A Parent's Guide to Special Education

Created by the GO West Contra Costa Special Education Community-Led Committee
Introduction

In education and parenting, you often hear that it takes a village to support a child. As someone who has worked in education for over two decades and has been a parent for just as long, I know how true this is.

This resource, A Parent’s Guide to Special Education, was created by a village of parent and community advocates who have come together to form our Special Education Community-Led Committee (CLC).

Over the course of six months, the SPED CLC met to create the pages that follow. This resource is the culmination of their experiences and expertise and is driven by their unwavering commitment to the students and families of West Contra Costa who need support navigating the special education process.

It is the sincerest hope of our team and the SPED CLC that A Parent’s Guide to Special Education serves as a guide to all those who need it. Even more, we hope that it is a reminder to special education students and families that they are not alone on this journey.

In Community,
The West Contra Costa Special Education Community-Led Committee
# Table of Contents

1. Special Education 101: An Overview  
   - Page 1
2. The Initial IEP Evaluation Process  
   - Page 15
3. On-going Meetings and Evaluations  
   - Page 32
4. Transition Planning  
   - Page 42
5. What to Do When Things Aren't Going Well  
   - Page 56
6. How Does Special Education Work in Charter Schools?  
   - Page 66
7. Resources  
   - Page 76
8. Family Documents  
   - Page 81
   - School Service Providers
   - Meeting Notes
   - Current IEP
   - Previous Assessments
   - Schedules, Report Cards, etc.
   - Nurse Assessments
Chapter One

Special Education 101: An Overview

Special Education refers to a variety of services that can be provided in different ways and in different settings. There’s no “one size fits all” approach to special education. It’s tailored to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Special Education focuses on creating the structures and programming that help children with disabilities learn. This can include a variety of learning environments, accommodations, and modifications.

As the term, Individualized Education Program states, special education is all about the unique set of needs each learner has. The services and supports for one student may be very different from those of another student. It’s all about the unique child and providing the resources they need to attain their goals in school and life.

Table of Contents

1. What is an Individualized Education Program (IEP)? 3
2. Disability Categories 4
3. Free and Appropriate Public Education: Tiers of Services 5
4. Glossary 6
5. Acronyms 10
6. Five Types of Special Education Meetings 11
7. Special Education Responsibility by School Type 12
8. IEP vs 504 Plan 13
9. Transportation 14
What is an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

An Individualized Education Program is also known as an IEP. This is a program developed to ensure that a child with an identified disability who is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives specialized instruction and related services. The IEP is developed by a team of individuals from various educational disciplines, the child with a disability, family members, and/or designated advocates.

Every child who receives special education services must have an IEP. That’s why the process of developing this vital document is incredibly important to educators, administrators, and families alike.

The IEP has two main purposes:

- to set reasonable learning goals for your child
- to state the services and accommodations that the school district or charter school will provide for your child

Your child’s IEP is a legal document and must contain specific information. This includes (but is not limited to):

- **PRESENT LEVELS**: Your child’s present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, describing how your child is currently doing in school and how your child’s disability affects their involvement and progress in the general curriculum.

- **GOALS**: Annual goals for your child, meaning what you and the school team think your child can reasonably accomplish in a year.

- **SERVICES**: The special education and related services to be provided to your child, including supplementary aids and services (such as a communication device).

- **PROGRAM ADJUSTMENTS**: Changes to the child's current program or additional supports provided by school personnel such as modifications to enable your child to fully access the curriculum.

- **TIMING**: When services, accommodations, and modifications will begin, how often they will be provided, where they will be provided, and how long they will last.

- **LEARNING SETTING**: The settings where your child will spend the school day and what extracurricular or other nonacademic activities such as clubs they may participate in.

- **STATE ASSESSMENTS**: How (and if) your child will participate in state and district-wide assessments, including what modifications to tests your child needs.

- **PROGRESS MONITORING**: How school personnel will measure the child’s progress toward the annual goals.

- **ACCOMMODATIONS**: Changes that help a student overcome or work around their disability.

**Key Takeaways**

- IEP stands for Individualized Education Program.

- An IEP lays out the special education instruction, support, and services your child needs to thrive in school.

- IEPs are part of PreK–12 public education.

Learn more at [www.gapublicschools.org](http://www.gapublicschools.org)
Learn more at www.gopublicschoolswwc.org

Disability Categories

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) identifies 13 different disability categories...

... under which 3 to 22 year olds may be eligible for services. To qualify, a child’s school performance must be “adversely affected” by a disability in one of the 13 categories below.

**Multiple Disabilities**
Simultaneous impairments, the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deafblindness.

**Specific Learning Disability (SLD)**
Learning challenges and conditions that affect a child’s ability to read, write, listen, speak, reason, or do math. Some examples of what could fall into this category are brain injuries, dyslexia & dyscalculia. SLD is the most common category under IDEA.

**Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**
ASD is a developmental disability. It involves a wide range of symptoms, but it mainly affects a child’s social and verbal, and non-verbal communication skills. It can also impact behavior and can look different from person to person.

**Speech or Language Impairment**
This category covers difficulties with speech or language. A few examples are stuttering, impaired articulation & language impairment. It also covers language problems that make it hard for kids to understand words or express themselves.

**Deafness**
A hearing impairment that is so severe that a child is unable to process linguistic information through hearing with or without aid, therefore affecting the child’s educational performance.

**Deafblindness**
Simultaneous hearing and visual impairments, this combination causes severe communication and educational needs that cannot be accommodated in programs designed for children with either deafness or blindness.

**Intellectual Disability**
Significantly below average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently (at the same time) with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance.

**Traumatic Brain Injury**
An acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability, psychosocial impairment, or both, affecting a child’s educational performance. May affect cognition, language, memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment, problem-solving, sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities, psychosocial behavior, physical functions, information processing, and speech. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

**Other Health Impairment (OHI)**
This category covers conditions that limit a child’s strength, energy, or alertness. One example is ADHD, which impacts attention and includes the ability to plan ahead, prioritize, stop and start activities, shift from one activity to another activity, and monitor one’s own behavior. OHI covers any eligible disability that does not fall within another category.

**Emotional Disturbance**
Various mental health issues can fall under the “emotional disturbance” category. They may include anxiety disorder, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and depression. (Some of these may also be covered under “Other Health Impairment.”)

**Visual Impairment, Including Blindness**
This category includes an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child’s educational performance. This can include both partial sight impairment as well as complete blindness.

**Hearing Impairment**
This refers to a hearing loss not covered by the definition of deafness. This type of loss can change over time. Being hard of hearing is not the same thing as having trouble with auditory or language processing.

**Orthopedic Impairment**
An impairment that affects a child’s educational performance. It includes impairments caused by a congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures).
Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)  
Tiers of Service

There are many different settings for children who have an IEP. The legal obligation of a school district or charter school is to provide the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) to a student where they can thrive. LRE is one of several vital components in the development of a child’s IEP and plays a critical role, influencing where a child spends his or her time at school, how services are provided, and the relationships the child develops within the school and community. Ultimately, LRE works to keep students in the same classroom as their non-disabled peers as much as possible.

Not all programming is available at all school sites. As you move up the triangle your child may need to travel to a different site to receive necessary services.

As you move up the pyramid from the bottom each step is more restrictive. Students should be placed only as high as they absolutely need to be and work to move downwards if possible.

Learn more at www.gapublicschoolswwcc.org
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>A change in curriculum or instruction that does not substantially modify the requirements of the class or alter the content standards or benchmarks. (Different from Modification)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adapted Physical Education (APE)</td>
<td>A diversified program of developmental activities, games, sports, and rhythms suited to the interests, capabilities, and needs of students with disabilities who may not successfully engage in a regular physical education program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)</td>
<td>Alternative Dispute Resolution is an informal method of settling disputes that may arise during the IEP process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Any systematic method of obtaining information from tests and other sources; used to draw inferences about characteristics of people, objects, or programs. An initial evaluation (or periodic re-evaluation) is to determine whether a child has a disability and what the educational needs are of the child.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistive Technology (AT) Device</td>
<td>Any piece of equipment used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.</td>
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<td>Assistive Technology (AT) Service</td>
<td>Any service that directly assists an eligible individual in selecting, acquiring, or using an assistive technology device.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)</td>
<td>A written improvement plan created for a student based on the outcome of the functional behavior assessment (FBA).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Day</td>
<td>Any day except Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday on which agencies/businesses are authorized or required by law or local governmental to close.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calendar Day</td>
<td>All days are considered calendar days, including weekends &amp; holidays.</td>
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<tr>
<td>California Diagnostic Center (CDC)</td>
<td>California Diagnostic Centers in Fremont, Fresno, and Los Angeles serve northern, central, and southern CA to provide no-cost assessment and educational planning services. Requests for services must be generated by referral from the school district.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compliance Complaint</td>
<td>A formal statement in writing that agreed upon services and supports in an IEP have not been delivered, or that the school district has violated IDEA mandates.</td>
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<td>Conservatorship</td>
<td>A court proceeding in which a judge appoints a responsible person to care for another adult who cannot care for him/herself or his/her finances. The person the Court appoints as conservator may or may not be a relative.</td>
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<tr>
<td>* To learn more go to page 51 of the Guidebook.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>The subject matter that is to be learned, usually described in terms of scope and sequence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum-based Assessment</td>
<td>A methodology in special education in which a child’s progress in the curriculum is measured at frequent intervals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Designated Instruction and Services (DIS)</td>
<td>Services required to assist an individual with disabilities to benefit from special education, including but not limited to: transportation, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language therapy, mental health services, and medical care.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Due Process</td>
<td>In general, a course of legal proceedings according to rules and principles established for enforcement and protection of private rights. Essential components of due process are “notice” and “a meaningful opportunity to be heard.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extended School Day</td>
<td>A provision for a special education student to receive instruction for a period longer than the standard school day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extended School Year (ESY)</td>
<td>A provision for a special education student to receive instruction during ordinary school vacation periods.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitated IEP</td>
<td>A group leadership process in which a trained individual helps keep the IEP discussion focused on your student and the education issues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)</td>
<td>The federal law that regulates the management of student records and disclosure of information from those records, with its own administrative enforcement mechanism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)</td>
<td>Special education and related services are provided to students with disabilities at public expense and under public supervision and direction at no cost to the student’s parents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Functional Analysis Assessment (FAA) OR Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)</td>
<td>An evaluation process to understand the purpose, motivation, and correlates of challenging behavior(s) to develop a positive and appropriate Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), instructional support, and services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Functional Curriculum</td>
<td>Also Life Skills Curriculum. A curriculum focused on practical life skills and usually taught in community-based settings with concrete materials that are a regular part of everyday life.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goals and Objectives</td>
<td>A written component of an IEP: skills the student is expected to reasonably achieve in one year maximum (reviewed and re-evaluated by the IEP team at least annually).</td>
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</table>
| Guardianship                             | Guardianship is when a court orders someone other than the child’s parent to: have custody of the child; or manage the child’s property (called “estate”); or both. It only applies to minors under the age of 18.  
* To learn more go to page 51 of the Guidebook. |
| Inclusion / Inclusive Education           | A belief that every student is entitled to an instructional program that meets his or her individual needs and learning characteristics; a commitment to build and maintain an assured sense of belonging for all students, regardless of strengths or challenges. |
| Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) | An independent evaluation of a student from a qualified person. Parents have the right to ask for and obtain an IEE if they disagree with the results of an assessment conducted by the school district. Any IEE must be considered at the IEP. |
| Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) | Federal law that entitles students with disabilities to special education services. |
| Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) | A written plan for providing early intervention services to an eligible child with a disability (from birth to 3rd birthday) and to the child’s family. |
| Insufficient                             | Not meeting the legal requirement of IDEA by failing to provide the necessary detailed information and evidence to support a Due Process Complaint. |
**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**
A federal mandate stipulating that, to the maximum extent possible, students with disabilities be educated with their non-disabled peers.

