

A Parent's Guide to Special Education Services

In the

Darien Public Schools

Fall, 2014

The District understands and acknowledges that the laws and interpretations of the laws may change over time. This Guide is intended to provide general guidance and explanation of the procedures related to the special education laws. All decisions regarding individual students who are or may be eligible for special education must be made by the multidisciplinary team, including parents and teachers, who know such students well.

This Guide is intended to be read in conjunction with special education statutes and regulations as well as guidance from state and federal authorities.

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The District was also assisted in the production of the Parent Guide by Kathryn Foxhall, a freelance editor and writer, who edited the Parent Guide.

Dear Parents (and other interested Readers):

Welcome to the Special Education and Student Services Department of the Darien Public Schools. The referral of your child to the Special Education Department may be a new and unsettling experience. We hope you will find any member of our department is ready to openly listen and communicate, provide you with information, and answer any questions you have about the process.

Quality services and programming for students with special needs requires continuous planning, support, and participation of the home and school. We look forward to working with you as a critical member of the team to provide a happy and successful school experience for your child.

This manual has been prepared to provide you with information on a variety of topics that may be of interest, as well as opportunities to seek further information that can be customized to your needs. We hope you find it helpful as we work cooperatively as a team to provide quality education for children with disabilities in Darien.

We welcome your input, comments, and questions, and thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

District Administrators for Special Education
Darien Public Schools

Introduction

This document provides basic information about education law related to students with disabilities. It is designed as an informative document to support parents regarding the special education processes, but it is not intended to provide legal advice and should not be used as a substitute for legal advice or legal representation. If you feel you need legal advice, please contact a lawyer to review the specifics of your concerns.

This Parent Handbook is NOT a statement of the Procedural Safeguards that are afforded to parents under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Procedural Safeguards under the IDEA can be found on the District's website at:

<http://www.darienps.org>

Click on "Department," Click on "Special Education"
Scroll down and then click on "CT Procedural Safeguards Notice"

The Procedural Safeguards are also available through the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education at www.sde.ct.gov

Click onto Special Education under Quick Links, then click onto Legal/Due Process, click onto Procedural Safeguards.

Laws and regulations change and new interpretations of laws and regulations are routinely issued by courts and multiple state and federal agencies enforcing the laws and regulations. While this document will be updated to reflect changes, you may wish to consult with a lawyer who knows this area of the law to make certain that the concepts presented are still valid.

This manual is cross-referenced to the *Special Education Standard Operating Procedures Manual (SOPM)* of the Darien Public Schools developed by the Procedures Manual Work Group. Where appropriate, the chapter of the SOPM will be cited in the chapter of the Parent Guide.

We hope you find it helpful as you navigate the special education processes in the Darien Public Schools.

Chapter One Legal Overview

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

All eligible-children with disabilities have a right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE). This right is guaranteed by an array of federal and state laws and regulations.

In 1975, Public Law 94-142, the Education for all Handicapped Children Act, was signed into law to ensure the educational rights of children with disabilities were protected and that such education was provided in a way that met the needs of those children. In 1990, this act was amended and renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA. In 1997, the IDEA was reauthorized to further strengthen the roles of parents, students, and educators in the education process.

Reauthorization is a process by which Congress prescribes changes, including additions and deletions to federal legislation and votes to continue to fund programs and activities mandated by the legislation. The IDEA is such a funding statute. The IDEA guarantees funding to states for the provision of special education and related services to eligible children if the state and local school districts are in compliance with the IDEA's requirements.

In order to remain eligible for federal financial assistance under the IDEA, the state must be in compliance with the IDEA's requirements. The state files a set of assurances every year with the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to show the state's compliance with the IDEA. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) posts the Part B application for the IDEA funds to the CSDE website every year for public comment.

The state may have more stringent requirements than those found in the IDEA as long as the state requirements are in compliance with the IDEA requirements. For example, the state requires short-term instructional objectives for all students while the IDEA only requires objectives for children who take alternate assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards.

The IDEA allows the states to elect how they will implement an IDEA requirement. For example, the IDEA allows states to choose either a two-tiered or single-tiered system for due process hearings. Connecticut has a single-tiered system.

The state has requirements for special education that are not addressed in the IDEA and are directly related to state implementation issues to ensure students with disabilities receive services to which they are entitled. For example, the state timeline for processing special education referrals to the implementation of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) if the student is found eligible is different than the timelines found in the IDEA.

The state has a duty under the state constitution to provide an equal educational opportunity for all children that is separate and apart from IDEA compliance. The primary responsibility for public education rests with the states, not the federal government. Connecticut has provided services for children requiring special education since the 1940s and has had the current state framework in effect since 1968. Over the years since the passage of the first *state* special education law, the state framework has remained intact and has been revised by the General Assembly to ensure consistency with the IDEA requirements or to add mandates not required by the IDEA.

The IDEA has the following major components, which are foundational principles of providing special education and related services to children with disabilities:

Services for all eligible children: Special education and related services are provided to all eligible children regardless of the nature or severity of their disability. No eligible child is denied services because the disability is too severe or the needs of the child are too great.

Non-discriminatory evaluation: Fair testing of children is required, with tests that are administered and scored in an unbiased way.

Free appropriate public education (FAPE): This is the foundational principle of IDEA. A child eligible for special education is to be provided with an educational program and services that are designed to meet the individual needs of the child. The IEP is the document that spells out the child's needs into a program of instruction and related services.

Least restrictive environment (LRE) for the child's placement: To the greatest extent possible to meet the individual needs of a child, a child with a disability is required to be educated with their non-disabled peers.

Parent participation: Parents may participate as full partners and have full knowledge of their child's education program. In order for the process of providing special education and related services to be collaborative, parents and staff work together.

Procedural due process: An array of notice, consent and evaluation requirements are available for parents with regard to the referral, identification, evaluation, program, or placement of their child, or any other matter related to their child receiving a FAPE. The IDEA has been interpreted to mean that if the District has followed the procedural requirements of the IDEA, it can be assumed that the child has been offered a FAPE.

The IDEA was reauthorized in 2004. The reauthorized law, called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), aligns the special education law with the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The IDEIA amended the IDEA to allow for more flexibility in formulating programming and services for students with disabilities. The IDEIA also places additional emphasis on cooperation between parents and school districts and the use of scientific research based instruction and

response to intervention to address student learning issues through early intervention activities. In addition, IDEIA attempts to streamline the process for resolving disputes under the IDEA.

For ease of reference, the reauthorized law continues to be referred to as the IDEA.

The new IDEA regulations became effective in October of 2006. You can access the IDEA regulations at: <http://idea.ed.gov/download/finalregulations.html>

A revision to the IDEA regulations relating to consent was adopted after the new IDEA regulations went into effect. This revision can be found at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2008-12-01/pdf/E8-28175.pdf>

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 provides that, “No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States...shall solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance....”

Section 504 of the [Federal] *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* (“Section 504”) is a federal law designed to protect the rights of people with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal funds from the U.S. Department of Education. The Office for Civil Rights, a sub-agency of the U.S. Department of Education, is responsible for protecting the civil rights of students in federally assisted education programs and prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or membership in patriotic youth organizations.

In the setting of a public school, Section 504 impacts the employment of persons with disabilities, the provision of access to programs and services offered by the District to persons with disabilities, and the provision of a free appropriate public education to students with disabilities who attend the Darien public schools. The regulations implementing Section 504 have a series of requirements for each-group of people who are protected by Section 504.

The Darien Public Schools publishes a Section 504 Manual. The manual is divided into three parts: Part A contains the Notice of Nondiscrimination; Part B contains the procedures utilized by the District to identify, evaluate and provide services for students who meet the criteria of disabled for purposes of Section 504, including information on student and educator support services, participation in extracurricular and nonacademic activities for identified students and discipline for identified students; and, Part C provides a grievance procedure for alleging violations of Section 504 unrelated to providing students with services under Section 504.

Please refer to the Darien Public Schools Section 504 Manual for a complete description of the District's obligations under Section 504 for students, parents or staff who are found disabled under Section 504.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law relating to how public schools manage student education records. The law is sometimes referred to as the Buckley Amendment, in reference to one of its principal co-sponsors in Congress, former Senator James Buckley of New York. Effective on November 14, 1974 this law protects student information in public schools and addresses the maintenance and storage of and access to student information. All parents of students under 18 years of age and all students over 18 years of age, or students who are emancipated minors, have the right to inspect and review student records; and to ask for amendment to those records if they believe the record are inaccurate, misleading, or a violation of the student's right to privacy. Parents and eligible students also have the right to control access to those records, except where FERPA allows access without the consent of the parent or student. Schools are required to have written procedures to carry out this law and to notify parents of their rights annually. FERPA applies to both students with and without disabilities. FERPA, as well as the state special education regulations concerning education records, applies to student records for students eligible for special education under the IDEA.

The annual notification of rights to parents and students required by FERPA is contained in the Student Handbooks provided at the beginning of each school year. In addition, the annual notification is also provided in the Parent Guide to Special Education.

ANNUAL NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day the Darien Public Schools receives a request for access. □Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal or the principal's designee, a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The principal or designee will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the Darien Public Schools to amend a record should write the school principal or the principal's designee and clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for

amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. □

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the school who performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of personally identifiable information from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

A second exception to FERPA, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure of school records to officials of another school including other public schools, charter schools and post secondary institutions. Upon request, the District discloses education records without consent to officials of another school, including other public schools, charter schools and post secondary institutions in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled, if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. The District must make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.

FERPA also permits school districts to disclose certain information that is considered directory information, unless a parent or guardian or eligible student (18 years of age or older) objects in writing. Directory information includes information in an educational record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed.

The Darien Board of Education has defined directory information to include the parent's name and/or e-mail address, and student's name and/or e-mail address, residence address, telephone number, date and place of birth, dates of school attendance, most recent previous educational institution attended, grade level, participation in school-sponsored activities or athletics, weight and height (if the student is a member of an athletic team), degrees, honors and awards received, student produced art, major field(s) of study, and photographic computer and/or video images of the student. Directory information does not include a student's social security number, student identification number or other

unique personal identifier used by the student for purposes of accessing or communicating in electronic systems unless the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a PIN or password.

Unless a parent or guardian or eligible student notifies the school to the contrary in writing within two (2) weeks from receipt of this notice, each of the seven Darien Public Schools reserves the right to disclose directory information concerning a student to third parties, including school sponsored information media, newspapers, colleges, or military recruiters. Disclosure to third parties can include publishing student photographs, video images, and other directory information on the school web site and sharing student photographs and other directory information with the DHS 169 press. Such written request for non-disclosure is valid only for the school year in which it is presented and must be renewed in writing for each year.

An objection to the disclosure of directory information shall not prevent the school district from disclosing or requiring a student to disclose the student's name, identified or institutional email address in a class in which the student is enrolled.

The District is legally obligated to provide military recruiters or institutions of higher education with names, addresses and telephone numbers of secondary students, unless the secondary student or the parent objects to such disclosure in writing. Such objection must be in writing and is effective for one year.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Darien Public Schools to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

The Student Records Policy for the Darien Board of Education can be located on the Darien Board of Education Website, www.darienps.org, Board Policy #5265. The Board policy contains detailed information on the procedures for exercising the rights noted above.

The full array of procedural safeguards afforded parents concerning a child's education records can be found in the *Procedural Safeguards Notice Required Under Part B of the IDEA*, located at the Connecticut State Department of Education website:

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/Prosaf.pdf>

In addition to the IDEA and FERPA requirements, the state also has statutes and regulations pertaining to student education records. See Sections 10-15b and Section 10-220h of the Connecticut General Statutes and, Section 10-76d-18 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.

For the full District procedure on *Confidentiality of Student Records*, see Chapter Two of the SOPM.

Chapter Two

THE REFERRAL PROCESS

For Special Education

Beginning the Partnership

Children bring many unique abilities, strengths, and styles of learning to the educational setting. When a child has difficulty in school, it may be noticed by the teacher or other school personnel, the parents, or the child.

General Education Interventions

Before Darien personnel refer a child to a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) to begin the special education process, alternative procedures and programs in general education are explored and implemented where appropriate. Interventions can range from less rigorous strategies (for example, moving the child's seat closer to the teacher) to multi-tiered interventions (see Scientific Research Based Interventions, below). Each school has a child study team that provides a variety of alternative strategies to the teacher. Parents are encouraged to collaborate with the teacher and other involved staff during this time. Interventions in general education may include instructional or behavioral strategies that address the child's concerns.

