel; and representatives of public, community, and private agencies. This committee advises school administrators and local school boards regarding the Local Plan for Special Education, assists districts with parent education, and promotes public awareness and understanding of individuals with special needs.

Developmental History

An account taken by a school nurse during a parent interview of how the child has grown or developed in comparison to children of the same age in areas such as walking, talking, dressing, etc. It includes past medical problems. This history is required for every child placed in special education.

Differential Standards for Graduation

Standards for graduation that may be modified for students with exceptional needs when appropriate.

Disability

An identified problem in a basic area of functioning, such as attention and concentration, understanding of language, listening and speaking, understanding words or numbers, etc. which prevent a student from learning to read, write or do math operations as most children do.

Extended School Year

Days over and above the mandatory school year; summer school.

Full Inclusion

Placement of disabled students full time into general education classes, with or without special education support.

IEP Individualized Education Program

Written document stating goals and objectives for students receiving special education services.

PARENT HANDBOOK

GLOSSARY (continued)

IEP Team

A committee of parent, teacher, administrator, or designee and student, if appropriate. May include psychologist, nurse, and specialists who conduct and review assessments. Purpose is to review the assessment results, determine eligibility, determine the content of the IEP, and make program placement recommendations.

IFSP Individualized Family Service Plan

A process of providing early intervention services for children with special needs (age 0-3) and their families. Family-based needs are identified and a written plan is developed with periodic review.

Integration

Opportunities to be near non-disabled, age-appropriate peers on general education campuses.

ISP Instructional Support Program

Provides special education instruction, materials, and services to students with special needs who are in regular classrooms for the majority of the day.

ITP Individualized Transition Program

An orderly plan to prepare a secondary student for passage from school to work, adult training, and community participation, with appropriate support services.

Learning Disabled

Those students who display learning disabilities, behavior disorders, educational retardation, or a combination of these.

LRE Least Restrictive Environment

Students with special needs are educated to the maximum extent appropriate with regular education students. Separate schooling/classes occur when the nature of the disability is such that education in regular classes cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Local Plan

A plan developed by school districts and counties and submitted for State approval which assures and provides delivery of support services to all eligible individuals with special needs living within the geographical boundaries covered by the plan.

Mainstreaming

Participation in a general education setting.

Multidisciplinary assessment

A team effort by a group of trained or credentialed school personnel, in an attempt to assess the whole child in areas such as academics, language, cognition or intelligence, health, social-emotional behavior, etc.

PARENT HANDBOOK

GLOSSARY (continued)

Occupational Therapy

Exercises and activities designed to improve the motor skills of those students who have difficulty performing self-help, play, or school-related activities. See DIS.

Parent Representative or Designee

A person chosen by the parent or guardian to accompany him/her to a meeting or represent him/her in their absence (acts on his/her behalf).

Parent's Rights Form

Statement of the rights a parent has by law in decisions pertaining to the education of their child.

Physical Therapy

Activities for promoting self-sufficiency primarily related to gross motor skills such as walking, sitting, and shifting position. Helps children with special equipment used for mobility such as wheelchairs, braces, and crutches. See DIS.

Pre-Vocational Skills

Group of skills necessary to have while at school such as the ability to pay attention, complete work, work in a group, etc., which prepare students for adult life.

Related Services

Services which are required to assist a student with special needs to benefit from his/her education program (transportation, DIS).

RSP Resource Specialist Program

Provides special education instruction, materials and supplemental services to students with disabilities who are assigned to regular classroom teachers for the majority of the school day.

SDC Special Day Class

Self-contained special education classes to which students are assigned because their instructional plan requires attention in special day classes for a majority of the school day.

Self-Help Skills

Skills that deal with growth towards personal independence, from birth to adulthood. At a younger age the activities that are developed are toileting, dressing, and feeding. At an older age, they include grooming, cooking simple foods, making a bed, wearing clean clothes, walking to school independently, etc.

SELPA Special Education Local Plan Area

A single district providing comprehensive special education services, or several districts combining resources and expertise to provide special education services to a given geographic area.

PARENT HANDBOOK

GLOSSARY (continued)

Severely Disabled

Those students who are seriously and emotionally disturbed, trainable mentally retarded, developmentally disabled, or autistic.

Social-Emotional Development

Growth towards understanding on self, personal needs and responsibilities, as well as being able to play, work and simply be with peers and adults in a positive way. It includes things like sharing, taking turns, apologizing, handling criticism, being part of a team, helping others, enjoying a field trip, understanding why you don't hit a smaller child, playing sports, etc.

Speech/Language Therapy

Remediation provided by a Speech/Language Specialist to facilitate language development, both receptively and expressively, or to correct faulty speech patterns, like stuttering or voice problems.

SST Student Study Team

A process which is used to focus on providing modifications and interventions for a student within the regular education program before a referral is made for support services. The team may consist of the parent, student, principal, teacher, psychologist, and other school personnel, as appropriate.

Student Success Team

School team made up of administrator and general education teachers who work together to generate interventions to help students who have been referred, to be successful in their general education classroom.

Triennial Evaluation

Comprehensive educational evaluation conducted every three years to identify student's continued learning needs.

Vocational Education

Organized educational programs which are directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid or unpaid employment.

A copy of each of the following documents is available at your local school district office for your review:

California Special Education Programs, A composite of Laws, California Department of Education, Special Education Division

Special Education Rights and Responsibilities, Community Alliance for Special Education (CASE and Protection and Advocacy, Inc. (PAI)

Greater Anaheim Special Education Local Plan