**Living Trust**
A Living Trust is a legal tool that allows a person (Trustee) to hold another person’s (Settlor’s) property for the benefit of someone else (Beneficiary). Unlike a testamentary trust, a Living Trust goes into effect during the settlor’s lifetime.
* To learn more go to page 51 of the Guidebook.

**Local Education Area (LEA)**
The local school district.

**Mainstreaming**
This lay term doesn’t appear in the law. It refers to IDEA’s preference for the education of every child in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE); most widely refers to the placement of students with disabilities in general education, rather than segregated, classrooms.

**Mediation**
A voluntary Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process that may be requested PRIOR to filing a Due Process Complaint. It is not a prerequisite to filing.

**Mediation (Formal Due Process)**
A voluntary Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process that may occur AFTER a Due Process Complaint is filed. Office of Administrative Hearing (OAH) provides mediators.

**Modification**
A change in curriculum or instruction that substantially alters the requirements of the class or its content standards or benchmarks. (Different from: Accommodation)

**Office for Civil Rights (OCR)**
An agency of the federal government’s executive branch within the Department of Education that is charged with enforcing a number of civil rights statutes.

**Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO)**
An office within the CA Dept. of Education to advise the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, CDE staff, and the State Board of Education on legal matters to ensure equal, fair, and meaningful access to its employment and program services.

**Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)**
An office within OSERS (see below) charged with assuring that the various states comply with IDEA.

**Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)**
An agency of the federal government’s executive branch within the Department of Education (DOE).

**Parent Training and Information Center (PTI)**
The designated agency that offers workshops and training on special education rights and responsibilities in a parent’s locale.

**Placement**
The unique combination of facilities, personnel, location, or equipment necessary to provide instructional services to meet the goals as specified in the student’s IEP. Placement is a set of services, not a location.
### Power of Attorney
A legal document written to give the authority to act for another person in specified or all legal or financial matters.

### Prior Written Notice (PWN)
A notice supplied to the other party that includes a description of the action proposed or refused by the school district or by the parent.

### Procedural Safeguards and Referral Services (PSRS)
An office of the CA Dept. of Education (CDE) that provides technical assistance and resources about procedural safeguards and educational rights of students with disabilities, from ages 3 up to 22nd birthday. Compliance complaints are filed here.

### Related Services
Transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability.

### Resolution Meeting
A meeting mandated in IDEA 2004 as part of the Due Process Complaint process where parties attempt to resolve a dispute prior to proceeding to a Due Process Hearing.

### School Days
Please refer to “The Initial Special Education Evaluation Timeline” to further understand legal timelines (page 23).

### Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA)
A consortium of school districts, within a geographical service area, is responsible for ensuring that every child eligible for special education receives appropriate services. Each SELPA’s Local Plan, based on Federal and California laws and regulations, describes how special education services are provided.

### Sufficiency
Meeting the legal requirement of IDEA in providing the necessary detailed information and evidence to support a due process complaint.

### Supported Decision Making
It enables people with disabilities to choose supporters to help them make choices to the maximum of their unique abilities without having to involve the court in their personal lives. *To learn more go to page 51 of the Guidebook.*

### Stay Put
The ruling that permits a student to remain in their current placement during any dispute concerning special education services.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronyms</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADA</td>
<td>Americans with Disabilities Act</td>
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<td>ADR</td>
<td>Alternative Dispute Resolution</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALJ</td>
<td>Administrative Law Judge</td>
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<tr>
<td>APE</td>
<td>Adapted Physical Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASD</td>
<td>Autism Spectrum Disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>Assistive Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAC</td>
<td>Community Advisory Committee</td>
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<td>CASE</td>
<td>Community Alliance for Special Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCS</td>
<td>California Children’s Services</td>
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<td>CDE</td>
<td>California Department of Education</td>
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<td>CDC</td>
<td>California Diagnostic Centers</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIS</td>
<td>Designated Instruction and Services</td>
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<td>DOE</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOR</td>
<td>Department of Rehabilitation</td>
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<tr>
<td>DREDF</td>
<td>Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESY</td>
<td>Extended School Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAA</td>
<td>Functional Analysis Assessment</td>
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<td>FAPE</td>
<td>Free Appropriate Public Education</td>
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<td>FERPA</td>
<td>Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act</td>
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<td>IDEA</td>
<td>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEE</td>
<td>Independent Educational Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFSP</td>
<td>Individualized Family Service Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPP</td>
<td>Individual Program Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>Local Education Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>LRE</td>
<td>Least Restrictive Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCLB</td>
<td>No Child Left Behind</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSH</td>
<td>Non-Severely Handicapped</td>
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<tr>
<td>OAH</td>
<td>Office of Administrative Hearings</td>
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<td>OCR</td>
<td>U.S. Office for Civil Rights</td>
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<td>OEO</td>
<td>Office of Equal Opportunity</td>
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<td>OSEP</td>
<td>U.S. Office of Special Education Programs</td>
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<td>OSERS</td>
<td>U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services</td>
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<td>OT</td>
<td>Occupational Therapy</td>
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<td>PAI</td>
<td>Protection and Advocacy, Inc.</td>
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<td>PSRS</td>
<td>Procedural Safeguards and Referral Services</td>
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<td>PT</td>
<td>Physical Therapy</td>
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<td>PTI</td>
<td>Parent Training and Information Center</td>
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<td>PWN</td>
<td>Prior Written Notice</td>
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<td>RSP</td>
<td>Resource Specialist Program</td>
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<td>SDC</td>
<td>Special Day Class</td>
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<td>SELPA</td>
<td>Special Education Local Plan Area</td>
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<td>SERR</td>
<td>Special Education Rights and Responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>SH</td>
<td>Severely Handicapped</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLD</td>
<td>Specific Learning Disability</td>
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<td>SLP</td>
<td>Speech Language Pathologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPED</td>
<td>Special Education</td>
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Learn more at www.gapublicschoolswww.org
### Five Types of Special Education Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>In-Take or Assessment Meeting</td>
<td>Sometimes prior to the start of the initial IEP evaluation process, there may be a short meeting to gather information or to explain the evaluation process. This does not happen in all cases. Sometimes you receive written notification of the assessment plan and send it back signed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Initial IEP Evaluation Meeting</td>
<td>This is the meeting at which the initial Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed and counts as the first Annual IEP meeting. These meetings usually last over an hour and can be quite intense.</td>
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<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Annual IEP Meeting</td>
<td>Each year the complete team meets and the full IEP document is reviewed and goals are set for the next calendar year. The school is required to hold an annual IEP meeting before the end date of the current IEP is reached.</td>
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<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Emergency or Review/Revise IEP Meeting</td>
<td>These meetings are where the team comes together to discuss a specific part of the IEP that doesn’t appear to be properly serving the needs of the student. They are also for when there are urgent reasons to update a child’s IEP or a crisis that necessitates holding an IEP team meeting now.</td>
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<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Triennial or Reevaluation Meeting</td>
<td>Every three years, the district must conduct a reevaluation or file review to determine a child’s ongoing need and eligibility for special education services. This process explores changes in your child’s abilities and strengths and identifies appropriate services going forward.</td>
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Special Education Responsibility
by School Type

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires:

- All children with disabilities are to be given a free appropriate public education (FAPE).
- Education and Related Services must be provided to children up to the age of 22 (In CA).
- Education includes academic as well as self-help and vocational skills.
- Education must be provided in the “Least Restrictive Environment” (LRE).
- Education must be individualized and appropriate to the child’s needs.

The important distinction is that this law applies to public education, not all educational settings. See below for how special education works in different school types.

### Public School District
In a public school district, all federal and state laws apply. They must provide a FAPE to all eligible students.

The best placement for a child may be in a private school. If a public school places a child in a private school with an IEP then the public school is responsible for ensuring that the private school implements the child’s IEP. All provided services are funded by the district.

For children enrolled in private/home school by their parents, the local LEA must:
- Evaluate any student attending a private school for special education services if a private school teacher makes a referral (through Child Find).
- Determine if the student is eligible to receive services.
- Develop an Instructional School Plan (ISP) for the child’s private school.
- Consult with the student’s parents and teachers when developing the ISP.

### Public Charter School
(in-person, online, or virtual)
A public charter school has all the same requirements as a public school district. They must meet all state and federal laws.