Parents or school personnel may request assistance from the school's child study team, which works collaboratively with the classroom teacher and parents to develop and document strategies that assist the child within the general education program. If the child's problems or difficulties persist, a prompt referral to a PPT is made.

Additionally, initiatives in general education programming, such as *Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI)*, are designed to emphasize successful instruction for all children through the differentiation of instruction in the classroom. Differentiated instruction provides opportunity to maximize progress for all children in the classroom by addressing differences in student learning, and adapting instruction and materials to meet their needs. SRBI emphasize high quality core general education practices, as well as targeted instruction for children experiencing learning, social-emotional, or behavioral difficulties (CSDE Overview of SRBI-2008).

SRBI are designed to ensure that all children in public school classrooms receive appropriate instruction by collecting critical information about the child's instructional strengths and needs and using this information to create effective, research-based instructional interventions in general education with frequent monitoring of student progress. SRBI are extensive, data-driven strategies, the comprehensive discussion of which is beyond the scope of this Guide. However, because general education interventions must be explored prior to referring a child to special education, parents are

encouraged to review the CSDE SRBI Guidelines and consult with District personnel concerning the implementation of SRBI within the Darien Public Schools. If the child's difficulties persist after general education intervention, District personnel will make a prompt referral to a PPT.

The parent may make a referral at any time for a special education evaluation regardless of where the District is in the intervention process. The District must hold a PPT meeting to consider any referral. The District will continue the general education interventions even though a referral for special education evaluation has been made.

The Planning and Placement team (PPT) meeting held with the parent after an initial referral has been made is to discuss the need for an evaluation to determine if a child may be eligible for special education. This is a formal process that follows state and federal guidelines. The parent is a member of the PPT and therefore is an active and equal participant at the PPT meeting.

The referral to the PPT "starts the clock" with mandated timelines. Special education law requires the school to meet strict time deadlines in evaluating a child and formulating an appropriate Individualized Education Program (IEP). After the initial referral, *state* regulations require that the school must complete its evaluation and formulate an IEP, if appropriate, within 45 *school* days (excluding weekends, holidays, school vacations, and the time required to obtain written parental consent) of the date of referral, or 60 school days for students placed in a private school by the PPT to meet their educational needs.

As explained below, a parent may initiate a referral which will also "start the clock." The initial referral that begins this 45-school day period can take place at any time during the school year, even if there are not 45 school days left before the end of the school year. If the student is found eligible for special education, the development of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for the student is based on the diagnostic findings of the evaluation study and the student's present level of academic achievement and functional performance. Implementation of the IEP based on an initial referral is not to exceed 45 school days from the date of referral, or 60 school days for students placed in a private school by the PPT to meet their educational needs, exclusive of the time necessary to secure written parental consent for the initial evaluation and initial receipt of special education and related services. .

What Happens When a Parent Has Concerns?

A parent may also make a request for a special education evaluation by writing a letter to the teacher or administrator of the school the child attends. It is wise to date the request and keep a copy for personal records. The parent may also verbally request a referral. However, a letter provides proof that a referral was indeed made. Upon the receipt of the request for evaluation, the PPT will meet to consider the request. A request for evaluation does not automatically trigger an evaluation. The PPT will meet and discuss the reasons for the request and determine if an evaluation is warranted. If the PPT decides to proceed

with an evaluation, the same process outlined above would then be followed. If the parent disagrees with the team's decision regarding the evaluation, the parent may refuse consent or exercise his/her due process rights.

Upon the request of the parent and prior to the PPT meeting where the initial evaluations are planned and discussed, the parent must be provided with an opportunity to meet with a member of the PPT. The sole purpose of this meeting is to discuss the PPT process and any concerns a parent may have about his/her child. This is a requirement of Connecticut law, not IDEA.

Tips for Parents

You should receive written notice of a referral for a special education evaluation made by school personnel within five school days after the referral is made.

- Talk to your child.
- Find out how your child feels about school, their likes, and dislikes.
- Talk with your child's teacher. Is the child:
 - Having difficulty with homework?
 - Unable to complete work independently?
 - Beginning but is unable to complete assignments?
 - Unable to recall the related instruction during the school day?
 - Complaining about physical illnesses, or inventing excuses, in order to stay home from school?
 - Appearing not to have any friends, or not talking about or know the names of classmates?
 - Using negative comments when talking about school?
- Observe your child at home.
- Start a home file to include:
 - Accurate records of meetings, phone calls, letters.
 - Copies of reports, correspondence, report cards, work samples.
- Make sure the school personnel are aware of any services your child receives outside school.

See Chapter One of the SOPM: *Child Find*, for a full description of the Child Find Procedures of the Darien Public Schools, including procedures for identifying children attending private schools in Darien and for evaluating children who may be gifted or talented who attend public school in Darien.

Chapter Three **THE PLANNING AND PLACEMENT TEAM (PPT) MEETING**

The Team Process at Work

A team of people makes decisions regarding special education through a formal meeting format. In Connecticut this team is called a “Planning and Placement Team (PPT).” The IDEA uses the term IEP team for certain meetings called concerning the child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Connecticut uses the term PPT to describe two very specific groups of individuals who have specific activities assigned to them:

- When used in the context of providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to an eligible child with a disability, the PPT means the IEP team as constituted by the IDEA. Unlike the IDEA IEP team, the PPT in Connecticut is responsible for all of the activities necessary to ensure an eligible student receives a FAPE.
- When used in the context of identifying and evaluating children who may be gifted and talented, the PPT means a group of certified or licensed professionals who represent each of the teaching, administrative, and pupil personnel staffs and who participate equally in the decision making process.

When Does a PPT Meeting Need to Be Convened?

The IDEA defines a “meeting” for purposes of determining if a full PPT meeting must be convened. The IDEA does not consider a meeting to be informal or unscheduled conversations involving district personnel and conversations on issues such as teaching methodology, lesson plans, or coordination of service provisions.

A “meeting” also does not include preparatory activities that district personnel engage in to develop a proposal or a response to a parent proposal to be discussed at a later meeting. In preparation for a PPT meeting, school staff may, and would be expected to, speak to each other and the Parent(s) about the child. School staff may also speak with district administrators about suggested services for a child. These discussions do not constitute prior approval of proposed services to be included in the IEP. The PPT has the sole authority to determine the individualized service needs of each child.

The purpose of the PPT for a child with a disability or a child who may be disabled is to:

- Determine eligibility by designing and reviewing evaluations and reevaluations;
- Develop, review, and revise the child’s IEP;
- Address all of the child’s academic and functional needs in the IEP components;

- Make placement decisions, including determining educational services to be provided to a child with a disability who may be excluded from school for discipline reasons; and,
- Ensure that a child with a disability who is eligible for special education and related services is provided with a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

Parents must receive written notice at least five school days prior to a PPT meeting stating the time, place, and purpose of the meeting, and a list of the invited participants. Parents and the school team may agree to meet with less than five (5) school days notice provided that there is signed written consent to do so.

PPT Membership to Consider the Needs of a Student with a Disability

If the PPT is convened to determine the needs of a child with a disability, then the PPT is composed of:

- The child's parents;
- Not less than one regular education teacher of the child if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment;
- Not less than one special education teacher of the child, or where appropriate, not less than one special education provider of the child;
- A representative of the District who:
 - Is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities;
 - Is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum;
 - Is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the District; and
 - Is able to commit the resources of the District, although it is not required that this person be an administrator.
- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results, who may be a school staff member of the team as described above;
- At the discretion of the parent or the District, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel as appropriate;

Whenever appropriate, the child with a disability.

These are the same individuals who constitute the IEP team as defined in the IDEA.

If an out of district placement of the child is being considered, a representative of the out of district placement must participate in the PPT process including the development of short-term instructional objectives.

If the purpose of the PPT meeting is to discuss secondary transition, that is, what a child will do after high school, the child and representatives of agencies providing transition services or post-secondary programs or services would be invited to participate. The parent will ultimately determine if he/she will allow a child to participate in a PPT meeting. The parent also must give consent for outside agencies to participate in the PPT meeting.

An “administrative designee” can serve in a dual role at the PPT as “representative of the District who is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction” and as a “service provider.”

Please note: a parent may bring persons of his/her choice to the PPT for additional support including private specialists, advocates, family members, and friends.

Other PPT Considerations, including notifications required under State requirements

The parent is not *required* to provide the District with advance notice if the parent intends to bring an attorney, advocate, outside evaluations or evaluator to the PPT or intend to record the PPT. The spirit of the law, however, presumes that there will be reciprocal, ongoing communication and relationship building on behalf of the student.

If the PPT is to be recorded by anyone, the participants *must be informed before recording begins*.

Both parties are encouraged to notify each other in advance of persons or documents they intend to bring to the PPT. Failing to notify the other party of the inclusion of persons or documents to the PPT meeting might distract the PPT or delay the PPT from discussion of the child’s needs.

The District will provide an interpreter for the PPT meeting if one is needed. At the start of the meeting, all participants are introduced. The team members should clarify the purpose for the meeting as stated on the invitation.

A parent has the right to request a PPT meeting to review, revise, or disagree with the decisions of the PPT.

A PPT meeting must be scheduled at a time and place mutually convenient for the parent and school personnel.

As noted below, the parent will receive a full copy of the IEP, including the “Prior Written Notice,” within five school days after the PPT meeting.

The parent will be offered a copy of the “Procedural Safeguards in Special Education.” The District is also required by state statute to inform parents about a specific provision of the state statutes and regulations regarding the emergency use of physical restraint and seclusion or the use of seclusion as a behavior intervention in a child’s IEP. Every parent must be advised of these rights at the initial Planning and Placement Team meeting (PPT) held for their child even if the emergency use of physical restraint or seclusion or the use of seclusion as a behavior intervention in a child’s IEP is not likely to occur with their child.

The District is also required to notify every parent, regardless of the age of the child, of the parent’s right to not enroll the child in school until age 7.

Prior Written Notice

All special education programming decisions made at the meeting will be summarized on the “Prior Written Notice” (PWN) page of the IEP (page two). The PWN explains the decisions of the PPT and is provided **after** the PPT meeting at which the PPT proposes to or refuses to initiate or change the child’s identification, evaluation, or educational placement, or the provision of FAPE to the child. The PWN is provided before the PPT changes or refuses to change the child’s identification, evaluation, or educational placement or the provision of FAPE.

The actions recommended by the team, the actions considered but not recommended by the team, and any actions refused by the District should be clearly stated on the PWN page. A parent should check the IEP to ensure that the agreement or disagreement with the team recommendations is accurately recorded on the IEP (“Written Prior Notice” under “Meeting Summary”).

There are *two options* for providing PWN to parents. The first option is to give PWN at the PPT meeting. The PPT may agree on an implementation date for the actions being proposed by the PPT. The agreement would be noted on page two of the IEP documents and the agreed upon implementation date would be noted on the PWN

The second option is for the District to send the PWN with the IEP, which must be sent within five school days after the PPT meeting where the action is discussed. As with the first option, the PPT may agree on an implementation date, and the agreement to be noted on page two of the IEP documents. If there is no agreement, the date for the implementation of the actions proposed by the PPT is 10 school days from the date the PWN was provided to the parent, which is likely 15 school days after the PPT. Adherence to these timelines is mandatory.

Consent

Parental signature is required under these conditions:

- Consent to conduct an initial evaluation of a child;

- Consent to conduct a re-evaluation of a child; and
- Initial consent for the child to receive special education services.

A parent may request additional time to consider the recommendations of the PPT. If this is the first time a child is found eligible for special education and the district offers services, the child cannot receive services until the parent gives the district written consent. If the parent does not give consent, the child cannot receive services. After consent is given for the initial receipt of services, the district does not need to have parental consent to implement an IEP. Unless a parent formally disagrees, the IEP will be implemented 10-15 school days after the mailing of the Prior Written Notice.

School staff and parents build an effective special education program collaboratively. Communication between the school and parents is a crucial component to the success of the IEP development and implementation, and reaching the intended goals of the IDEA. With good communication between school and home, parents are able to build on the strategies and interventions applied at school, and school staff is able to learn more about the individual needs of the child through parents' insights.

<i>Tips for Parents</i>

- Before the meeting, write a list of concerns or issues you feel are important to discuss.
- Talk to other parents who have attended PPT meetings.
- Ask to see your child's school folder and any reports concerning your child prior to the PPT meeting.
- Stay informed of your child's progress. Communicate with school staff throughout the school year concerning your child's needs, including but not limited to, implementation of your child's IEP, your child's progress and any questions or concerns that may arise. You may meet informally with school staff, outside of the PPT process, to discuss these matters. Communication between parents and school staff is an important part of the education of your child.
- Think about whether your child should be included at the meeting and discuss this with school personnel.
- Play an active part in setting goals and objectives for your child.
- If the school prepares a draft of the IEP prior to the meeting, you may request to review it before the meeting.
- Take your own notes or tape record what was said at the meeting.
- Be a good listener. Listen to the staff's professional opinions about your child. Remember, school personnel are good advocates for your child, too.
- When differences of opinion arise, talk them out.
- If you do not understand something, ask that it be restated. You may ask for an example or demonstration of what is meant.

- If you feel pressured or overwhelmed, it is okay to take a break. Leave the room, take a walk, and reconvene. If you don't feel you can continue without time out to think about what you have heard, you may ask that the meeting be continued at a later date.

See Chapter 3: *Written Notice, Prior Written Notice and Parental Consent* and Chapter 4: *Planning and Placement Team*, of the SOPM, for a complete description of the District procedures.

Chapter Four **THE EVALUATION PROCESS**

Identifying A Child's Strengths and Needs

The purpose of the evaluation process is to identify a child's specific learning strengths, needs, and concerns. This is a problem-solving process that involves many ways of collecting information. Information may be gathered through informal and formal observations, reviewing school work and records, talking with the teachers, standardized testing, and checklists. The initial evaluation is done to determine if a child is eligible for special education services and, if eligible, to provide valuable information regarding strengths and needs for consideration in the development of the IEP for the child. This process also helps identify a child's strengths and abilities, which are as important as other concerns in planning future services.

Evaluation Procedures

Evaluations are conducted for different reasons:

- **Eligibility:** to determine whether a child is eligible for special education services. (Each child receiving special education and related services shall be reevaluated at least once every three years to determine continued eligibility.)
- **IEP development and placement:** to develop a plan of action and make decisions about a child's program.
- **Instructional planning:** to plan instruction appropriate to the child's specific strengths and needs and to monitor its effectiveness.
- **Behavioral assessments:** to determine what triggers a child's behavior that may result in disciplinary action and to address that behavior with appropriate interventions.

There are certain IDEA requirements the District must meet when evaluating a child's need for special education services. These include:

- The evaluation must be conducted by a "multi-disciplinary team," meaning a group of professions with expertise in different areas including at least one teacher or other specialist with knowledge in the area of a child's suspected disability. In Connecticut, the PPT is constituted with members who meet these criteria.
- As part of the initial evaluation (and any reevaluation), the PPT must review existing data on the child, including evaluations and information provided by the parent; current curricular, local, or state assessments; classroom based

observations and observations by teachers or related service providers; as well as attendance, disciplinary, health/nursing data, etc. Once the review is completed and parental input is considered, the PPT must decide if there is a reason to suspect the child has a disability that is adversely impacting the child's education.

- Once the PPT decides a child should be evaluated for special education, the PPT then decides if there is enough existing data to determine eligibility for special education and, if the child is found eligible, is there enough information to write an IEP for the child. If the PPT determines there is not enough data to do this, then the PPT will discuss and plan an evaluation for the child.
- More than one evaluation instrument or procedure will be used to determine if a child is eligible for special education and to write the child's IEP. An evaluation need not always include an assessment of intellectual ability (IQ).
- Tests must be nondiscriminatory and administered in the child's native language and primary means of communication.
- The team must collect information from a variety of sources, which may include observations, parent interviews, and a review of pertinent medical history.

The parent will be invited to the PPT meeting called to discuss the evaluation plan for a child. The role of the parent at the PPT is twofold: a member of the PPT and the child's parent. In these roles, the parent is to:

- Fit the evaluation to the needs of the child;
- Make the parent an informed partner from the beginning; and
- Make the evaluation process the least intrusive and anxiety producing.

The parent must be informed in his/her native language of the school's intent to evaluate the child. The parent will be offered a copy of the Procedural Safeguards document at the PPT meeting called to plan the evaluation for the child. It is possible the discussion of the initial referral and the evaluation will take place at the same PPT meeting. If so, the parent will be offered a copy of the Procedural Safeguards at that initial meeting.

Consent

In order for the school to be able to conduct the evaluation proposed by the PPT, the parent must provide written consent. The District uses the CSDE form for "Notice and Consent to Conduct an Initial Evaluation." The CSDE provides a template for districts to use and to fill in the district name at the top of the form.

The consent that is given by the parent (for an evaluation or reevaluation) is described as “informed consent.” This means that the parent:

- Has been fully informed of all the information relevant to the evaluation. This information is given to the parent in his/her native language, or other mode of communication unless it is clearly not feasible to do so;
- Understands and agrees in writing to the evaluation. The consent describes the evaluation and lists the records (if any) that will be released and to whom they will be released; and
- Understands that the granting of consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time.

A parent should take a moment to read the consent form before he/she signs it. The consent form mentions the Procedural Safeguards under Part B of the IDEA document and a listing of some of the rights a parent has with respect to the evaluation.

Other Evaluation Considerations

It is important to note that the **screening** of a student by a teacher or specialist to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation is not considered to be an evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services.

Once the formal evaluation of a child has been completed, the results will be shared with the parent. Upon request of the parent, the District will provide copies of the assessment and evaluation results that will be considered in determining if a child is eligible for special education. The results must be provided to the parent at least three school days prior to the PPT meeting where they will be discussed. This only applies to the initial determination of eligibility. If a parent does not make this request, a copy of the evaluation report will be provided at or prior to the PPT meeting. This is a requirement of Connecticut law, not the IDEA.

A parent may ask the District for an informal meeting prior to the PPT meeting to discuss the results of the evaluation. A parent should fully understand the results and conclusions drawn from the evaluation so he/she may work confidently with school staff and other professionals in planning services for the child. If the parent disagrees with the results of the District’s evaluation, the parent may request an independent educational evaluation at the school’s expense.

Timelines

The parent may wish to think about the proposed evaluation and perhaps consult with others before written consent is given by the parent for the evaluation to be done. If the District does not receive written consent to conduct the evaluation *within 10 school days* from the date the parent receives the “Notice and Consent to Conduct an Initial Evaluation,” the state regulations on special education requires that the District assume the parent does NOT consent to the evaluation. The District will not be able to evaluate a

child without written parental consent. The District will take steps they deem necessary, which may include moving to due process proceedings, to ensure that a child receives a free appropriate public education.

After the initial determination of eligibility, the child is reevaluated at least every three years to determine if the child continues to be eligible for special education and to assist the District in writing the individualized education program for the child. This happens unless the PPT agrees that reevaluation is not necessary.

If the school staff determines the educational or related service needs of the child, including improved academic achievement or functional performance, warrant a reevaluation, or the parent requests a reevaluation, the District will do one. However, this type of reevaluation may only occur once a year unless the PPT agrees otherwise.

INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION (IEE)

The parent may request that the District pay for an independent educational evaluation (IEE) if the parent disagrees with an evaluation that was completed or obtained by the District. The District provides to parents, upon request for an independent educational evaluation, information about where an IEE may be obtained and the District's criteria for independent educational evaluations.

It is important to distinguish between:

- (1) When the parent disagrees with the evaluation conducted by the District, which requires prompt action by the District, and
- (2) When the parent is requesting additional testing. A parent may agree with all the evaluations conducted by the PPT, but would like additional evaluation(s) done. Under these facts, either the parent or the District may wish to schedule a PPT to discuss the parent's request for additional testing.

Additionally, it should be noted that if the District uses an outside evaluator to conduct an evaluation, for example a psychiatrist or other evaluator not on the staff of the District, and the parent disagrees with the evaluation, the parent has the right to ask for an IEE. The fact that the District has used someone not employed by the District to conduct the evaluation does not make it an IEE. The parent still retains the right to request an IEE if he/she disagrees with the evaluation done by the evaluator hired by the District.

The parent is not required to request a PPT meeting to ask for an IEE, nor is the District required to hold a PPT meeting to consider the parental request for an IEE. The District may ask for the parent the reasons the parent is objecting to the public evaluation, that is, the evaluation conducted by the District. The District may not require a parent to provide an explanation and may not unreasonably delay either providing the IEE or filing for due process to request a hearing to defend its evaluation.

The District may hold a PPT meeting to consider the parent's request and review the District's evaluation(s) being contested. This meeting is not intended to interrupt, interfere with, or otherwise compromise the parental right to an IEE, and is used solely to

gather information to assist the District in responding to the parent's request without unnecessary delay.

The parent is entitled to request only one IEE at District expense each time the District conducts an evaluation with which the parent disagrees. If the parent requests an independent educational evaluation at public expense, the District will, without unnecessary delay, either:

- File a due process complaint to request a hearing to show that the District's evaluation is appropriate; or
- Ensure that an IEE is provided at the District's expense, unless the District demonstrates in a hearing that the evaluation obtained by the parent did not meet District criteria.

If the District files for a hearing, and the final decision is that the District's evaluation is appropriate, the parent still has the right to an IEE, but not at public expense. This evaluation obtained by the parent may be submitted to the PPT for its consideration.

When an IEE is at the District's expense, the criteria under which the evaluation is obtained, including the location of the evaluation and the qualifications of the examiner and timelines, must be the same as those the District uses when it initiates an evaluation. The District may not impose additional conditions or timelines to those that the District uses. The District criteria-for an IEE must take into account exceptions in the event an IEE is needed that does not meet the criteria of the District. Exceptions to the District IEE criteria preserve the right of the parent to obtain an IEE. For example, a student's needs may be so unique that the type of evaluator needed to conduct an appropriate evaluation of the student may not meet the District criteria.

Tips for Parents

- Share information with the PPT that will benefit your child's education.
 - Any evaluations you may have secured of your child by outside professionals. This means you took your child to an evaluator not employed by the school district. You may do this at any time during the process at your expense. This is not an Independent Educational Evaluation, as explained in further detail below. It is required that the PPT consider any evaluation you bring to the PPT.
 - A list of your child's strengths, needs, preferences, and learning style.
 - Samples of your child's work.
- Learn more about the evaluation and the process. Ask questions! If you don't understand what a specific evaluation is and what it will measure, ask!!
- Think about what questions do we, the parents, have that we hope will be answered by the evaluation?
- Ask who will be conducting the evaluation and in what setting?
- Ask what areas will be evaluated? What specific tests or portions of tests will be used and why?

- Ask what is the training and experience of the persons administering the test?
- Ask if the evaluation needs to be adapted to compensate for your child's suspected disability?
- Ask for any written information on the evaluation process.
- Talk with other experienced parents, school representatives, or outside professionals about the evaluation process.

See Chapter 3: *Written Notice, Prior Written Notice and Parental Consent* and Chapter 4: *Evaluation and Reevaluation*, of the SOPM for a complete description of the District procedures

Chapter Five ELIGIBILITY

Determining Which Children Are Eligible for Special Education Services

After evaluation, the PPT is responsible for determining the eligibility of a child for special education and related services. As a member of the PPT, the parent will participate in this important meeting. The following definitions describe which areas of special needs/disabilities may make a child eligible for special education under the IDEA (and state law requirements, as the state law and regulations have adopted the federal standards for disability categories). The results and conclusions of the child's evaluation are compared to these definitions to determine if a child meets the criteria for a particular category of disability.

Three requirements for eligibility

In order for a child to be eligible for special education:

- The evaluation results show a child's difficulties meet the *criteria of one or more disability categories*; and
- Due to this disability, the child's *ability to receive an education is adversely impacted*; and,
- Because of the disability and the adverse impact, the child *needs specially designed instruction*, that is, special education and related services.

In order to be eligible for special education, *all three* requirements must be met. It is possible a child may meet the criteria for a disability category, but the child's ability to be educated may not be adversely impacted. In similar fashion, a child may meet the criteria for a disability category and their ability to be educated may be adversely impacted, but the child doesn't need specially designed instruction. In either event, the PPT will consider if other services may be available for the child and make sure a referral is made so the child can receive appropriate services.

Definitions of Categories of Disability for Which Students May Be Eligible for Special Education Services:

Autism

A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3, which adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Child with Developmental Delay:

A child ages 3 to 5, inclusive, who is experiencing developmental delays as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures in one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development or adaptive development and who needs special education and

related services. The IDEA allows states to use the developmental delay category until a child turns 9; Connecticut has elected to use it to age 6. Once a child reaches age 6, the PPT must determine if a child meets the criteria for any of the disability categories and then determine if the child is eligible for special education as described above.

Deaf

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

Deaf-Blind

Concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children who are deaf or children who are blind.