Children with disabilities who attend public charter schools have all special education rights available under federal and state law.

See Public School District for more information.

### Religious/Parochial/Private School
IDEA does not apply to individuals placed in private schools by their parents.

Private schools do not receive funding and are not required to provide a free appropriate education or an IEP. They are not required to provide any special education services to children with disabilities.

However, private schools are bound by Section 504 and are responsible for providing modifications, accommodations, and access to educational opportunities (such as a ramp for a child in a wheelchair). They are also required to engage the family if they suspect a disability.

Read more [here](#).

If you have concerns about how your child is doing in school, make sure you understand the programs and services available at your school.

### Home School
(not enrolled in a public or charter school program)
Homeschoolers are classified as private school students and are entitled to federal funds specifically earmarked for private school students. This funding is minimal and how those funds are spent is entirely at the discretion of the local school district.

Read the Religious/Parochial/Private School section for more information.
Both an IEP and a 504 Plan help a student with disabilities get the support they need to succeed in school. They have a number of similarities, but also significant differences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is it</th>
<th>IEP</th>
<th>504 Plan</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides individual special education services for eligible students</td>
<td>Provides student support (accommodations) in the classroom setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Qualifying | To qualify, a child’s school performance must be “adversely affected” by a disability category identified by IDEA | Available to any public-school student with a documented disability that "substantially limits" his/her ability to learn and function in school |

| Ages Served | For school aged-children and youth, aged 3-22 | No age limit |

| Plan Format | A written legal document developed by the IEP Team | There is no standard form for a 504 plan. Most are written, but it's NOT required |

| Goals | Formal written measurable goals, objectives & progress monitoring | There is no scope of goals, it focuses on assistance |

| Modifications | May modify academics based on the student’s abilities | Will not modify the academic program |

| Service Eligibility | Student is eligible to receive services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, etc. | Student is NOT eligible to receive extra services |

| Rights | IDEA has a clearly defined set of procedural safeguards that must be followed to ensure the rights of the parent and child | Does NOT have specific guidelines to protect the rights of the parent and child |

| Funding | State receives special funding for eligible students | State does NOT receive any additional funding for eligible students |

| Timing | Reassessment every 3 years & Reviewed yearly | Reviewed yearly |

| Cost | Accommodations at no cost | Accommodations at no cost |

Don’t Forget: If your child has a condition that adversely impacts his/her education, a well-written, well-implemented IEP or 504 Plan will help ensure that your child gets the support that he/she needs.
In the case of an IEP, special education transportation is defined as a related service. Transportation is required to be provided as a related service if it is required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education. In addition, as required for any special education program, the service must be provided to meet the criteria for a free, appropriate public education.

Now, what does this all mean...

The state has established a series of guidelines around special education transportation. However, at the end of the day, decisions are made at the local LEA level. Each LEA providing special education is required to adopt policies for the programs and services it operates and consistently implement them.

Here is guidance provided by the state for IEP teams to help evaluate transportation eligibility. Local IEP teams take these guidelines and policies adopted by the LEA to make final decisions for individual students.

Transportation Policy in WCCUSD

- If you attend your school of residence (based on your home address) there is generally no transportation provided.
- If you are assigned to a school different from your school of residence, transportation costs or reimbursement for travel may be an option.
- If you choose to attend a school different from your school of residence (i.e. request a transfer) there is generally no transportation provided.

Primary Consideration: Student Needs

The specific needs of the student must be the primary consideration when an IEP team is determining any transportation needs. These may include, but are not limited to:

1. Medical diagnosis and health needs are a consideration when determining whether long bus rides could affect a certain pupil's health (duration, temperature control, need for services, health emergencies); general ability and/or strength to ambulate/wheel; approximate distance from the school or the distance needed to walk or wheel oneself to the school; consideration of pupil needs in inclement or very hot weather, and other weather conditions.
2. Physical accessibility of curbs, sidewalks, streets, and public transportation systems.
3. Consideration of a pupil's capacity to arrive at school on time, avoid getting lost, avoid dangerous traffic situations, and avoid other potentially dangerous or exploitative situations on the way to and from school.
4. Behavioral Intervention Plans specified by the pupil's IEP and consideration of how to implement such plans while a pupil is being transported.
5. Mid-day or other transportation needs as required on a pupil's IEP (for example, occupational or physical therapy or mental health services at another site, community-based classes, etc.) must also be taken into consideration when the IEP team discusses a pupil's placement and transportation needs.
6. Extended school year services, should be another consideration of a pupil’s need for transportation if considered necessary to provide a free appropriate public education as specified in a pupil’s IEP.

Read more here.

- When in doubt, ask your IEP team to show you how their transportation recommendation is supported by local policy.
- If you need transportation, bring evidence that meets the guidelines above to your IEP meeting.
The Initial IEP Evaluation Process
Chapter Two
The Initial IEP Evaluation Process

When school staff or a child’s caregiver suspects that there is a disability impeding a child’s progress in school, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) evaluation is conducted to determine if any services or accommodations would support the child to succeed in school.

After the assessment process, not all children will qualify for an IEP plan. To be eligible they must fall within one of the 13 diagnosis categories. If it is deemed that a student is eligible, the IEP team (parents, the child’s teacher, the special education teacher, other professionals or specialists, and sometimes the child) develops a plan for success.

Table of Contents
1. The Path to an Individualized Education Program (IEP) 17
2. Signs Your Child May Be Struggling in School 18
3. The Special Education Cycle 21
4. IEP Evaluation Request Template 22
5. The Initial Special Education Evaluation Timeline 23
7. IEP Initial Meeting Checklist 25
8. IEP Meeting Planning Tool 26
9. IEP Preview Checklist 27
10. Who is on the IEP Team? 28
11. IEP Accommodations Checklist 29
12. Key Annual Milestones in the IEP Process 30

A Parent’s Guide to Special Education
The Path to an Individualized Education Program (IEP)  
(when all goes smoothly)

The school notifies your family that your child may have an obstacle interfering with their learning.

OR

You notice your child has signs of struggling in school and reach out to initiate a conversation.

After meeting with the school team, the decision is made to move forward with an assessment OR you request in writing a formal assessment for special education. (Note: an SST is optional and not required for assessment eligibility)

You receive an assessment plan to review and sign.

The assessment process begins. You and the teachers complete surveys. Your child is evaluated.

The initial IEP meeting is held. You have the opportunity to share your hopes, goals, and concerns. The team reviews the data from assessments and surveys. Eligibility is determined and an initial plan is created. The meeting feels collaborative and you feel heard.

You receive a final copy of the IEP to review and sign.

IEP services begin and your child takes the first steps forward toward meeting their goals.

You and the IEP team meet annually to review progress and adjust goals.

Learn more at www.gopublicschoolswcc.org
Parents and caregivers have the best insight into their children as they grow and develop. Often family members will notice subtle changes in their child that raise concerns about how they are navigating school. These changes can include shifts in diet, sleep patterns, behavior, or how your child talks about school. Below is a list of some of the shifts in behavior or feedback you may hear that might warrant a follow-up meeting with school staff or a request for evaluation.

### Signs Your Child May Be Struggling in School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drop in Grades</th>
<th>Misbehaves in School</th>
<th>Develops Physical Symptoms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Voices Concerns</td>
<td>Talking About School Becomes Off Limits</td>
<td>Your Child Doesn’t Feel Challenged at School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending Too Much Time on Homework</td>
<td>Your Child Seems Distracted or Disorganized</td>
<td>Changes in Friends or Activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The behaviors named above can have a range of root causes such as transitions in family life, puberty, moving homes or schools, a learning disability, etc. It is vital to understand the core issue to develop the appropriate action plan.

**My child is demonstrating signs of: (check all that apply)**

- [ ] Physical Symptoms
- [ ] Spending Too Much Time on Homework
- [ ] Misbehavior at School
- [ ] Drop in Grades
- [ ] No Longer Wanting to Talk About School
- [ ] Other: _______________________________

- [ ] Not Feeling Challenged at School
- [ ] Distraction or Disorganization
- [ ] Changes in Friends or Activities and/or
- [ ] A teacher has reached out with concerns

If your child is showing several of these signs, schedule a conference with school staff to explore what is interfering with your child’s success in school. Begin with your child’s classroom teacher.

Learn more at [www.gopublicschoolswwcc.org](http://www.gopublicschoolswwcc.org)
Drop in Grades
Dropping grades is a common indicator that your child is struggling. While an occasional poor grade may not be a cause for serious concern, a pattern of low grades—or a significant change in performance—is a sign of a problem.

Sometimes parents assume that bad grades simply mean that their child just isn’t applying themselves or that they did not study hard enough. If your child studied thoroughly and still did poorly on the test or an assignment, it may be a sign of a deeper issue. For example, your child may be struggling with a learning disability and not even know it. By playing an active role in your child’s study habits, you have a chance to evaluate if they are putting in effort and still struggling.

Misbehaves in School
Misbehavior or other shifts in classroom behavior like withdrawal could be a way a child expresses their academic struggle. It could be your child’s way of trying to take attention off the fact they are struggling with their work.

If your child is usually well-behaved and suddenly begins to have behavior problems at school, take a look not only at what is happening in their social world but also at their academic world as well. Parents should not assume discipline will fix the problem. Instead, they should try to determine why their child is struggling and how they can best help.

Develops Physical Symptoms
When children are struggling in school they may develop physical symptoms such as having issues sleeping, experiencing changes in eating patterns or complaining of pain. These symptoms could be the result of worry, especially if they know they aren’t keeping up with their peers, completing school work accurately, or fear they are letting down adults in their lives. Children often don’t have the language to describe the emotions they are feeling and instead describe symptoms in their bodies.

Teacher Voices Concerns
Sometimes a teacher will reach out with observations of your child from their time at school. These conversations can be easy to dismiss, especially if what they are telling you is different from what you see in your child. Even if you see things differently, the way forward is to engage with the teacher and work together as a team—the teacher, your child, and you.