Emotional Disturbance

A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree, which adversely affects educational performance:

1. an inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors;
2. an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
3. inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;
4. a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or
5. a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

Hearing Impairment

A measurable hearing impairment which, with or without amplification, impairs linguistic processing and adversely affects educational performance.

Intellectually Disabled

Significant sub-average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, which adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Multiple Disabilities

A combination of identifiable disabilities, the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the disabilities, but does not include children who are deaf-blind.

Orthopedic Impairment

A severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects the child's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease (i.e., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis) and impairments

from other causes (i.e., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures), but does not include a temporary condition which is anticipated to be of less than three weeks duration.

Other Health Impairment (OHI)

Limited strength, vitality, or alertness (including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli) which 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 or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette's syndrome, which adversely affects a child's educational performance, and is expected to be of more than three weeks in duration.

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, including conditions such 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. The state of Connecticut prohibits the use of a severe discrepancy between educational performance and measured intellectual ability to determine if a child has a learning disability.

Speech or Language Impaired

A communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Traumatic Brain Injury

An acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Visual Impairment

A measurable visual impairment which, even after correction, continues to adversely affect the child's educational performance. The term shall include both partially sighted and blind children.

<i>Tips for Parents</i>

- Ask another person, spouse, friend, or professional to attend the PPT meeting with you. It can be overwhelming and it is helpful to have another pair of ears at the meeting. Many parents also tape record this discussion.

- Consider presenting your opinions to the team members in a statement that you have developed prior to the meeting (see below).
- You may wish to bring a professional or others who have worked with or know your child.
- Before the PPT meeting, make sure you understand the nature and basis of your child's specific needs. Do you have enough information? Have you reviewed the evaluation reports?

Organizing your thoughts for the Referral PPT Meeting: Example

Jay is an eight-year-old boy who is very gifted in some areas but also has some unique learning needs. Jay loves to draw; is physically coordinated and talented; has a competitive spirit and musical aptitude; is sensitive and gentle; and shows heightened awareness artistically. Jay enjoys participating in the swim team and playing tennis. He's always shown a great imagination and loves playing games. He has a best friend who shares his interests and they enjoy playing together for hours. For us, his parents, Jay has challenged our skills and patience and we have learned that positive expectations and reinforcement work most effectively for him. Behaviors that concern us with Jay are his mood swings and intense behaviors.

Our concerns:

Jay is falling behind academically.

Jay has difficulty getting organized, for example, getting into his class on time, handing in homework, and organizing his written work and thoughts.

Jay has difficulty following schools rules.

While there has been some improvement, peer interactions are still very difficult for him.

As his parents, our goals for Jay are:

In general to help Jay feel good about himself and his ability to learn, enjoy positive interactions with peers and adults, and progress academically.

Specifically, we would like:

1. For Jay to work at a fourth grade level in all academic areas.
2. For Jay to become a more organized and independent learner.
3. For Jay to improve his ability to monitor his behavior and get help when he needs it.
4. For Jay to increase his social interaction skills.
5. For Jay to follow the school routines and rules independently.

See Chapter 1: *Child Identification* and Chapter 4: *Evaluation and Re-evaluation* of the SOPM for a complete description of the District's procedure for determining eligibility.

Chapter Six **THE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM**

A Plan for Action

Once a child has been determined eligible for special education and related services, the team process of developing an individualized education program (IEP) designed to meet the specific needs of your child will begin. The IEP is *both a document and a process*.

The development of the IEP gives the parent the opportunity to work with educators *as equal partners* to identify what a child's educational needs are, what will be provided to meet those needs, and what the anticipated outcomes or goals may be. The process of collaborative goal setting allows both educators and parents to combine their separate areas of expertise to plan for the specific needs of a child.

The IEP is also a document: a written description of the plan developed for the child. It is a written document that includes the resources the school agrees to provide in order for a child to receive a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The IEP document will be written at a PPT meeting. A proposed IEP, labeled DRAFT, may be presented at the PPT meeting, but changes can be made as the team works together to develop the plan.

Specific, detailed information about the IEP is contained in the IEP Manual and Forms published by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). It is available on the CSDE website. This District uses the standard state IEP form that has numerous legally required components that help guide the PPT in the development, review, revision, and implementation of the child's IEP.

IEP Initial Pages

Cover Page

The cover page of the IEP provides:

- Basic demographic information about the child along with the reason for the PPT meeting,
- The primary disability,
- Team members present, and
- Information regarding the next meeting.

It is possible that a child may have more than one disability. In Connecticut, school districts including Darien are permitted to identify only one primary disability when determining the basis for eligibility.

Page two of the IEP provides a list of PPT recommendations and a summary of the PPT meeting. Meeting summaries, or minutes of a PPT meeting, are optional. However, most school districts, including Darien, provide a summary of the PPT meeting to explain how the PPT reached its decisions regarding the child's identification, evaluation, program, or provision of FAPE. A meeting summary or minutes of the PPT meeting is not a transcript of the PPT discussions.

Prior Written Notice

Page three of the IEP is titled Prior Written Notice (PWN) and serves to notify the parent, in writing, 10 school days before the District takes any action as a result of the PPT decisions. PWN is provided to the parent after the PPT meeting where the PPT proposes to, or refuses to, initiate or change the child's identification, evaluation, educational placement, or the provision of FAPE to a child. This is not to be confused with the invitations to PPT meetings, which also may be called "notice" and go out to a parent and other members of the PPT before the scheduled PPT meeting.

IEP Components

The IEP has the following components:

1. **Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance:** a description of how a child is currently performing in many important academic, behavioral, vocational, and adaptive areas. The PPT looks at academic achievement, communication, social/emotional, vocational/transition, fine and gross motor skills, and activities of daily living (community participation and independent living) skills.
2. **A statement of the measurable annual educational goals for the coming school year and a statement of how and when progress towards meeting the annual educational goals will be measured.**

For example, "Mary will use strategies and apply math skills to solve work problems."

The IEP will also indicate when the parent will be informed of a child's progress toward meeting the annual goals and the extent the progress is sufficient to help a child achieve the goals by the end of the school year. This reporting on progress should be at least as often as progress reporting is provided for parents of children without disabilities.
3. **A statement of short-term instructional objectives or benchmarks derived from the annual educational goals. Connecticut requires these objectives be included for each goal while the IDEA requires these objectives only for children taking an alternate assessment.**

For example, with teacher demonstration, the child will use a word to request a desired object across three people and two environments, 4/5 trials.

4. A consideration of special factors when developing a child's IEP. They are: (1) behavioral strategies and interventions and supports for children with behavioral concerns; (2) the language needs of children with limited English proficiency; (3) the use of Braille for children who are blind or visually impaired; and (4) the development of a language and communication plan for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. For children who are deaf or hard of hearing, the development of a Language and Communication Plan is required under Connecticut law.
5. A statement of specific educational services needed by the child, including a description of special education and related services that are needed to meet the needs of the child and the recommended instructional settings, the date when those services will begin, the length of time the services will be given, the frequency of the services indicated in a way that most accurately reflects the service implementation and is stated in the IEP so the District commitment of resources is clear to parents and staff, and where the services will be provided.
6. Discussion and documentation of program considerations including the length of the school day and year, assistive technology, vocational/career education, physical education, extended school year services, need for a functional behavior assessment and transportation.
7. A description of the extent to which the child will participate in the general education program and the justification for removal from general education, if needed.
8. Modifications and accommodations in general education including nonacademic and extracurricular activities for the child, as well as a statement of the program accommodations and modifications and supports for school personnel to implement the IEP.
 - a. Accommodations are changes to instruction (such as materials, content enhancements and tasks) that change how a child learns. For example, the child may be provided with assistive technology devices and services which help the student access instruction.
 - b. Modifications are changes to the content of instruction, which affects what the child learns. Modifications include curricular changes in the content standards or the performance expectations. For example, the content standard may be that children will learn multiplication facts and the performance standard is that the child will achieve mastery of the multiplications facts for 0 to 9.
9. A description of criteria for a child to be exited from special education. Exit criteria means the anticipated criteria to be used in the future, which will determine when the child no longer needs special education and related services.
10. A description of what the child needs to participate in district and state-wide assessment. Children with disabilities must participate in this type of testing. The

PPT determines what each child needs to participate. The PPT also determines whether a child will participate in an alternate assessment for statewide assessment. The PPT will reference the Smarter Balanced Usability Guidelines to determine what accommodations are allowable and the conditions under which they may be used.

11. Transition planning and related goals and objectives for postsecondary transition are included in the IEP beginning at the annual review following a child's 15th birthday, unless the PPT determines such planning should begin earlier.
12. Summary of performance for a child whose eligibility for special education is ending due to graduation from high school with a regular high school diploma, or for a child who is exceeding the age of eligibility, that is, the end of the school year in which the student turns 21.

<i>Tips for Parents</i>

Before the IEP is developed:

- Familiarize yourself with the IEP document. You may view it at

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/IEPManual.pdf>

and

http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/student_assessment/special_education/2015_Final_Accommodation_Form_5-4-14.pdf

for testing accommodations.

- Note the following about the IEP document:
 - Page one is the Cover Page
 - Page two is the List of PPT Recommendations and optional meeting summary
 - Page three is Prior Written Notice
 - Pages four and five are Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance
 - Page six is Transition Planning
 - Page seven is Measurable Goals and Short-Term Objectives. There will be multiple pages of goals and objectives for your child.
 - Page eight is Accommodations and Modifications and frequency and duration of supports required for school personnel to implement the IEP.
 - Page nine is state and district testing and accommodations.
 - Page ten is special factors, progress reporting, and exit criteria.

- Page eleven is a summary of special education, related services, and regular education.
- Page twelve has the data collection required by the Office of Special Education programs of the federal Department of Education.
- Review all relevant information, including:
 - Assessments, making sure they are accurate and up to date.
 - Prior IEPs, if applicable.
 - Teacher progress notes.
 - Your child's schoolwork.
 - The general education curriculum for your child's grade.
- If the school has prepared a draft IEP prior to the meeting, you may ask to review it. Whether you are looking at a draft IEP or the final IEP, look to see if the annual goals and objectives track the present levels of academic and functional performance. If your child has educational needs that impact on his or her ability to receive instruction, those should be addressed in the goals and objectives of the IEP.
- Remember, you are an expert in your child's development. Be prepared to share your observations of your child's functioning in the following areas: movement, communication, social relationships and behavior, independence, preferences, and problem solving.
- Be prepared to share your educational expectations for your child and what outcomes you would like to see your child accomplish during the year. Also, it's helpful to share your vision for your child's future with the team. It is important that everyone is heading towards the same goal(s). As your child becomes older it is important for the team to hear what your child's vision is, too.
- Be prepared to share your observations about the way your child learns best. Does he/she learn by:
 - Touching, holding.
 - Seeing, looking, and watching.
 - Working in groups with other children.
 - Working alone or with one friend.
 - Drawing, writing.
 - Talking about new things he/she is learning.
- Be sure all services necessary to implement your child's educational program are being written into the IEP.
- Be sure to consider all of your child's needs including socialization and include whether strategies such as Social Skills groups or MAPS are necessary.

- Be sure to discuss the most effective ways for ongoing communication with your child's team. Parents and school teams are encouraged to have ongoing communication so that any areas of concern are known to the PPT in advance if possible. Regular communication, including discussion of areas of concern, facilitates the collaborative PPT process. Discuss the best method and frequency for communication with your child's team and do whatever works for all involved.
 - Some methods of communication include:
 - Daily notebook or log
 - Checklists or worksheets
 - Weekly phone call
 - E-mail
 - Informal meeting or conferences
- Be specific on what information you need to monitor your child's academic and social functioning.
- Make sure you get feedback from all teachers and specialists working with your child, as appropriate.
- Be sure to share important information from home that may affect your child's functioning at school.

When there is a problem:

- Don't wait. Share your concerns first with the person(s) directly involved.
- Be specific about your concerns and the effect on your child's academic or social performance.
- Put your concerns in writing.
- Give the person(s) involved reasonable time to make changes before going to a supervisor.
- If necessary, go up the administrative ladder one at a time, starting with the teacher leader.

Remember, most problems can be solved at your home school with people who are most familiar with your child and his/her individual needs. There are people on your child's educational team with whom you should speak if you have concerns about your child's education program or services. You may speak with the child's teacher, the child's case manager, the SESS facilitator or the appropriate school administrator.

If you cannot resolve your concerns at the team level, you may speak with the SESS Program Director, the Assistant Superintendent for Special Education and Student Services or the Superintendent of Schools. It is important to remember that the PPT has the sole authority to revise a child's IEP and that any individual you speak with will not have the authority to do so. However, it is important that parents understand they have the opportunity to communicate with District administrators about issues or concerns they may have with the delivery of special education services.