Your child’s teacher is teaching a classroom full of students at the same grade level working on the same material. If your child’s teacher believes that your child is struggling more than other students, pay attention. Work together to develop a plan of action that incorporates the teacher’s suggestions along with things that you know have worked in the past with your child.
Talking About School Becomes Off Limits
If your child has always talked about what’s going on in school and then stops doing so, something could be wrong. It is worth reaching out to your child’s teacher to see if they are seeing changes in behavior or in academic performance. Your child may be having school problems if they are struggling to master the material, experiencing problems with their peers, or suffering from learning difficulties.

Your Child Doesn’t Feel Challenged at School
This major warning sign is one that typically hides in plain sight: when a child complains about being bored with school. In some cases, boredom may be a kind of coping mechanism. This happens when the child cannot understand the material and decides to disengage from it entirely. It is important for parents to discover the source of the boredom and determine if academic support is needed.

Spending Too Much Time on Homework
The amount of homework assigned can vary greatly depending on the teacher’s homework philosophy. It’s important to get a general idea about how much homework your child is normally given so you can monitor your child to see how long assignments are taking. If you notice a pattern of excessive time spent on homework, your child may be encountering school problems and/or struggling to master the subject matter. This might be a sign more help is needed.

Your Child Seems Distracted or Disorganized
If your child is frequently distracted or spending time looking for their materials and trying to keep themselves organized at school or home, they won’t be able to effectively learn. If your child is struggling due to distractions, talk to the teacher to see if there are ways to reduce the stimuli, or ask your child what they’d need to be able to better focus. Distraction can also come from school anxiety, as some kids who are stressed out by schoolwork or other students may choose to mentally check out. It is important to identify the source of the distraction and/or disorganization.

Changes in Friends or Activities
Noticeable shifts in interests/hobbies and/or in friend groups could mean something is amiss at school and needs sorting out. These shifts could also be accompanied by lower grades. This could mean that your child is struggling a bit. Talk with your child to try to identify the root cause of the changes. Reach out to your child’s teacher if more information is needed.
The Special Education Cycle

Three ways to begin a student’s special education evaluation process

1. Screening Through or Referral from School Staff or SST
   or
2. Parent Request in Writing

Once an assessment plan is created by school staff and signed by the family...

- Evaluation to Determine Eligibility
- Eligibility Determined
- Initial Individual Education Plan Created

Once a child is determined to be eligible for special education services...

- Student receives Individualized Education Plan Services
- Annual Review of Goals and Services
- Triennial Evaluation and IEP Review

Begin here at Step #1

Continue to Step #2

Step #3 and Annual Cycle

Learn more at www.gapublicschoolswwcc.org
[School Principal’s Name]  
[School Street Address]  
[School City, State, Zip code]

RE: [Your Child’s Name]  

Dear [School Principal’s Name],

I am writing to request an Individual Education Plan (IEP) assessment for my child [Your Child’s Name], who is [Your Child’s Age] old, and a student at [School’s Name]. [Your Child’s Name] is a student in the [Your Child’s Grade Level or Class Name]. [His or Her] primary instructor is [Primary Instructor or Homeroom Teacher’s Name].

I am very concerned about [Your Child’s Name] ability to successfully achieve an education due to [His or Her] difficulties with [Name The Specific Issues Your Child Is Experiencing At School. Include Academic and Emotional Issues That Are Interfering With His/Her Ability To Maintain Successfully In The Classroom Setting.]

Therefore, [Your Child’s Name] requires this special education evaluation in order to identify possible learning or emotional disabilities that are interfering with [His or Her] ability to achieve up to [His or Her] full potential.

Today, [Date], I am requesting, in writing, a formal evaluation for special education services to determine if [Child’s Name] has a disability interfering with their ability to learn. I know that there is a legal timeline for response (15 days) and assessment (60 days).

I can be reached at: [Give Your Mailing Address and Work, Home, and Mobile Telephone Numbers if Available.] I look forward to speaking with you soon and I appreciate your assistance in this matter.

Thank you,

[INSERT SIGNATURE]

cc: As Many Of The Titles Listed As Applicable To Your Child’s School: Vice Principal, Counselor, Primary Classroom Teacher or Homeroom Teacher, Special Education Director
# The Initial Special Education Evaluation Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal Timeline</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Your Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Before Evaluation Request</strong></td>
<td>Before requesting an evaluation, you may want to do the following:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Meet with your child’s teacher to discuss concerns</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Request an SST Meeting to explore strategies and supports for your</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Engage your child’s pediatrician</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day 1</strong></td>
<td>Submit a written request for evaluation.</td>
<td>Date Written Request Submitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Clock Starts</strong></td>
<td>See the template in this guidebook for guidance on key elements of the</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>request letter.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Within 15 Days</strong></td>
<td>The school team must propose an assessment plan for initial assessment.</td>
<td>Date Assessment Plan Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Within 15 Days</strong></td>
<td>Parent has 15 calendar days after they have received a proposed</td>
<td>Date Signed Assessment Plan Submitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>assessment plan to return the signed Assessment Plan to the school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Within 60 Days</strong></td>
<td>Once the signed Assessment Plan is received by school, all assessments</td>
<td>Date IEP Meeting Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and reports must be completed and the IEP meeting held.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Within a Reasonable Amount of</strong></td>
<td>Once agreed upon and signed, the IEP must be implemented within a</td>
<td>Date IEP Services Started</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td>&quot;reasonable amount of time&quot;.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notes on deadlines</strong></td>
<td>The timelines above are in calendar days.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If a referral is received within 30 days or fewer before the end of</td>
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<td></td>
<td>the school year, then it is due within the first 30 days of the next</td>
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<td></td>
<td>school year.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If a school break is longer than 5 days then the clock pauses. For</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>example over winter break.</td>
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## Resources

- **Request for Assessment Template**
- **Legal Timelines with Education Code Information**

Learn more at [www.gopublicschoolswcc.org](http://www.gopublicschoolswcc.org)
FIVE STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO SET YOUR CHILD UP FOR SUCCESS

The process of qualifying for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) — from identifying your child is struggling in school to the initiation of services — is a long one. Even at its fastest, the journey is more than three months and often even longer. This can feel like an eternity. Here are some things you can do while you are waiting.

FIND A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT

You are not alone. One of the best sources of information for learning about community resources and experiences is by networking with other parents who have children with similar needs. They often provide guidance and insights about available resources. Ask staff at your child’s school and look online for local parent groups that might provide access to information, play spaces, and caregiver support groups.

Explore social media for organizations that serve and support children like yours. Search using hashtags to make these connections.

Look for local parent resource centers like Care (now an FEC, Family Empowerment Center) and the Special Education Liaison in your district.

Care Parent Network: https://www.careparentnetwork.org/

BEGIN THE PROCESS OF CLINICAL EVALUATION (IF APPLICABLE)

Some disabilities are supported in both clinical and educational settings. Examples include ADHD and autism. For these disabilities, there is a medical diagnosis as well as a qualification for an IEP under an educational category. The two processes can happen at the same time. Both take time and offer different types of intervention and support.

The goal of a clinical diagnosis is to determine if any treatments or therapies are needed outside of school and to make sure those treatments will be covered by insurance. The goal of a school evaluation is to determine if a student qualifies for special education services to support learning in the school setting. In some cases, a child may qualify for services in one setting but not the other.

BECOME AN EXPERT

The more you know about your child’s potential diagnosis, the more effective you will be as their advocate. Explore books at your local library. Search online for articles and blogs. Watch videos and interviews. Talk with educators, medical professionals, and other parents. As you gather information, focus on what supports and interventions are possible and effective. These ideas can play a pivotal role in the development of your child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP).

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

When the IEP evaluation process is completed, you will meet with a team of educators and professionals to determine the next steps. The clearer you are on what you want for your child and their future, the more powerful your voice will be. Use our IEP Meeting Planning tool to capture your thoughts.

EXPLORE PRIVATE THERAPY SERVICES

While waiting for potential services provided by the school, you can explore and see if your health insurance may cover speech-language therapy, mental health support, occupational therapies for communication, social, motor, and sensory delays and deficits, and more. You may also choose to engage providers directly who offer clinic-based therapies and pay out-of-pocket.

Learn more at www.gapublicschoolswwwcc.org

Waiting for the Initial IEP Meeting?
### BEFORE THE MEETING
- Review draft IEP - take notes and write down any questions or concerns
- RSVP to the meeting
- Practice difficult conversations in front of the mirror or with a friend
- Make personal arrangements (if needed)
  - Request time off and clear schedule before and after the meeting
  - Set up childcare for your other children
- Create a list of the most important things you want to achieve during the meeting to help maintain focus
- Prepare emotionally for how hard the meeting is going to be. IEP meetings are designed to deeply explore your child’s areas of growth or gaps to success. It can be a very heavy and upsetting conversation.
- Decide on the role of your student ahead of time. Do they come at all? Do they just stay for the beginning to share their story and step out? Do they stay for the entire conversation?
- Have a conversation with your child (if they are old enough to engage):
  - If attending - “Here is what to expect during the meeting…”
  - If not - “This is what will happen during the meeting…”
- If you want to record the meeting, notify the school 24 hours in advance

### DURING THE MEETING
- If needed, is there an Interpreter present? Are all documents translated?
- Have the following documents out and available:
  - List of child’s strengths
  - List of suggested goals and or accommodations
  - List of things you hope to achieve during the meeting
  - Print out of child’s condition/diagnosis from your doctor (if applicable)
- Make sure talk time is balanced. You (and your child if present) should have space to share your information and experiences.
- Make sure all decisions and offers of service are written down in the official notes for the meeting. If it is not written down, the service is not guaranteed.

**Quick Rights - You have the right to:**
- Bring someone with you to the meeting. It can be helpful to have another adult with you to take notes and to hear the conversation should you have questions afterward.
- Stop the meeting if translation services are needed but it is not provided by the school. It is not acceptable to have a student translate the meeting.
- Take the proposed IEP home and read it over before signing. Do not sign anything you don’t agree with and do not feel rushed to sign it during the meeting.
- Get all offered services in writing. If it is not written in the IEP do not expect it to happen.

### AFTER THE MEETING
- Take a moment for yourself to process what happened. How will you take care of yourself? To whom can you vent?
- Complete any required “next steps” (final signatures, submission of necessary documents, etc)
- Review any new documentation and add it to your file or binder
- Before you forget anything, write it down:
  - What went well?
  - What worked vs what didn’t work?
  - Did you address the items on your list of the most important things to cover?
- Request a summary of the meeting to check your understanding of decisions made
- Update your service provider directory
- Have a conversation with your child (if they are old enough to engage):
  - “Here is what happened during the meeting…”
  - “Some things that will be different for you at school are…”
- Monitor the implementation of the IEP

Learn more at www.gopublicschoolswwc.org
### Questions to Think About Prior to the Meeting

**What are your goals for your child in the next year?**

**What are your child’s social and educational strengths?**

**How would you describe your child’s peer relationships?**

**How would you describe your child’s relationships with parents, siblings, and teachers?**

**How would you describe your child’s behavior at home and school? Are there any specific behaviors that interfere with their academic performance?**

**How would you describe your child’s attitude toward school?**

**What are your child’s greatest needs? Are there particular areas where your child needs assistance?**

**What would you like your child’s IEP to address?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are your areas of concern?</th>
<th>What are your dreams for your child’s future?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional/Behavioral</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social/Community Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent Living</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Job Training</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</table>

Learn more at www.gopublicschoolswcc.org
Questions to ask and things to keep in mind as you read over your child’s IEP

☐ Is there a clear IEP start and end date?

☐ Is all the information correct and current?

☐ Can the proposed IEP goals be measured? Learn more about SMART goals on page 37

☐ Do the academic and behavior goals feel attainable?

☐ Does the IEP include:

☐ A list of accommodations or modifications that are needed?

☐ A list of the types of services and the frequency they are provided?

☐ Any other supplemental aids or supports?

☐ Transition needs?

☐ A list of any additional required tests?

☐ Does the IEP specify when and how often you will receive reports on your child’s progress?

☐ Did you have the chance to give input or feedback on the IEP draft?

☐ Were questions you or your child raised addressed?

☐ Was your child involved in the process?

☐ Are you clear on who your child will work with and how to contact them? Be sure to complete your School Service Providers Form on page 84.

☐ Are there any next steps? Who is responsible and when?

Notes and Questions

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Who is on the IEP Team?

**Parents** - One or both parents or legal guardians are considered a necessary part of the team. The school must ensure that the parents are invited; at the very least three attempts must be made and documented, but the meeting will happen even if they are not present.

**District Representative** - (Principal, AP, etc) Someone qualified to provide or supervise the implementation of the IEP must be present. This person should also be authorized to make decisions on behalf of the school district (especially financial decisions) and will be able to ensure that promised services will be provided.

**Gen Ed Teacher** - If your student is participating in general education classes, their teacher should be present. In the event that there is more than one general education teacher, the teacher who is or might be, primarily responsible for implementing the IEP should participate.

**SPED Teacher** - IEP requires that at least one special education teacher/provider be included. This person should be the person who is or might be, responsible for implementing the IEP.

**Student** - When appropriate, the student can be a part of the team. This is especially true in meetings to discuss postsecondary goals and transitional services. At the very least, the school should ensure that the interests of the student are considered.

**Others** - Anyone else who works/knows the student and has important information that should be included in the conversation. If needed, a translator should be present. Meetings can be stopped if one is not present. At the parent's request - an advocate or support person can attend the meeting.

Learn more at www.gopublicschoolswwc.org
**IEP Accommodations Checklist**

**CHILD NAME:** ______________________  **SCHOOL YEAR:** _______________  **GRADE:** ________

Accommodations adjust the expectations of a student’s work while not changing the grade-level content. These options support a student having access to the grade level curriculum to make progress towards high school graduation. Be sure to closely monitor that accommodations are being implemented in all of your child’s classrooms.

Explore the list below of possible accommodations that students could benefit from throughout the school day:

### MATERIALS
- Use of highlighters (highlight critical information)
- Large print
- Needs a copy of notes
- Needs study sheets to organize material
- Allow the use of a calculator, number line, or other tools as appropriate
- Use graph paper to write problems
- Provide “math facts” sheets or charts
- Needs models/sample sheets
- Benefits from the use of manipulative sets
- Needs access to new vocabulary in advance

### ACADEMIC
- Needs written/oral/both instructions
- Reduced difficulty level
- Needs examples/models
- Limit penalizing for errors related to disability
- Needs alternate activities, with the same content
- Benefits from simplified language or reading level
- Group similar problems together
- Provide fewer problems
- Break multiple-step items into smaller steps
- Allow work to be recopied when sloppy

### TIME MANAGEMENT
- Needs visual schedule
- Needs a calendar or journal
- The student should repeat back directions
- Establish timelines for work
- Needs long-term assignment timelines
- Needs transition warning
- Benefits from shorter assignments
- Needs extra cues or prompts
- Directions in small distinct steps
- Needs more time on assignments
- Allow short breaks during/between activities
- Don’t use timed activities

### ENVIRONMENT & SOCIAL SUPPORT
- Needs study skills
- Benefits from individual/small group instruction
- Review and practice in real situations/environments
- Needs to see skills connected to student’s life
- Needs verbal praise
- Needs nonverbal (visual) cues to keep working
- Needs choices
- Benefits from positive reinforcement/Behavior chart
- Preferential seating in the classroom
- Preferential seating in the lunchroom
- Reduce visual distractions
- Allow movement within an assigned area
- Allow the student to stand and work
- Ignore minor movement within an assigned area

### TESTING ADAPTATIONS
- Optional oral responses
- Read test to/with student
- Preview test language
- Extended time
- Short answer vs. open-ended
- Multiple choice vs. short answer
- Modified format (i.e. white space, word bank)
- Shortened questions/limited answer choices
- Taken in a different room/quiet space
- Retest at the teacher’s discretion
- Grades averaged at the teacher’s discretion

### HOME
- Have a second set of materials at home
- Use a home-school communication program
- Have parents preview or review material
- Link learning/behavior activities to family routines

Learn more at www.gopublicschoolswwc.org 29
### Key Annual Milestones in the IEP Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILD NAME: __________________________</th>
<th>SCHOOL YEAR: _______________</th>
<th>GRADE: ________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### QUARTER 1

**August, September, October**

- Does my child have the support he/she needs to start a new year?
- Are IEP accommodations and services in place for the new school year?
- Update your Service Provider Form
- Attend Back to School Night
- Look for progress report
- [ ] ________________

### QUARTER 2

**November, December, January**

- End of semester one (middle + high school)
- Look for report card
- End of trimester one (elementary school)
- Look for report card
- Begin summer program research
- [ ] ________________
- [ ] ________________
- [ ] ________________

### QUARTER 3

**February, March, April**

- Create your plan for state testing
- Attend Open House
- Look for progress report
- End of trimester two (elementary school)
- Look for report card
- [ ] ________________

### QUARTER 4

**May, June, July**

- Prepare transition to new grade/school
- Visit /tour new campus if possible
- End of semester two (middle + high school)
- Look for report card
- End of trimester three (elementary school)
- Look for report card
- [ ] ________________
- [ ] ________________

### Potential Items to Add to the Tracker Above

- IEP Annual Renewal Date - The team must meet to review and update strategies and goals prior to the expiration of the current IEP
- Transition planning from Early Childhood Programming (i.e, Cameron School) to TK or Kindergarten
- Transition planning for middle school
- Transition planning for high school
- Creation of Transition Plan (prior to your child’s 16th birthday)
- Planning of the triennial evaluation and meeting
- Review progress reports on your child’s IEP goals (read the IEP document to confirm the schedule)
- Creation of your child’s graduation plan
- [ ] ________________
On-going Meetings and Evaluations
Chapter Three

Ongoing Meetings and Evaluations

You have a signed initial IEP. Now what?

The completed document is just the beginning of the process. Now begins the cycle of monitoring the implementation of the plan, making adjustments for strategies that are not working, and the annual review process.

This cycle continues as long as your child is eligible for special education services. While some elements will feel very familiar to the initial IEP process. There are some additional elements that you will be navigating for the first time.

In this chapter, explore the various types of meetings and processes that you will navigate in the years to come.

Table of Contents

1. What I Know: A Brainstorming Tool to Prepare for Your Annual IEP 33
2. Preparing for the Annual IEP: Tips for Collecting Work Samples 34
3. What’s Working: Successful Strategies Used at Home 35
4. Questions to Ask Before Your Child’s IEP Annual Review 36
5. Creating SMART IEP Goals: Building a Plan for Success 37
6. IEP Goal Tracker 38
8. A Guide to Triennial Reviews 40
9. Emergency IEP Request Template 41

A Parent’s Guide to Special Education
What I Know:  
A Brainstorming Tool to Prepare for an IEP

1. Summary of progress reports received over the past 12 months since the last IEP

2. Summary of the work samples you are bringing to the IEP

3. Summary of information your child has shared with you about school

4. Reflections from reviewing materials and reports sent prior to the IEP

Learn more at www.gopublicschools-wcc.org
Preparing for the Annual IEP: Tips for Collecting Work Samples

Why collect work samples?
Work Samples act as a snapshot in time that can highlight your child’s strengths and identify areas of weakness. You can learn from both!

Work samples help you make meaning of the reports from teachers and specialists you hear during your annual IEP. They provide evidence of your child’s growth and/or additional support needed.

How often should I collect work?
For samples of schoolwork: At least monthly or as often as you see signs of progress or concern.

For standardized tests and other assessments: Whenever the results are sent home.

You can always collect more samples than you need and then select the most powerful pieces before heading to your IEP meeting.

What types of things should I collect?
It is recommended to collect 3-5 samples per IEP Goal per quarter or trimester.