Parents may also raise concerns to the Darien Board of Education through the public comment portion of the open meetings of the Darien Board of Education. It is important to keep in mind that members of the Darien Board of Education are not members of the PPT and thus cannot make any changes to your child's program or services.

In rare situations, if you are in disagreement with the program or services being provided to your child, or believe the District has violated a required procedure, and want to challenge what the District is offering, you may access the State Complaint Resolution Procedures or Due Process Procedures which provide a formal process for challenging the programs and services offered by the District. You will find a complete description of the Complaint Resolution Procedure and Due Process Procedures in the Procedural Safeguards Document Required under Part B of the IDEA.

You may also contact the State Board of Education or the Federal Department of Education, the Office of Special Education Programs, if your issues remain unresolved or not resolved to your satisfaction. Remember, however, that the authority to revise a child's IEP rests with the PPT and that any individual or group you speak with does not have the authority to do so.

Remember, giving the person involved with your child's program and services a reasonable time to make changes before going to a supervisor will expedite resolution of the problem. Ask the person you have contacted what a reasonable time is to address your problem.

Always keep copies of all correspondence.

Let the same officials hear from you with positive feedback.

After the IEP is developed:

- Ask for suggestions of how you can continue, expand, and reinforce school activities at home.
- Take the time to explain any special equipment your child uses outside of school.
- Inform the teacher of any activities or significant events that may influence your child's performance in school.
- Let the school know that you would like to be called if your input is needed. Remember, you and the school want the best for your child. Working together can make that happen.
- Ask that samples of your child's work be sent home. If you have questions, make an appointment with the teacher(s) and other service providers to discuss new strategies to meet your child's goals.
- Take the initiative. If you want to meet with the teacher, call him or her and arrange a visit.
- While in the classroom, observe how your child participates. How does your child interact with other children? With the teacher?
- Is your child reasonably happy? Does he or she feel pretty good about school? Talk to your child about what's going on at school.

- Does your child seem to be making progress toward the goals of the IEP? If not, and you see it first, it is your responsibility to contact the school and talk about it. Remember, you and the school are on the same side: your child's!

See Chapter 6: *Individualized Education Program*, of the SOPM for a complete description of the District's procedures.

The IEP Checklist

The following checklist may be helpful when you are working with the PPT/IEP process and paperwork:

Do the PPT members include:

Required:

- Parent.
- Student, as appropriate.
- Special education teacher of the child.
- General education teacher of the child, if the child is or may be participating in the general education environment.
- An individual who is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction, is knowledgeable about the general curriculum and the availability of resources, and is able to commit district resources. This individual is usually an administrator, but it is not required.
- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results, who may be a school staff member as described above.

Optional:

At the discretion of the parent or the District, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the student, including related services personnel as appropriate, and the following:

- Family members/friends
- Peers/Advocates
- Specialists
- Other professionals.

Excusal of PPT members:

- Have you agreed in writing before the PPT meeting that one or more members of the PPT are not needed at this specific meeting?
- Has the excused PPT member submitted any written comments, feedback, or data for the PPT to review or consider during his/her absence?

Were PPT members notified and the meeting scheduled:

- With sufficient time to allow the parents to make arrangements to attend?
- At a time and place mutually agreeable to both the parent and the District?
- Of the purpose, time, place, and participants of the meeting?
- That parents may bring others to the PPT meeting?
- In the primary language of the parents?

Does the present level of performance:

- Describe the student in a positive way?
- Reflect parent concerns?
- Include the student's strengths and needs?
- Reflect the results of the most recent evaluations?
- Reflect the results from a variety of assessment tools?
- Describe how the disability affects involvement in the general education curriculum?

Are annual goals and objectives:

- Tracking the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance?
- Meaningful and attainable within one school year?
- Allowing the student to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum?
- Clear on what the student will do, how, where, and when he/she will do it.
- Include a behavior intervention plan, if needed?
- Clear as to how progress will be measured for each goal/objective?
- Clear as to how parents will be informed of progress?
- Promoting high expectations for the student?
- Prioritized in terms of the student's age and time left for schooling?
- Including skills to help the student live as independently as possible?

Do Related Services, Supplementary Aids, and Supports:

- Help the student reach annual goals?
- Help the student progress in the general education program?
- Help the student participate with other students, both disabled and nondisabled?
- Include specifics: start/finish dates; frequency and duration, indicated in a way that most accurately reflects the service implementation and is stated on the IEP so that the commitment of resources is clear to parents and staff: location; who will deliver; delivery method (individual or group, in class)?
- Include modifications for participation on district or state assessment?
- Include a statement of why a particular test is not appropriate and what will be used instead?

Is Placement:

- Decided after goals, objectives, and supports are agreed upon?
- In the Least Restrictive Environment?
- Explaining the justification if a student is not participating in all general education activities?
- Ensuring that IEP is coordinated with general education classroom, schedules, activities and programs, including field trips or overnight field trips?

Instruction and Adaptations:

Is person(s) responsible clearly listed on the IEP (page 11, responsible staff and service implementer: for example, special education teacher, general education teacher, specialist, paraprofessional, parents, student, and others).

When, where, and how often will the IEP be carried out including seating preferences; individual or small group instruction needed; extra time to complete assignments; assistive technology needs, for example, calculators, tape records, taped textbooks; any other special equipment, materials, or resources.

Transition:

Articulation plan developed for smooth transition to new setting a year prior to the move: for example, preschool to kindergarten or elementary school, or elementary to middle school.

Beginning at the annual review following the student's 15th birthday, transition planning and related goals and objectives are part of the student's IEP including identifying the student's preferences and interests and contacting transition services providers with the consent of the parent.

Before age 18, explaining to the parent and the student what legal rights will transfer to the student when the student turns 18.

Adaptation and Modification checklist

The following checklist may be helpful when you are working with the PPT/IEP process and paperwork:

Pacing:

- Extend time requirements
- Vary activity often
- Allow break
- Give extra cues or prompts
- Omit assignments requiring copying in timed situation
- School text sent home for summer preview
- Home set of texts/materials for preview/review
- Other:

Motivation and reinforcement:

- Verbal/non-verbal
- Positive reinforcement
- Concrete reinforcement
- Reinforce initiation
- Planned motivating sequences of activities
- Offer choice
- Use strengths/interests often
- Other:

Environment:

- Preferential seating
- Define areas concretely
- Planned seating: classroom, bus, cafeteria, auditorium, specials
- After physical room arrangement
- Reduce/minimize distractions: visual, auditory, spatial, movement
- Teach positive rules for use of space
- Other:

Testing Adaptations:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oral | <input type="checkbox"/> Test administered by resource person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taped | <input type="checkbox"/> Short answer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pictures | <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple choice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read test to student | <input type="checkbox"/> Modify format |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preview language of test questions | <input type="checkbox"/> Shorten length |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Applications in real setting | <input type="checkbox"/> Extend time frame |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

Assignments:

- Give directions in small, discrete steps (written/picture verbal)
- Use written back up for oral directions
- Lower difficulty level
- Shorten assignment
- Reduce paper and pencil tasks
- Read or tape record directions to student
- Use pictorial directions
- Allow student to record or type assignment
- Adapt worksheets/packets
- Utilize compensatory procedures by providing alternate assignments/strategy when demands of class conflict with student capabilities
- Avoid penalizing for spelling errors/sloppy
- Avoid penalizing for penmanship
- Other

Self-Management/Follow Through:

- Visual daily schedule
- Calendars
- Check often for understanding/review
- Request parent reinforcement
- Have student repeat directions
- Teach study skills
- Use study sheets to organize material
- Design/write/use long-term assignment timelines
- Review and practice in real situations
- Plan for generalizations
- Teach skill in several settings/environments
- Other:

Social Interaction Support:

- Peer advocacy
- Peer tutoring
- Structure activities to create opportunities for social interaction
- Focus on social process rather than activities/end product
- Structure shared experiences in school, extracurricular
- Cooperative learning groups
- Use multiple rotating peers
- Teach friendship skills/sharing/negotiation
- Teach social communication skills greeting, conversation turn taking, sharing, negotiation
- Other

Presentation of Subject Matter:

- Teach to student's learning style: linguistic, logical/math musical, spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, interpersonal, model experiential learning
- Utilize specialized curriculum
- Teacher tape lectures/discussions for reply
- NCR paper for peer to provide notes
- Functional application of academic skills
- Present demonstrations/model
- Utilize manipulatives
- Emphasize critical information
- Pre-teach vocabulary
- Make/use vocabulary files
- Reduce language levels of reading level of assignment
- Use total communication
- Use facilitated communication
- Share activities
- Use visual sequences
- Other:

Materials:

- Arrangement of material on page
- Taped texts or other class materials
- Highlighted texts/study guides
- Use supplementary materials
- Note taking assistance
- Type teacher material
- Large print
- Special equipment: calculator, AAC device, computer, homemade device, electronic, video recorder

Chapter Seven
CONTINUUM OF SERVICES
LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

The IEP process results in a decision concerning a learning environment in which a child can best meet the identified goals and objectives in the child's IEP.

A child with a disability must be provided with a free appropriate public education in the *least restrictive environment*. (*LRE*). This means that, to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities, including students in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with students who are nondisabled.

IDEA outlines the following requirements for ensuring a child with a disability receives his or her education in the least restrictive environment:

- Special classes, separate schooling, or otherwise removing a child from general education should occur only when the nature or severity of the child's disability is such that education in general education classes cannot be achieved satisfactorily, even with the use of supplementary aids and services.
- Schools must consider a continuum of placement options: instruction conducted in the general education classroom, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions. For example, instruction could be offered in general education classes, general education classes with minimal support, general education classes with one-to-one assistance, special education classes, etc.
- The placement decision is made by a group of persons, including the parents, and other persons knowledgeable about the child, the meaning of the evaluation data, and the placement options. In Connecticut, the placement decision is made by the PPT. When considering placement options, the PPT must ensure that:
 - The child's placement is made in conformity with the LRE requirements.
 - The child's placement is determined at least annually, is based on the IEP, and is as close as possible to the child's home.
 - The child must be educated in the school that the child would attend if he or she were not disabled, unless the IEP requires some other arrangement.
 - In choosing a placement in the LRE, consideration is given to any potential harmful effect on the child or on the quality of services that the child needs.
 - A child with a disability is not removed from education in age-appropriate general education classrooms solely because of needed modifications in the general education curriculum.
 - The child has the right to participate with nondisabled children in nonacademic and extracurricular activities. The District will provide the child with the supplementary aids and services determined by the PPT to be appropriate and necessary to allow the child to participate.

The terms “regular education” or “general education” or “regular classes” mean the educational programs and services offered to typically developing students in the public school setting. Over the years, data have been collected to describe the time students with disabilities spend with their nondisabled peers, referred to as “time with nondisabled peers.” The data is reviewed to ensure that for each child with a disability, the time spent with nondisabled peers is considered on an individual basis and the time spent with nondisabled peers is the maximum amount of time appropriate for the child. In addition to access to and participation in the general education curriculum, children with disabilities are also entitled to participate in the variety of educational programs and services that are available to nondisabled children in in the District. These programs and services include but are not limited to Art, Music, Industrial Arts, Consumer Education, and Vocational Education as well as non-academic and extracurricular activities.

Definitions

SOURCE: Except where noted otherwise, definitions are from the OSEP Data Dictionary, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. The definitions have been included in order to better define for District personnel and parents the possible settings where special education services may be delivered. The definitions have been included for reference only and are not intended to bind the District or any individual PPT to placing a child in a particular setting for any period of time. All programming decisions must be made by an individual child’s PPT, taking into consideration the unique needs of that child.

A regular or general education class includes students who receive the majority of their education program in a regular or general education classroom and receive special education and related services outside the regular or general education classroom for less than 21 percent of the school day.

A regular or general education environment means regular or general education classrooms and other settings in schools such as lunchrooms and playgrounds in which students without disabilities participate (OSEP comments).

Resource room includes students who receive special education and related services outside of the regular or general education classroom for at least 21 percent but no more than 60 percent of the school day.

Separate class includes students who receive special education and related services outside the regular or general education classroom for more than 60 percent of the school day.

Separate school includes students who receive special education and related services in a public or private separate day school for students with disabilities, at public expense, for

more than 50 percent of the school day.

Residential facility includes students who receive special education in a public or private residential facility, at public expense, for more than 50 percent of the school day.

Homebound/hospital environment includes students placed in and receiving special education in a hospital or homebound program.