Examples include:
- Pieces of writing
- Quizzes and tests
- Homework assignments that were particularly strong or challenging
- Google classroom assignments

How can I keep work samples organized?
- Store samples in a binder or a box
- Keep a table of contents page for each goal area
- Make notes about what you observed while your child was completing the work (if work was completed at home)
- For odd-sized work (construction paper, note cards), consider using a 3-hole punched folder or sheet protector
- Take pictures using your phone and store them in a folder in your photos app

Note: progress is based on your child’s IEP goals. Focus on what is identified as success in the IEP document.
Idea identified in the worksheet below can help the IEP team select the appropriate accommodations to support your child in the classroom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies that support your child with their school work</th>
<th>Strategies that support your child with their behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examples: setting timers to monitor progress, talking through answers before writing things down, etc...</td>
<td>Examples: visual reminders of the desired behavior (i.e. voice volume), setting small goals to reach an incentive, etc...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incentives that motivate your child to succeed</th>
<th>Supports you offer your child that contribute to their current success in school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examples: five minutes of free time, technology time, food treats, etc...</td>
<td>Examples: breaking large projects into smaller pieces, supporting organization, reading assignments aloud, etc...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions to Ask Before Your Child’s IEP Annual Review

Request a meeting with your child’s teacher about 3 months prior to your IEP annual review meeting to learn more about your child’s progress. Use this essential information to support your IEP meeting planning. If feedback from your child’s teacher does not match your experience, request a classroom visit. Be sure to schedule in advance per your school’s regulations.

REVIEW YOUR CHILD’S PROGRESS IN ALL AREAS OF SCHOOL LIFE: SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC.

When you review academic progress talk through each subject independently (math, reading, writing, reading comprehension, etc.). How is my child progressing? Where are they aligned with their peers and where are the places more support is needed? Take notes and add them to your IEP brainstorming tool so you can reference this information during the IEP meeting.

ASK YOUR TEACHER FOR YOUR CHILD’S READING LEVEL (WHEN THEY READ BY THEMSELVES AND WHEN THEY ARE LEARNING NEW MATERIAL IN THE CLASSROOM)

Gather the teacher’s verbal reflections on your child’s progress but also ask for all reading assessment data (examples: chapter tests, online reading assessments, and annual testing). If you are unsure what this data means, sit down with your teacher and have them walk you through the information. Ask your child’s teacher where your child was functioning in reading at the start of the year and then the next time it was measured. Where was there improvement? Where did your child go backward? Are there places where there was no progress at all?

INQUIRE ABOUT YOUR CHILD’S ACCOMMODATIONS

Classroom accommodations are written into your IEP document. They are not just suggestions, they are legally required. Are these services and supports being used regularly by all teachers? If so, make a list of accommodations that you feel are useful for your child and making an impact. Enter into the IEP meeting prepared to delete any accommodations that no longer feel useful. If accommodations are not being consistently implemented, come to the meeting prepared to demand the lawful implementation of your child’s IEP and develop a plan for monitoring implementation going forward.

ASK FOR FEEDBACK FROM YOUR CHILD’S SERVICE PROVIDERS

Have service providers been regularly delivering services? How is your child progressing? Are the current services being recommended to continue into the next year? If so, for how long and how often? What goals will be addressed next year and how are they different from the ones that were addressed in the current year? If goals have not been met, it may be time to re-evaluate that goal and either modify it (raise the bar, or lower it) or eliminate that goal altogether.

ASK ABOUT YOUR CHILD FUNCTIONING SOCIALY AND EMOTIONALLY

How are your child’s relationships with adults and peers? How are they managing stress, frustration, conflict, or other social or emotional pressure points? Do the reports from your child’s teacher match the information your child shares with you? Does your child need to join a social skills group? Does your child need individual or group counseling weekly? Biweekly? On an as-need basis? Gain that information from your child’s teacher, and touch base with your school counselor or school administrators.

Learn more at www.gopublicschoolswcc.org
Creating SMART IEP Goals: Building a Plan for Success

The key to a strong and impactful IEP is carefully crafted goals that drive student programming and support. Clear and actionable targets create a shared vision for the team of people who support a student, including parents, school partners, and outside providers.

Use the tool below to assess the goals contained in your IEP plan. Are your goals SMART?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>SPECIFIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WHAT DO I WANT TO ACHIEVE?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be specific about what you want to achieve in the future. Decide on the topic you want to improve and define the goal you want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>MEASURABLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN IT IS ACCOMPLISHED?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assign a target number so you can have a more specific goal of what you want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>ACHIEVABLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HOW CAN THE GOAL BE ACCOMPLISHED?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No matter what you want to achieve, the important thing is to know if you can really do it, otherwise don’t waste your time. It must be clear who is responsible and what the process is for teaching the goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>RELEVANT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DOES THIS SEEM WORTHWHILE?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Your goal must be linked to who you are or want to be later. The lifestyle you want must connect to your present and your future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>TIME BOUND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WHEN CAN I ACCOMPLISH THIS GOAL?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You must define a specific time to achieve your goal. You must define the exact time it will take you to achieve your goal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learn more at www.gopublicschoolswwcc.org
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL #</th>
<th>GOAL DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>WHO IS RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>GOAL MET? Y/N</th>
<th>NEW GOAL OR ONGOING</th>
<th>MULTIYEAR? Y/N</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
IEP Meetings can be emotionally overwhelming and filled with large amounts of new information. In some cases, they can last well over an hour and have 8-10 people in attendance. Below are some ideas to help successfully navigate your IEP meeting.

Get comfortable in the space before the meeting starts
Before you dive into the meeting, get comfortable in the space. Bring water with you and make sure you have access to tissues. Have your paper and pen ready for note-taking. Ask the team to provide an overview of the space, especially where the bathrooms are. Ensure translation is available if needed.

Bring the support you need
You can bring people with you to the IEP meeting for support and additional information. These could include, an advocate, a support person, and/or private outside service providers. It can be very helpful to have another person take notes for you.

You also have the right to record the meeting, but that request needs to be submitted ahead of time. It is best done in writing so there’s a paper trail. If you record, the school team will also record.

Need a break? Take one.
Your parents’ rights state that you have the right to be “an equal partner and participant in the IEP process”. If you are overwhelmed you cannot be that. Pause the meeting if you need to take a moment to breathe and refocus.

Simply say, "I need to take a short break and grab a glass of water. Let’s reconvene the meeting in five to ten minutes.”

If the meeting has exceeded the scheduled time limit or you are just overwhelmed, you can request a second session.
You can request to have a part 2 of the meeting to continue the conversation at a later time. Given how hard scheduling can be to get the entire team together again, the parent can choose to excuse certain members if they have already presented and are not needed for additional questions.

Simply say, "I'm overwhelmed. Can we pause the conversation and find time to meet again?” OR “We’ve come to the end of our time. Let's look at our calendars and find another time to continue the conversation."
WHAT IS A TRIENNIAL IEP?
Every three years, the district must conduct a reevaluation or file review to determine a child’s ongoing need and eligibility for special education services. This process explores changes in your child’s abilities and strengths and identifies appropriate services going forward.

In many ways, a Triennial IEP is very similar to the annual review you have already done several times. Read below for key differences and decision points along the way.

TWO OPTIONS FOR THE TRIENNIAL IEP PROCESS
As you prepare for your triennial review, there are two paths that can be taken. Each has pros and cons. As a parent, you can advocate for one versus the other.

FILE REVIEW
A file review, or records review, involves reading and summarizing salient information from the student’s existing records. This may include: - a child’s cumulative file. - teacher’s working file and data collection from the family and school staff.

Based on the records reviewed, the IEP team makes a determination on eligibility and services going forward.

FULL REEVALUATION
A full reevaluation looks very similar to the initial IEP process that your child went through when they initially qualified for services.

The tests that are administered are determined by your child’s current progress and any concerns that have been raised during the last three years of programming. As a parent, you can advocate for areas to be explored during this time.

WHEN TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A FULL REEVALUATION
There are two moments in your child’s K-12 educational journey where a full reevaluation during the triennial IEP is crucial.

1. The triennial closest to the leap to middle school. The learning environment is significantly different in elementary versus secondary school. This is an important moment to make appropriate adjustments to your child’s IEP plan.
2. The last triennial review before exiting the K-12 system (might be prior to high school graduation or before age 22). Having a full current evaluation is incredibly important as your child looks to access services and supports beyond secondary school.

RIGHT OF APPEAL
If you select File Review as the preferred option for your triennial review and the outcomes are not what you hoped they would be, the process does not end there. You can move on to the next option of a full reevaluation and then an independent educational evaluation if needed.

Learn more at www.gopublicschoolswcc.org
Dear [Special Education Administrator's Name],

I am requesting that an IEP meeting be held as soon as possible and in no more than 30 days as required by law. I am requesting a meeting because: [Describe concerns]

The best way to reach me is by: [email/phone]. The best times to reach me are: [________]. I prefer that the meeting be held: [remotely/in person]. I will be bringing the following people with me to the meeting: [_______________________________]

___I will need an interpreter in the following language who understands special education so I can participate effectively in the meeting.

Please schedule enough time for the meeting so that we can discuss my concerns and get input from all team members. I expect that all team members will be present for the duration of the meeting. It is essential that a special education administrator attend the meeting who can commit resources on behalf of the local educational agency (LEA).

I do NOT agree to excuse required team members for any portion of the meeting UNLESS the District provides reasonable justification and receives my approval prior to the meeting so that I can decide if that person’s input is needed or if the meeting should be rescheduled.

Thank you for your prompt action regarding this request. I look forward to meeting with the IEP team within 30 calendar days from your receipt of this request so that we can move forward together to adjust/improve the IEP as needed and address my concerns.

Thank you,

[INSERT SIGNATURE]

c: As Many Of The Titles Listed As Applicable To Your Child’s School: Vice Principal, Counselor, Primary Classroom Teacher or Homeroom Teacher, Special Education Director

Source: https://dredf.org/special-education/sample-letters/sample-letter-request-iep-team-meeting-for-a-student-who-has-iep/
Transition Planning
For students receiving special education services, the word “transition” means a set of activities intended to help them transition to life after high school. These activities take into consideration individual student needs, preferences, and interests. The process of preparing for life after high school begins as early as 12 depending on the topic you are addressing. In this chapter, you will explore the key elements of transition planning.

Note: there are smaller transition moments in a child’s educational journey like the shift from preschool to kindergarten or from elementary school to secondary school. These moments require a conversation during your annual IEP to make any necessary adjustments to services and/or accommodations.

**Table of Contents**

1. What Can the Transition Journey Look Like? 44
2. High School Diploma vs Certificate of Completion 45
3. WCCUSD High School Pathways: Opening Doors to Career Opportunities 46
4. Student Transition Assessment 47
5. Educational Rights 49
6. Legal Milestones on the Path to Transition 50
7. Teenagers Survival Checklist 52
Children enter the world of special education at all different ages. They can begin as early as three years old and anytime after. Similarly, when a child exits the system also varies. Learn more below.

A student completes their initial special education evaluation, qualifies for services, and an IEP is developed. This begins the cycle of service delivery, annual review, and triennial assessment.

Prior to your child’s 16th birthday, there should be a transition meeting. This meeting looks ahead to the end of their time in the Pre-K-12 system. During this meeting, you will partner with the IEP team to develop a plan to optimize development in academic and life skills.

There are different options for a child to exit the Pre-K-12 system.

- If your child is eligible to earn a high school diploma, they exit when they complete the high school requirements. This can be up to age 22.

- If your child is working to earn their certificate of completion, they can exit at age 18
  OR
  they can continue to receive services, and exit at age 22.

No matter the exit pathway your family selects, there are many options for your child going forward. The path may just take a little longer and look a little different.
# High School Diploma vs Certificate of Completion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do these terms mean?</th>
<th>High School Diploma</th>
<th>Certificate of Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A student has met all the requirements for graduation established by the district or charter they attend. This can take additional time up to age 22.</td>
<td></td>
<td>A student has completed high school but didn’t meet all the requirements for graduation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| What are the graduation requirements? | In WCCUSD, a student must complete 225 credits with a grade of D- or higher. Required classes are:  - History/Social Science (4 Years)  - English (4 Years)  - Math (3 Years)  - Laboratory Science (2 Years)  - Foreign Language (1 Year)  - Visual/Performing Arts (1 Year)  - Physical Education (1 year)  - Elective and Academy Courses (55 units) For charter requirements, please talk to your school counselor. | Students who are eligible to receive a Certificate of Completion have three paths. 1. The individual has completed a prescribed course of study approved by the governing board of the school district in which the individual attended and identified in their IEP. 2. The individual has satisfactorily met their IEP goals and objectives during high school as determined by the IEP team. 3. The individual has satisfactorily attended high school, participated in the instruction as prescribed in their IEP, and has met the objectives of the statement of transition services. |

| Will my child be able to participate in graduation? | Yes | Yes. Per the CDE, students with disabilities must be allowed to participate in any graduation ceremonies and scheduled activities related to graduation. |

| When is the decision made? | If you are considering the diploma path, you should decide before your child begins high school. | If you are considering the certificate of completion path, you can decide at your transition meeting at age 16. |

| Accomodations Allowed? | Yes | Yes |

| Modifications Allowed? | Depends on the degree of modification. Be sure to ask during your IEP. | Yes |

| Accepted by 4-year Colleges? | Yes | Depends on the college. Be sure to ask when considering a school. |

| Eligible for College Financial Aid? | Yes, if eligibility requirements are met. | No for federal aid. Potential yes for Cal Grant C |

| Accepted by Employers? | Yes | Maybe. It depends on the employer and the job qualifications. |

When considering the diploma track vs certificate of completion track think about your child’s future plans to identify which path is the best fit. If in doubt, default to the diploma track as it is easier to pivot to a certificate of completion than the other way around. You have time to decide. Don’t feel pressured to select a path early in your child’s educational journey.

Learn more at [www.gopublicschools.wcc.org](http://www.gopublicschools.wcc.org)
Throughout WCCUSD high schools there are a variety of programs that seek to offer students exposure to career and technical training. Some even include certifications that enable young people to go right into the workforce upon completion of their time in high school.

If you see a pathway that your child would enjoy that is not at your school of residence, you can request a transfer based on academy preference.

**Health Sciences**

These programs provide students with career-related skills in health. Some students earn certifications allowing them to enter the workforce directly out of high school.

- De Anza High School
- Pinole Valley High School
- Richmond High School

**Arts, Media, and Entertainment**

Explore different types of digital media, journalism, and photography.

- El Cerrito High School
- Richmond High School

**Engineering & Architecture**

Explore topics like coding, robotics, civil engineering, and architecture.

- Pinole Valley High School
- Richmond High School

**Welding**

Gain experience in a variety of skills including metalworking, safety, arc welding, and CNC technology.

- Kennedy High School

**Law, Public Safety, and Emergency Response**

Prepare for various government, law, and enforcement-related careers.

- De Anza High School
- Pinole Valley High School
- Richmond High School

**Choosing a Program**

You can explore all the college and career pathways to find a fit for your child. Many offer skills and certifications that prepare students to enter the workforce after high school. Reach out to the school to learn more.

Learn more at www.gopublicschoolswwcc.org
After high school goals to help in the development of the Transition IEP

What kind of education/training do you see yourself doing after graduation?

- University/College (4 yr)
- Community College (2 yr)
- Technical/Vocational School
- Military Service
- On-the-Job training (at current or future job)
- Training in a center based day program
- Vocational Rehabilitation /Training
- Other: ____________________________________

In what areas or classes do you feel you need more help or instruction in order to help you meet your educational/professional goals once you complete high school?

- ____________________________________
- ____________________________________
- ____________________________________
- ____________________________________
- ____________________________________

What kind of employment/work do you see yourself doing after graduation?

- Full time work while in college
- Part time work while in college
- Full time work - no support
- Part time work - no support
- Full time in area of interest after college
- Part time in area of interest after college
- Full time supported employment
- Part time supported employment
- Other: ________________

Do you feel you have the necessary skills to live on your own?

- Yes (or will obtain support from family)
- No, I feel I need help/instruction/support in the following areas:
  - Handling money/budget - cash
  - Using a debit and/or credit card
  - Household management (laundry, cooking)
  - Shopping for food, clothing, other necessary items
  - Personal hygiene
  - Ordering at restaurants
  - Personal safety (stranger awareness, personal information)
  - Community safety (street crossing, staying with group/adult)
  - Transportation (drivers education information; public bus, transit, app service, family, etc)
  - Other: ________________________________
Where do you hope to live after high school and/or as an adult?

- in house/condo
- in apartment
- with family
- Military Base
- Dorm
- In house/condo - supported
- In an apartment - supported
- Group Home
- Other: ____________________________

What type of community activities do you hope to participate in as a young adult?

(sports leagues, volunteer activities, arts classes, faith community, etc...)

- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________
- ______________________________________

Check any of the following services that you feel would be helpful in achieving your educational or professional goals. Your school should support you in identifying interests through surveys and other supports.

**Career Planning**

- College visits
- Career/technical school visits
- Visit military recruiting office
- Job/career visit or shadow program
- Job/career exploration, research, and interest/ability assessment
- Other: ____________________________

**Academic/Career/Job Instruction (HS)**

- Advance Placement course work
- Career tech course work
- Career/job skills course & practice
  (writing resume, filling out job application, social skills, interviewing)
- Independent living skill development
  (money, budgeting, household management, hygiene, transportation, self-advocacy, etc)
- Job/career exploration, research, and interest/ability assessment

**Work and Community Experiences**

- In-school work experiences
- On-the-job training/apprenticeship/internship
- Community volunteer work experience
- Community paid work experience
- Other: ____________________________

Who is in your circle of support?

**Emotional Supporter**

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

**Advocate**

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

Learn more at www.gopublicschools.wcc.org
It may be necessary for a parent or guardian to continue to have decision-making authority after a child has reached 18. There are numerous different ways that a parent or other legal appointee can retain the right to make educational decisions on behalf of a student. These included:

- Power of Attorney (POA)
- Guardianship
- Supported Decision-Making
- Conservatorship

See page 50 for more details on each of these options.

To navigate these processes, you may need to consult with an attorney.
At different stages in your child’s development, you may find that you are no longer allowed to manage your child’s money, access their health records, or make important medical or educational decisions. There are also important transitions in the special education process that must be highlighted. In some cases, it may be appropriate to consider the following.

12

A minor who is 12 years of age or older may consent to medical care that may include: counseling, contraceptives, and other services. Parents will no longer have full access to the minor’s medical record.

You can sign up for proxy access, you may request a Parental Access Form from your medical service provider. If you already have access to your child’s account, your access will automatically change from full proxy access to teen proxy access upon the child’s 12th birthday.

Legal Adulthood + Educational Rights

In the US, the age at which one is considered a legal adult is typically 18. As an adult one can legally work, participate in contracts, vote, marry, give sexual consent, manage all health care decisions, and join the military. At age 18, educational decision-making authority transfers from the parent to the student.

These rights are granted regardless of an individual’s capacity to exercise them unless they have been determined incompetent under California law.

What happens when a child reaches this age and is not ready to make adult decisions? There are a few legal options you should be aware of to support your child into adulthood. Learn more on the next page

Sample Letter

16

In partnership with the IEP team, a transition plan must be created by your child’s 16th birthday. This plan outlines the path to exiting the Pre-K through 12th grade system.

When planning for transition, some programs and services have extensive waiting lists. With lists two years long in some cases, it is important to start early and identify potential supports needed when your child completes high school.

18

IHSS and SSI Benefits

Disabled children may be eligible for In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS). This program will help pay for services provided so the eligible child can remain safely in their own home.

The types of services which can be authorized through IHSS are housecleaning, meal preparation, laundry, grocery shopping, personal care services, accompaniment to medical appointments, and protective supervision.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is the only source of federal income support targeted to families caring for children with disabilities. - It reaches only the lowest-income and most severely impaired children. These families face higher costs, and more demands on their time, and therefore have more needs.

21

Turning 21 means more than being able to drink legally. It also means your child is a full legal adult. If you live outside of California, many states terminate Pre K-12 services at this time.

In California, a student with an IEP may receive services until age 22.

In WCCUSD:

- If your child is working towards a high school diploma - once they have earned their diploma, services are stopped.
- If your child is working towards a high school Certificate of Completion, they can continue to receive services until age 22.
- Be sure to get a “summary of performance” as your child exits to share with providers going forward.