<i>Tips for Parents</i>

- Remember, special education is *not a place*, but services and supports to assist your child in the setting most appropriate for his/her needs.
- Make sure you understand your child's strengths and needs and what types of supports will be beneficial.
- Share your vision and expectations for your child.
- Be sure to consider all supports and services to help your child succeed such as assistive technology, adapted or modified curriculum, special equipment, or special education consultation.

See Chapter 7: *Least Restrictive Environment*, for a complete description of the District procedures for LRE.

Chapter 8

RELATED SERVICES

The IDEA defines “related services” as: Transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability *to benefit from special education*. Related services include but are not limited to:

- Speech language pathology and audiology services
- Interpreting services
- Psychological services
- Physical and occupational therapy
- Recreation, including early therapeutic recreation
- Early identification and assessment of disabilities in children
- Counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling
- Orientation and mobility counseling
- Medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes

Related services also include school health services and school nurse services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training.

Related services do not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, the optimization of that device’s functioning (i.e., mapping), and maintenance of that device or the replacement of that device. A child with a surgically implanted device (i.e., a cochlear implant) has the right to receive related services determined to be necessary for the child to receive a free appropriate public education.

The District is responsible for appropriately monitoring and maintaining medical devices that are needed to maintain the health and safety of a child, including breathing, nutrition, or operation of other bodily functions, while the child is transported to and from school or is at school and may routinely check external component of a surgically implanted device to make sure it is functioning properly.

Related services must have a relationship to the child’s special education needs and must be necessary to give the child the opportunity to benefit from his or her special education program.

The District provides related services through its own personnel and by contracting with agencies or individuals who provide the services.

Related services can be delivered directly in an individual or group situation or indirectly by consultation with teachers and other school personnel so they may carry out interventions throughout the school day.

One type of service is not necessarily better than the other. The choice depends on the individual needs of the child.

Frequency and Duration

Frequency and duration of related services are listed in the IEP, as well as the responsible staff, service implementer, when the service starts, when the service ends, and the instructional site where it will be provided. If needed, it includes a description of the instructional service delivery, for example, small group, team taught classes, etc. Frequency and duration must be indicated in a way that most accurately reflects the service implementation and is stated in the IEP so the District's commitment of resources is clear to parents and staff.

Tips for Parents

- Consider a variety of different ways and times for integrating services into your child's program.
- Consider the potential benefits and risks of services that take your child from the regular classroom.
- More is not always better.
- Ask questions:
 - Who will provide the services?
 - How will the therapists and teachers communicate?
 - How will I receive information concerning my child's services?
 - Will the service be delivered individually or in a group (clearly specified on the IEP)?
 - How often will my child receive the services?

Chapter 9 ASSESSMENT OF FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR

The IDEA mandates positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports to address the behavior of a child whose behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others.

The functional assessment, or functional behavioral assessment (FBA), is a foundation of positive behavioral supports. The results of a functional assessment allow team members to design an environment that “works” for students with communication and behavioral challenges. The students with the challenges and those who know the students best collaborate with someone trained in behavioral analysis. Together they plan how to reduce or eliminate the challenging behavior.

Functional assessment methods look at the behavioral support needs of people who exhibit the full range of challenging behaviors, such as self-injury, hitting, and biting, violent and aggressive attacks, property destruction, and disruptive behaviors (i.e., screaming or tantrums).

Those who exhibit challenging behaviors may be labeled as having a developmental disability, autism, intellectual disability, mental illness, emotional or behavioral disorder, traumatic brain injury, or they may carry no formal diagnostic labels at all. These individuals vary greatly in their overall support needs and ability to communicate and participate in their own behavioral support.

Information about when, where, and why challenging behavior occurs can help build effective, efficient behavioral support, because unplanned reactions can make behaviors worse. Allergies, infections, menstrual cycle effects, toothaches, chronic constipation, and other medical conditions may bring on challenging behaviors. Medication can also influence behaviors.

A functional assessment:

- Clearly describes the challenging behaviors, including behaviors that occur together.
- Identifies the events, times, and situations that predict when the challenging behaviors will and will not occur across the range of daily routines.
- Identifies the consequences that maintain the challenging behaviors (what the person “gets out” of the behaviors, e.g., attention, escape, or obtaining preferred items).
- Develops one or more summary statements or hypotheses that describe specific behaviors, specific types of situations in which they occur, and the re-enforcers that appear to maintain the behaviors in that situation.
- Collects directly observed data that support these summary situations.

A functional assessment can be done in many ways and at different precision levels depending on the behavior severity. A person who has observed undesirable behavior in

different situations and concluded that, “she does that because...” or “he does that in order to ...” has also developed a summary statement about things that influence behavior.

Functional assessment methods fall into three general strategies:

1. *Information gathering (interviews and rating scales):* This method involves talking to the individual and to those who know the individual best. It also consists of formal interviews, questionnaires, and rating scales to identify which events in an environment are linked to the specific problem behavior.

Questions to answer include:

- What challenging behaviors cause concerns?
 - What events or physical conditions occur before the behavior that increases the behavior’s predictability?
 - What results appear to motivate or maintain the challenging behavior?
 - What appropriate behaviors could produce the same result?
 - What can be learned from previous behavioral support efforts about strategies that are ineffective, partially effective, or effective for only a short time?
2. *Direct observation:* Teachers, support staff, or family members who already work or live with the person observe the person having challenging behaviors in natural conditions over an extended period. The observations must not interfere with normal daily environments. In most cases, observers record when a problem behavior occurs, what happened just before the behavior, what happened after, and their perception as to the function of the behavior. When an observer collects 10-15 instances of the behavior, he or she might discover where a pattern exists.
 3. *Functional analysis manipulations:* Taking the assessment one step further is the functional analysis. In this process, a behavior analyst systematically changes potential controlling factors (consequences, structural variable, i.e., task difficulty, or length) to observe effects on a person’s behavior.

These determinations involve creating situations that will reduce, eliminate, or provoke the challenging behavior to test whether the hypothesis is correct. Functional analysis, although expensive in time and energy, may be the only way, in some cases, to ensure an adequate assessment. It is the only approach that clearly demonstrates relations between environmental events and challenging behaviors. To support the functional assessment, also consider measuring activity patterns (the variety and degree of community integration and relationships).

Behavioral support must be conducted with the dignity of the person as a primary concern.

The objective of functional assessment is not just to define and eliminate undesirable behavior, but also to understand the structure and function of behavior to teach and promote effective alternatives.

Functional assessment is a process for looking at relationships between behaviors and the environment. It is not simply a review of the person with challenging behaviors.

Taken from the Beach Center on Families and Disability: Fact Sheet on Functional Assessment of Behavior

Final Thoughts

Dear Parents (and other Readers):

We hope you find this parent handbook informative, practical, and easy to read and use. It is not intended to take the place of open and meaningful exchanges between the home and school, but to provide information to allow all team members to make informed contributions and decisions.

We invite your comments and/or suggestions for continuous improvement. Please direct such input to:

Assistant Superintendent, Special Education and Student Services
35 Leroy Ave.
Darien, CT
06820

Or, you may provide a comment or suggestions through the District website.

We thank you for your partnership on behalf of children with disabilities and unique learning needs.

Special Education and Student Services Administration

PARENT RESOURCES

CONNECTICUT BIRTH TO THREE SYSTEM

From birth to age 3 children have a lot to LEARN but not all children are learning as well as they can. Every child DESERVES a good start in life.

Do you have concerns about how a child sees, talks, hears, moves, eats, or plays?

To talk to someone about your concerns, call toll-free at 800-505-7000 (TDD accessible).

www.birth23.org

CT PARENT ADVOCACY CENTER (CPAC)

Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center, Inc. (CPAC) is a statewide nonprofit organization that offers information and support to families of children with any disability or chronic illness, age birth through 26. The Center is committed to the idea that parents can be the most effective advocates for their children, given the confidence that knowledge and understanding of special education law and its procedures can bring.

338 Main Street

Niantic, CT 06357

Toll Free 1-800-445-2722 or (Voice/TDD) 860-739-3089

<http://www.cpacinc.org/about-us/>

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Early Childhood Education

www.sde.ct.gov, then under Quick Links, click MORE at bottom of list, scroll down to Early Childhood

Website contains information on Early Childhood SRBI, Kindergarten, Curriculum and Instruction, General Guidance, Links, and Resources including links to Birth to 5

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Bureau of Special Education

www.sde.ct.gov, then under Quick Links, click onto Special Education

Main phone line: 860-713-6910

Website contains information on all matters related to special education including Compliance and Monitoring information and Program Improvement information. Website provides links to guideline documents for determining eligibility, the Parent Guide to Special Education, Restraint and Seclusion Notice, Due Process Forms, Procedural Safeguards Document, State and District Performance Information for Special Education, Topic Briefs on special education, family resources, listing of approved private schools, and fiscal and grant information.

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES (DDS)

<http://www.ct.gov/dds/site/default.asp>

Main Phone Line: 860-418-6000; Toll Free Line: 866-737-0330; TD line 860-418-6079

Website provides a wide array of information of providing services to infants, toddlers, children, and adults with developmental delays. The family page has comprehensive information about respite care funding, family supports, and case management.

Darien is located in the West Region of DDS. The West Region page of the DDS website contains information about resources local to towns in the West Region.

The contact information for the West Region is as follows:

West Region 55 West Main Street Waterbury, CT 06702	Telephone: (203) 805-7400 Telephone (Toll Free): (866) 274-3888
Email: ddsct.west@ct.gov	After Hours Emergency: 203-725-5297

NATIONAL INFORMATION CENTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES (NICHCY)

A national information clearinghouse for information on educational services for children with disabilities. Extensive information on special education and related services, IEP's, and specific disabilities.

The website will be shut down effective September 30, 2014, but all the information contained in the website will be stored and available at:

Center for Parent Information and Resources' Library at
<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/resources>

SEPAC
Special Education Advisory Council

<http://dariensepac.wordpress.com>

The Darien Special Education Parent Advisory Committee is an independent organization of parent volunteers committed to open communication and effective collaboration between the families of our community and the Darien Public Schools administrators and educators as partners in planning and problem solving. SEPAC provides an infrastructure for constructive collaboration among families of children with disabilities and with the District. The website has links to disability specific advocacy organizations.

The website provides information on contacts at each school.

CDSP
Council of Darien School Parents

<http://www.darienps.org/cdsp/index.html>

The Council of Darien School Parents - CDSP is the umbrella organization for the Parent-Teacher Organizations of the Darien Public Schools. Its purpose is to promote understanding and communication among parents, schools, the administration, and the Board of Education by exchange of ideas and consideration of matters of mutual interest. (Article II, Bylaws of the Council of Darien School Parents)

STATE EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER

25 Industrial Park Road
Middletown, CT 06457

www.ctserc.org
860-632-1485

Information and resources for parents of children with special needs. Extensive resources include a library with curriculum, instruction, testing, and assessment materials as well as a comprehensive collection of legal resources on educating students with disabilities and access to online articles; in-service training for staff and parents; conferences; and newsletters. Information dissemination. Request the Parent Resource Package, no charge.

To obtain a copy of the IDEA regulations:

There are multiple online resources to download a copy of the IDEA regulations. Simply use the phrase "IDEA 2004 regulations" in a search engine to view sites.

For example, a federal government website on IDEA 2004 has the regulations.

Go to Building the Legacy: IDEA 2004.<http://idea.ed.gov/>
Click on Part B, and then scroll down to “Check These Out” to “Regulations.”

To obtain a copy of the State Special Education Regulations:

As of the time of printing for this guide, the current official copy of the state regulations has not been revised to reflect the revisions that went into effective in June of 2013. You must look at two documents to see the complete up to date version of the state special education regulations.

The first document is the revised special education regulations effective June, 2013. It is located at:

www.sde.ct.gov Go to Quick Links, click onto Special Education and then Legal/Due Process and look for:

Connecticut Department of Education Regulations; Special Education Regulations are found on pages 101-141[PDF].

Special Education Regulations June 2013 (Note: must be read in conjunction with existing Special Education Regulations found on pages 101-104) [PDF].

The second document is the special education regulations without the revisions. You can get to that by following the link in the above citation.

It’s important to note the following: The set of regulations without the revisions contains sections of the regulations that were not revised with the June 2013 revisions. Those sections are still current.

The revised regulations show which sections of the regulations were amended and contain the amendments. You will not see the new language with any identifying characteristics such as capital letters or underlining as the new language has been incorporated into the regulations.

NOTE

A simple search in any search engine will get you to thousands of sites about special education. It’s important to remember the following: Is the site credible? Is the site current? You might want to start your search by looking at the links provided by the organizations cited above.

Second, ask yourself the following question: How much information do I need to make a decision that will best serve my child and my family? Talk to other parents about their experiences. Call the District and talk to the staff. Call the state and talk to the consultants in the Bureau of Special Education. Talk to people who can help you navigate the information tsunami so you don’t wind up under water.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Accommodations: Teaching supports and services that the student may require to successfully demonstrate learning. Accommodations should not change expectations for achievement in the curriculum grade levels. Examples include, extra time for assignments or tests, the use of taped textbooks, study carrel, etc.

Advocate: Someone who takes action to help someone else (as in educational advocate). Also, to take action of someone's behalf.

Age-appropriate: Materials, activities, and interactions appropriate to the student's chronological age.

Amendment: A change such as a deletion or addition made to a law or regulation. Also, a change made to a student's IEP that may be made after the PPT has met.

Annual Goals: A component of the IEP that states in measurable terms, what a student can reasonably be expected to achieve in one year's time.

Annual Review: A yearly examination of the student's IEP to determine what revisions are necessary.

Appeal: A written request for a change in a decision; also, to make such a request.

Applied Behavioral Analysis: A method of teaching designed to change behavior in a precisely measurable and accountable manner; applying the principles of behavior to the student's behavior (events are socially relevant, observable, and measurable) and determining if changes in the behavior are attributable to the intervention.

Appropriate: Able to meet a need: suitable or fitting the student's individual needs and abilities.

Articulation: Movement from one level of school to the next (i.e., preschool to elementary, elementary to middle, middle to high school. Also used to describe speech issues.

Assessment: A bringing together of information about a student's learning needs, which may include social, psychological, and educational evaluations used to determine eligibility for special programs or services; a process using observation, testing, and test analysis to determine a student's strengths and weaknesses to plan his or her educational services.

Assistive technology: One of the related services under the IDEA. Any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially, off the shelf, modified or

customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

At Risk: A term used for children who have or could have problems with their development that may affect later learning.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP): A plan and/or strategies, program or curricular modifications, and supplementary aids and supports developed by a planning and placement team (PPT) to teach a child appropriate behaviors and eliminate behaviors that impede his/her learning or that of others. It should be positive in nature, not punitive.

BESB: Board of Education and Services for the blind. A state agency that provides services and supports for students who are blind or have visual problems.

BRS: Bureau of Rehabilitation Services. A state agency that provides vocational services to adults with disabilities.

Child Find: A requirement under the IDEA for districts to take active measures to locate, identify, and evaluate children with disabilities.

Circle of Friends: A process to build relationships among general education students and students with disabilities. The Circle of Friends develops a network for caring, friendship, and support.

Complaint Resolution Process: A parent or other interested party or parties may file a written complaint with the Bureau of Special Education alleging that the local school district has violated a requirement of federal or state law concerning special education. Bureau staff will not look into any part of a complaint that is also part of a due process hearing until the final hearing decision has been made. If an issue raised in a complaint was already decided in a due process hearing with the same parties, the hearing decision is final, and the issue raised in the complaint will not be reviewed. The Bureau of Special Education of the State Department of Education must resolve a complaint alleging that a school district has failed to carry out a final decision of a due process hearing.

COACH: Choosing Outcomes and Accommodations for Children: An assessment and planning tool designed to help educators identify family-centered priorities for their students, define the educational program components, and address these components in an inclusive setting.

Cognitive: A term that describes the process people use for remembering, reasoning, understanding, and using judgment.

Community-Referenced Instruction: Instruction provided in domestic/home living, recreation/leisure, general community functioning, and vocational environments within the school and community.

Consent: Written permission given by the parent to the District to act on behalf of the student. The consent is **informed consent**, that is, the parent:

- Has been fully informed of all the information relevant to the evaluation/reevaluation/initial receipt of services. This information is given the parent in the parent's native language, or other mode of communication unless it is clearly not feasible to do so;
- Understands and agrees in writing to the evaluation/reevaluation/initial receipt of services. The consent describes the evaluation/reevaluation/initial receipt of services and lists the records (if any) that will be released and to whom they will be released; and
- Understands that the granting of consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time.

Counseling: Advice or help given by someone qualified to give such advice or help, such as the school guidance counselor, social worker or psychologist. Counselors works with students on academic development, career development and personal/social development.

DDS: State Department of Developmental Services, formerly the State Department of Mental Retardation.

DMHAS: State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

Developmental: Having to do with the steps or stages in growth and development before the age of 18.

Developmental History: The development progress of a child (ages birth to 18 years) in such skills as sitting, walking, or talking.

Developmental Tests: Standardized tests that measure a child's development as it compares to the development of other children at that age.

Disability: The result of any physical or mental condition that affects or prevents one's ability to develop, achieve, or function in an educational setting at normal rate.

Due Process Procedures: In special education, this refers to the right of the parent or guardian, or, in some instances, the District, to challenge the decisions made by the PPT or the parent/guardian. Impartial hearing officers appointed by the State Department of Education hear and review evidence and may issue a final decision and order to resolve the dispute between parents and the district. The due process procedures include advisory opinions, resolution sessions, mediations, hearings, and expedited hearings for issues related to discipline.

Eligible: Meeting the necessary criteria under the IDEA-to receive special education and related services.

Evaluating: Analyzing a child's special learning needs.

Evaluation Criteria: A component of the IEP that provides a description of how the objectives of a student's IEP will be examined to determine if a student has achieved what was expected.

Evaluation Team: A team of people from different areas of expertise who observe and test a child to determine his or her strengths and weaknesses.

Evaluation: A way of collecting information about a student's learning needs, strengths, and interests, the evaluation is part of the process of determining whether a student qualifies for special education programs and services.

Extended School Year (ESY): Special education and related services that are provided to a student: in accordance with the student's individualized education program (IEP); beyond the normal school year and/or school day; and at no cost to parents. The determination of the need for ESY services to a student is made by the PPT on an individual basis.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): A federal law enacted in 1984 that gives all parents of students under 18 or students over the age of 18 or attending post-secondary schools, the right to see, correct, and control access to student records.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): One of the key requirements of the IDEA which requires that an education program be provided for children with disabilities, ages 3 to 21 (in Connecticut, to the end of the school year in which the student turns 21), regardless of the nature or severity of the disability, provided without cost to families. Usually, FAPE is used in the context of FAPE in the least restrictive environment, see definition of LRE below.

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA): A FBA is an assessment that looks at why a child behaves the way he or she does, given the nature of the child and what is happening in the environment. It is a process for collecting data to determine the possible causes of problem behaviors and to identify strategies to address the behaviors.

Functional Curriculum: Curriculum in which students are taught clusters of skills and activities that have direct practical applications for their daily lives.

Home-School Collaboration: The work in which school and family practice a team approach to the educational process. Parents are involved and visible participants in decision-making throughout the school years.

Inclusion: The process in which student with disabilities are welcomed into their communities, schools, and regular education classrooms. Students attend their home schools (the schools they would attend if they did not have a disability) and access the total school environment, including extracurricular and nonacademic activities as participating members of the school community, as is appropriate for the child's individual needs and abilities and determined by the PPT.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): The federal special education law that provides grants to states/districts to provide special education and related services to eligible students and requires that such services be provided according to the federal requirements. The law was first passed in 1975, amended in 1997 (IDEA '97), and most recently reauthorized in 2004 as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, although the law continues to be referred to as the IDEA. Reauthorization means that Congress has decided to continue to provide funding to states and districts. Congress may revise a law at the time it reauthorizes it.

Identification: The process of locating and identifying children needing special education and related services.

Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE): An evaluation performed by a certified or licensed professional examiner who is not employed by the school system responsible for the education of the child. It is done at the request of a parent who disagrees with an evaluation conducted by the District.

Individually Adapted Curriculum and Instruction: Curriculum instruction and support strategies designed to meet the individual needs of each student within inclusive school and community environment.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A written educational plan developed by the PPT for a child, ages 3-21 with disabilities. It is reviewed and updated at least yearly and describes how the child is presently doing, what the child's learning needs are, and what instruction and services the child will need and who will provide the needed instruction and services.

Instructional Strategies: Specific methods and materials that will be used in teaching the student.

Integrated Therapy for Related Services: Related services (speech/language, physical therapy, and occupational therapy, for example) that support students' participation in school and the community and are provided within these naturally occurring environments. Educational and therapeutic techniques are cooperatively designed to assess, plan, implement, evaluate, and report progress on educational needs and goals. Therapists provide both direct service to students and indirect, consultative services to other educators working with the student.

LEA: Local education agency. The local school district usually.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): The principle that a child with a disability must, to the maximum extent appropriate, be educated with children who are nondisabled in the general education class in the school that he/she would attend if the child did not have a disability that required special education and related services. A child with a disability should not be removed from the general education setting unless the nature and severity

of the child's disability is such that education in the general class with the use of supplemental aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

MAPS: McGill Action Planning System: A system approach to help team members plan for the integration of students with special needs into regular age-appropriate classrooms.

Manifestation Determination: A determination as to whether the child's behavior is caused by the child's disability. It needs to be made when a child with a disability behaves in a way that violates the school's code of conduct and as a result the school seeks to change the child's education placement.

Modifications/Adaptations: Changes made to curriculum expectations to meet the needs of the student. Modifications are made when the grade level or age appropriate expectations are beyond the student's level of ability. Modifications may be minimal or very complex depending on the student performance. Modifications must be clearly acknowledged in the IEP.

Objectives: The specific, intermediate steps that must be taken to reach the annual goals; a component of the IEP.

Occupational Therapy (OT): A therapy or treatment provided by an occupational therapist that helps improve fine motor skills, self-help skills, and sensory development.

Office of Civil Rights (OCR): A branch of the U.S. Department of Education that enforces several Federal civil rights laws (such as Section 504) that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance. These laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, gender, disability, and on the basis of age.

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP): A division of the U.S. Department of Education dedicated to improving results for children with disabilities ages birth through 21, by providing leadership and financial support to assist states and local districts. OSEP administers the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA).

PJ Settlement Agreement: The agreement in the legal case P.J., et al. v. State of Connecticut Board of Education, et al. The case was filed in 1991 in federal district court on behalf of five school-age children with mental retardation and their families against, among others, the Connecticut State Board of Education and the State Commissioner of Education. The lawsuit was later certified by the court as a class action. The class is made up of all school-age children in Connecticut identified with the label of mental retardation/intellectual disability who are not educated in the general classroom. On May 22, 2002, a settlement agreement was approved by the federal court and five goals and outcomes were established.

Planning and Placement Team (PPT): The name Connecticut uses to describe the IEP team found in the IDEA. The PPT in Connecticut is responsible for all decisions relating to the referral, identification, evaluation, development/revision of the IEP, placement of the student, and all matters relating to the student receiving a FAPE, including matters of discipline. When used in the context of identifying and evaluating students who may be gifted or talented, the PPT means a group of certified or licensed professionals who represent each of the teaching, administrative, and pupil personnel staffs and who participate equally in the decision making process.

Positive Behavior Supports (PBS): An approach to addressing challenging behaviors that includes functional assessment of the behavior, organizing the environment, teaching skills, rewarding positive behaviors, anticipating situations, monitoring the effect of interventions, and redesigning interventions as necessary.

Physical Therapy (PT): Treatment provided by a trained physical therapist that helps in developing strategies to improve muscle tone, posture, and the ability to move around.

Placement: The instructional site or location where a student eligible for special education will receive instruction and related services, described in the IEP.

Policy/Policies: Process or Procedures: As related to the provision of special education and related services, the procedures, process, or policy adopted and used by a school district to ensure eligible students with disabilities are provided with special education and related services in compliance with IDEA and state requirements.

Positive Behavioral Supports: Non-aversive interventions to address behavior problems. The functions of a problem behavior are identified and team members problem-solve and design strategies for: (a) preventing the behavior, (b) teaching alternative desirable skills to meet this function or purpose, and (c) reacting appropriately if the behavior does occur.

Prior Written Notice: An explanation why the school district proposes or refuses to take an action. The school must inform parents of any actions proposed or refused by the PPT, a description of other options that the PPT considered, an explanation why those options were rejected including assessment information used to make the decision. All this must be done in writing. In Connecticut, prior written notice is attached to the IEP. The proposed action cannot be implemented until 10 school days from the date the parents receive the notice, or by an agreed-upon date.

Private Therapist: Any professional (therapist, tutor, psychologist, etc.) not connected with the public school system or with a public agency. May also be referred to as an outside therapist; or outside evaluator.

Psychologist: A specialist in the field of psychology, usually having a Master's degree or Ph.D. in psychology.

Public Agency: An agency, office, or organization that is supported by the public and services the community at large. Examples, the State Department of Education, the Darien public schools.

Referral: The process of bringing a student to the attention of the school staff to determine whether the student is eligible for special education services. A referral may be made by the school staff or a parent or someone who the parent authorizes to do so.

Regional Education Service Center (RES-C): A Connecticut public educational authority formed by four or more boards of education for the purpose of cooperative action to furnish programs and services. Cooperative Educational Services (CES) in Trumbull serves Fairfield County.

Related Services: Transportation and developmental, corrective and other support services that a child with disabilities requires in order to benefit from special education. Examples of related services include: speech pathology and audiology, psychological services, physical therapy and occupational therapy, recreation therapy, counseling services, interpreters for the hearing impaired, assistive technology, and medical services for diagnostic and evaluation purposes. This list is not exhaustive.

Related Services Personnel or Pupil Personnel Staff: Employees of a board of education who provide or supervise the provision of related services and supports to students with disabilities.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: A federal civil rights statute that protects the rights of persons with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance, which includes public schools.

Self-Help Skills: The abilities related to feeding, dressing, and other skills necessary for functioning in a family, school, and community, also referred to as Activities of Daily Living (ADL).

Special Education Services and Supports: Specifically designed supports and services provided at no cost to families to meet the individual needs of students found eligible for services under the IDEA.

Speech/Language Therapy: Treatment provided by a speech therapist that helps in developing strategies to improve communication, auditory oral motor, and feeding skills.

Standardized Tests: Tests that give results compared to a very large group of other children the same age. These may be expressed in grade equivalent, age equivalent percentile, standard scores, or raw scores.

Stay Put: The requirement that a child must stay in his or her current program or placement during the course of a due process hearing unless the parent and the school District agree to a change.

Supplementary Aids and Services: Aids, services, program modifications, and/or supports for school personnel provided in general education classes or other education-related settings to enable students with disabilities to be educated with students who are nondisabled.

Transition Planning: Process by which educators, families, and adult service providers work together to advocate and plan a smooth transition from school to integrated adult life. Particular attention is given to ensure opportunities for students to transition to meaningful integrated employment. The term may also be used to describe moving from preschool to elementary school, elementary to middle school and middle to high school.

The document *Commonly Used Terms*, found in the Connecticut State Department, “*A Parent’s Guide to Special Education in Connecticut*,” was incorporated into the Glossary of Terms.

**Common Educational Tests Used for Assessments
for Special Education**

PROCESS	DEFINITION	TESTS WHICH GIVE INFORMATION
Cognitive Intelligence	Ability to reason,-think abstractly and solve problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wechsler tests: WISC-III, WAIS-R, WPPSI-R • Stanford-Binet: Fourth Edition • Differential Ability Scales (DAS)
Verbal Intelligence	Ability to use cognitive processes that rely primarily on verbal language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wechsler: Verbal Scales • Stanford-Binet: FE-Verbal, Comprehension Factor • DAS: Verbal Ability
Non Verbal Intelligence	Ability to use cognitive processes that do not rely primarily on verbal language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wechsler: Performance Scales • Stanford-Binet: FE: Nonverbal Reasoning/Visualization Factor • DAS: Nonverbal Ability • Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC): Nonverbal Scale • Leiter International Performance Scale • Columbia Mental Maturity Scale • Raven's Progressive Matrices

LANGUAGE

PROCESS	DEFINITION	TESTS WHICH GIVE INFORMATION
Receptive Verbal Language	Ability to understand incoming spoken language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wechsler: Verbal Scales • Test of Language Development-2 • (TOLD-2): Listening Composite • Test of Auditory Comprehension of Language-Revised • Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals (CELF-R): Receptive Subtests • Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised
Expressive Verbal Language	Ability to convey ideas and relate information through oral language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wechsler: Verbal Scales • TOLD-2: Speaking Composite • CELF-2: Expressive Subtests • Woodcock-Johnson, Revised-Tests of Cognitive Ability (WJ-R COG): Oral Language Cluster
Receptive Nonverbal Language	Ability to derive meaning from pictures, gestures, and facial expressions and to interpret social situations without verbal clues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wechsler: Picture Completion, Picture Arrangement, Object Assembly • Stanford-Binet: FE-Absurdities • K-AC: Gestalt Closure, Photo Series, Face Recognition • Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude-2 (DTLA-2): Conceptual Matching Observation of behavior
Expressive Nonverbal Language	Ability to convey meaning through gestures, facial expressions and drawings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goodenough-Harris Drawing Test • Kinetic Family Drawing • ITPA: Manual Expression Observations of behavior

AUDITORY SKILLS

PROCESS	DEFINITION	TESTS WHICH GIVE INFORMATION
Auditory Discrimination	Ability to detect subtle likenesses and differences between speech sounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wepman Auditory Discrimination Test-2d Edition • Test of Auditory Perceptual Skills (TAPS): Auditory Word Discrimination • Goldman-Fristoe-Woodcock Test

AUDITORY DISCRIMINATION		
PROCESS	DEFINITION	TESTS WHICH GIVE INFORMATION
Auditory Analysis	Ability to break words into syllables or discrete sound components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WJ-R, Cognitive: Incomplete Words • Slingerland: Test 7, Echolalia • Auditory Analysis Task (plant=p-l-a-n-t)
Auditory Synthesis	Ability to combine supplied sounds or syllables into words (sound blending)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WJ-R, Cognitive: Sound Blending • Mann-Suiter Sound Blending
Auditory Immediate Memory	Ability to retain information just heard for a short period of time (no storage involved)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wechsler: Digit Span • Stanford Binet: FE-Memory for Sentences, Memory for Digits • K-ABC: Number Recall, Word Order • WJ-R, Cognitive: Memory for Sentences, Memory for Words • DTLA-2: Sentence Imitation, Word Sequences, Oral Directions
Auditory Recent Memory	Ability to store and recall recently heard auditory material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slingerland: Tests 6, 8 • Ray Auditory-Verbal Learning Test
Auditory Remote Memory	Ability to store and recall auditory material heard several months or years earlier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wechsler: Information, Similarities, Vocabulary, Comprehension • Stanford-Binet: FE-Vocabulary, Comprehension, Verbal Relations • WJ-R, Achievement: Knowledge Cluster • Peabody Individual Achievement Test-Revised: General Information

VISUAL SKILLS

PROCESS	DEFINITION	TESTS WHICH GIVE INFORMATION
Visual Discrimination	Ability to detect subtle likenesses and differences in visual stimuli such as symbols, pictures, and designs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wechsler: Performance Scale • WJ-R, Cognitive: Visual Matching, Cross Out • Motor Free Visual Perception Test • Slingerland: Test 4 • Test of Visual Perceptual Skills (TVPS): Visual Discrimination
Visual Analysis	Ability to identify the parts of a visual stimulus and to differentiate figure from ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wechsler: Performance Scale • K-ABC: Gestalt Closure, Triangles, Matrix Analogies, Photo Series • Slingerland: Tests 1, 2, 3, 8 • Motor Free Visual Perception Test • Jordan Left-Right Reversal Test (1990 Edition) • Observations of word list and paragraph reading
Visual Analysis/Synthesis	Ability to identify the parts of a visual stimulus and to combine visual elements into a whole	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wechsler: Picture Arrangement, Block Design Object Assembly • K-ABC: Triangles, Photo Series • Raven's Progressive Matrices
Visual Immediate Memory	Ability to retain information just seen for a short period of time (no storage involved)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wechsler: Coding Stanford-Binet: FE-Bead Memory for Objects • K-ABC: Hand Movements, Spatial Memory • WJ-R, Cognitive, Picture Recognition
Visual Recent Memory	Ability to store and recall recently seen visual information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slingerland: Tests 3, 5 • Ray Complex Figure Drawing • Weekly Spelling Tests
Visual Remote Memory	Ability to store and recall visual information seen several months or years earlier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wechsler: Picture Completion, Object Assembly • Achievement Tests: word recognition, oral reading, spelling
Visual-Spatial Orientation	Ability to perceive spatial relationships involving one's own body and the environment. Ability to organize and interpret spatial relationships on a two-dimensional level as in copying, writing, or reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slingerland Tests: 1, 2 • Bender Visual-Motor Gestalt Test • Jordan Left-Right Reversal Test (1990) • Wechsler: Block Design • Right-Left Discrimination Test • Observations of written work, reading, and behavior
Visual Scanning	Ability to investigate visual materials in a systematic, organized way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slingerland: Tests 3, 4, 8 • Motor Free Visual Perception Test • Jordan Left-Right Reversal Test (1990) • Observations of paragraph-reading

MOTOR SKILLS

PROCESS	DEFINITION	TESTS WHICH GIVE INFORMATION
Fine Motor Coordination	Ability to control fine muscle movements, as in writing, drawing and cutting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wechsler: Coding, Mazes • Stanford-Binet: FE-Copying • Bender-Gestalt • Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration (VMI) • Slingerland: Tests 1, 2, 5, 6 • Observations of writing, drawing, and cutting
Fine Motor Coordination-Speech	Ability to coordinate articulatory movement patterns for speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech Exam • Slingerland: Echolalia
Tactile-Kinesthetic Discrimination	Ability to identify and interpret information gained through touch and movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task: Examiner moves child's fingers to form letters or numbers with eyes closed; child identifies
Kinesthetic Memory	Ability to remember information gained through movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task: Examiner teaches a new word through repeated writing; child reproduces letter. • Observations of motor patterns in writing
Gross Motor Coordination	Ability to coordinate large muscle movements as in running, walking, skipping and throwing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruininks-Oseretsky Test of Motor Proficiency • Observation of gross motor activities
Modality Integration	Ability to transfer information from one sensory modality to another. Ability to coordinate two or three modalities in the production of outgoing responses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slingerland • Halstead-Reitan and Reitan-Indiana Neuropsychological Test Batteries • WJ-R, Cognitive: Visual-Auditory Learning • Comparisons of performance on academic tests such as reading, copying, and dictated spelling

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT		
PROCESS	DEFINITION	TESTS WHICH GIVE INFORMATION
Self-Concept and Relationships with Others		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projective Drawing Tests • Apperception Tests (CAT, TAT, Roberts) • Piers-Harris Self Concept Scale • Sentence Completion Tests • Rorschach
Social Maturity and Appropriateness of Behavior		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodcock-Johnson Scales of Independent Behavior (SIB) • Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale • Developmental Profile II • Child Behavior Checklist • Conners Parent and Teacher Rating Scales • Behavior Evaluation Scale-2

ACADEMIC SKILLS AND ACHIEVEMENT

PROCESS	DEFINITION	TESTS WHICH GIVE INFORMATION
Reading and Phonics Skills	Ability to decode unfamiliar words, to recognize familiar words, and to understand written material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT): Reading Composite • Woodcock-Johnson, Revised-Tests of Achievement (WJ-R ACH): Reading Subtests • Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement (K-TE): Reading Composite • Ekwall Reading Test • Informal survey of phonics skills
Spelling skills	Ability to encode words in written form. Use of spelling rules, visual recall and auditory analysis skills in encoding words.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WIAT: Spelling • K-TEA: spelling • Wide Range Achievement Test-3 (WRAT-3): Spelling • Dictated Spelling Tasks
Handwriting Skills	Neatness, spatial organization and knowledge of manuscript or cursive alphabets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WIAT: Written Expression • Test of Written Language-2 (TOWL-2) • Slingerland, Tests 1, 2, 5, 6 • Alphabet writing task • Classroom Writing Samples
Written Language Skills	Ability to organize and relate ideas in written form. Knowledge of written language mechanics skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WIAT: Writing Composite • TOWL-2 • Test of Early Written Language (TEWL) • Test of Written English • WJ-R, Achievement: Written Language Subtests
Mathematics Skills	Ability to perform arithmetic computations and to solve problems involving mathematical concepts and reasoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WIAT-: Mathematics Composite • Key Math-Revised • WJ-R, Achievement: Mathematics Subtests • K-TEA: Mathematics Composite • WRAT-3: Arithmetic

Physical Health and Development		
PROCESS	DEFINITION	TESTS WHICH GIVE INFORMATION
Visual Activity	Keeness of vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snellen Vision Screening • Titmus Test
Auditory Activity	Keeness of hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pure Tome Audiometric Screening • Tympanometry
Health and Developmental History		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Developmental Interview • Neurodevelopmental Exam

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