If your child turns 22 BEFORE December:

They will exit the program that calendar year (at the winter break) and do NOT qualify for summer program that school year.

If your child turns 22 AFTER December:

They will exit the program in June & are eligible for ESY program ending in July.

Learn more at www.gopublicschoolswwc.org
Legal Terms and Important Documents

If your child needs additional support making legal, health, financial, and/or educational decisions once they have reached adulthood, there are numerous options to partner with them along the way. It is recommended that parents select the least restrictive option that works to keep their child safe but also ensure as much independence as possible.

**Conservatorship**
A court proceeding during which a judge appoints a responsible person to care for another adult who cannot care for him/herself or his/her finances. Usually, the parents (sometimes others) petition the court to say that their family member with a disability who is over 18 should not be able to make important decisions about their lives. A conservatorship includes spending money, health care, where to live, whom to date, and even with whom to have sexual relationships.

It is important to note, the court chooses whom to appoint as conservator (the decision maker). This may mean a parent or someone else. While the conservator can recommend a future conservator (if they are unable to continue), ultimately the court may appoint anyone.

The conservatorship process can be very expensive. You can save money by working with a paralegal. The process usually takes around three months.

**Supported Decision-Making**
Supported Decision-Making empowers people with disabilities to choose trusted advisors as supporters to help them make informed decisions. There is no need to involve the court or hire a lawyer; which eliminates fees. This can be very informal or you may choose to have written formal documents in case of an emergency. This can be a great opportunity to expand the circle of support to other family and non-family members; making sure there is a plan set once the parent is no longer alive.

To learn more about both Conservatorship and Supported Decision-Making visit:
https://disabilityvoicesunited.org/

Samples of Supported Decision-Making letters:

**Guardianship**
A legal guardian is a person who has been given the legal authority to care for the personal interests of another person who has been found to be fully or partially incapable of providing these necessities for themself. Personal interests include educational matters.

**Power Of Attorney**
A power of attorney is a written authorization to represent or act on another’s behalf on some legal matters. This is something the student and family can do voluntarily if the student agrees that they want the parents to continue to make decisions on educational matters.

The document allows one person to appoint another person to act on their behalf concerning finance, real estate, business, and more. May be critical to have in the event of unforeseen circumstances; for example, if you suddenly become ill or are involved in a serious accident, having one in place will allow your appointed person to manage your affairs until you are better.

**Living Trust**
A living trust is used in estate planning and set up by someone during their lifetime. It designates a trustee and provides explicit directions for the distribution of assets after the death of the grantor. The trustee manages assets in a trust according to the beneficiaries’ best interests. Many individuals prefer a living trust to a will because a living trust bypasses the probate process.
Teenager Survival Checklist

SELF CARE
Can your teenager:
- clean a small cut/wound?
- apply simple bandages?
- recognize symptoms of cold/flu?
- recognize the cause of certain pains?
- treat a minor burn?
- know when to go to the doctor or call 911?
- take simple medication?
- identify a minor infection?
- know how often to groom? (shower, wash hair, brush teeth, etc)
- understands Minor Consent Laws?
- knows & understands the biology of sex?
- understands their own sexuality?
- accepts responsibility for their sexual choices?
- understand birth control?
- understands sexual hygiene?
- know when/where to seek for professional advice?
- feels comfortable discussing problems with you?

PREPARING MEALS
Can your teenager:
- cook a meal?
- recognize balanced food groups?
- prepare a balanced diet for a day?
- prepare a balanced diet for a week?
- recognize if foods are bad, expired or spoiled?
- set the table?
- follow a recipe?
- use and recognize measuring tools? (teaspoon, cup, oz, etc)
- clean up after meals? (wash dishes, clean stove, etc)
- operate small kitchen appliances? (toaster, blender, etc)
- operate big kitchen appliances? (oven, dish washer, etc)
- select fresh fruits & vegetables?
- understand perishable & non perishable food?
- use sharp objects? (knife, kitchen scissors, etc)
- know how to handle hot kitchen items?
- be responsible for feeding someone else?

Learn more at www.gopublicschoolsweo.org
### Teenager Survival Checklist

**HOME SKILLS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>SOME</th>
<th>USUALLY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hang a picture?</td>
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<td>Paint a room?</td>
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<td>Mow the yard?</td>
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<td>Set a thermostat?</td>
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<td>Use insecticides safely?</td>
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<td>Replace a light bulb?</td>
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<td>Clean the house? (dust, make the bed, etc)</td>
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<td>Clean and disinfect a bathroom?</td>
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<td>Sort, fold, &amp; put away clothes?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operate small household appliances? (vacuum, iron, etc)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operate big household appliances? (washer, dryer, etc)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Know how to contact a maintenance person if needed?</td>
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<td>Recognize and use tools? (hammer, screwdriver, etc)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stay home alone?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Care for younger siblings?</td>
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<td>Care and be responsible for a small pet?</td>
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**TECHNOLOGY**

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<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>SOME</th>
<th>USUALLY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Use a smart phone/mobile device?</td>
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<td>Navigate the web safely?</td>
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<td>Memorized their phone number?</td>
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<td>Call 911?</td>
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<td>Use a texting app?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Download an app?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use social media safely?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understands that some apps have hidden charges?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Know their phone plan limits and restrictions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understands the dangers in sexting?</td>
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<td>Has a working email account?</td>
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<td>Create/send an email?</td>
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<td>Use a computer?</td>
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<td>Knows not to share passwords?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create, store and remember passwords?</td>
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<td>Understands internet safety?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knows how to recognize safe, reliable websites?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognize fake news?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Teenager Survival Checklist

**GETTING AROUND**

Can your teenager:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>SOME</th>
<th>USUALLY</th>
<th>ALWAYS</th>
<th>UNKNOWN</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>do a short walk around your neighborhood?</td>
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<td>name their home address?</td>
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<tr>
<td>use a navigation app?</td>
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<td>recognize and respect road signs?</td>
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<tr>
<td>ask for directions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>use public transportation? (bus, BART, etc)</td>
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<tr>
<td>use a transportation app? (Uber, Lyft, etc)</td>
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<td>drive a car safely?</td>
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<tr>
<td>pump gasoline to their car?</td>
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<td>has a drivers license?</td>
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<td>knows how to check the tire pressure?</td>
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<tr>
<td>change a tire?</td>
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<tr>
<td>get to and from school safely?</td>
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<td>knows car insurance is needed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>knows when &amp; how to renew his license?</td>
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<tr>
<td>can interact with strangers?</td>
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<tr>
<td>knows who to call if non-emergency help is needed?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**FINANCIAL NEEDS**

Can your teenager:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>SOME</th>
<th>USUALLY</th>
<th>ALWAYS</th>
<th>UNKNOWN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>recognize different coins?</td>
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<tr>
<td>recognize different bills?</td>
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<td>make change for a dollar or more?</td>
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<td>pay monthly bills?</td>
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<tr>
<td>open and manage a checking/savings account?</td>
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<tr>
<td>use a debit card?</td>
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<tr>
<td>read and understand a bank account?</td>
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<tr>
<td>understands overdraft?</td>
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<tr>
<td>understand income tax forms?</td>
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<tr>
<td>use credit card?</td>
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<tr>
<td>understands debt and the collection process?</td>
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<tr>
<td>understands a credit score?</td>
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<tr>
<td>knows how to ask for a loan and the consequences?</td>
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</table>
Teenager Survival Checklist

**JOB READINESS SKILLS**

Can your teenager:

- add? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- subtract? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- multiply? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- divide? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- read a book? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- read directions on a medicine bottle? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- read and follow directions on household items? (detergent, insecticide etc) __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- apply for a job? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- complete an application form? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- write a resume? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- write a cover letter? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- participate in an interview? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- knows how to dress for an interview? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- know how to use employment sites? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- complete hiring paperwork? (w-9) __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- knows their personal information? (full name, birthday, ssn, etc) __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- knows how to fill out a W-4 employment form? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __

**SHOPPING**

Can your teenager:

- create a shopping list? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- buy a week’s supply of healthy food choices? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- buy within a budget? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- compare prices? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- understand and take advantage of “on sale” items? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- check for quality of an item? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- know to save receipts? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- understands how to return items? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- figure and understand percentages on sale items? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- know how to buy toiletries? (razor, shampoo, etc) __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- knows and is comfortable buying female products? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
- knows how to find and read the expiration date on products? __ NO __ SOME __ USUALLY ALWAYS __ UNKNOWN __
What To Do When Things Aren't Going Well
Chapter Five
What To Do When Things Aren't Going Well

The special education process is a long, technical, complicated one. In some instances, things go smoothly and there is little need for support outside of your child’s IEP team. However, in some cases, there is a need for escalation.

There are many steps you can take from a simple meeting with your child’s case manager all the way up to a hearing with a judge and everything in between. In this chapter, you will explore options available to you to resolve concerns that arise.

Table of Contents

1. I Need Help: What Support Do WCCUSD and Local Community Agencies Offer? 58
2. How Do I Escalate a Concern? 59
3. WCCUSD Alternative Dispute Resolution 60
4. Mediation 61
5. Written State Complaints 62
6. Right to Request a Hearing 64
You are not alone! Throughout West Contra Costa there is a variety of resources and supports. Some are offered by WCCUSD. Others are provided by local community agencies. Explore the information below to see if an option feels right for you.

**Parent Support Groups**

Parenting children with special needs can feel challenging and even overwhelming. If you are in need of support and would like to connect with others while navigating the world of special needs and special education, the following list of support groups may be able to help.

**Local Parent Support Groups:**

Please click on the links provided for more information including how to access via Zoom.

- R.A.I.S.E. Parent-to-Parent Support Group for Caregivers in Need of Resources and Support
- Black Parents Raising Exceptional People Special Needs Support Group
- West County Support Group for Parents and Caregivers of Children with Special Needs
- Coffee With Ken: Informational Hour on Transition Services
- Care Parent Network list of current Parent Support Groups via Zoom

**WCCUSD Resource Parents**

A Resource Parent can provide support and answer your specific questions. They can also guide you as you navigate the education process for your child. Resource Parents have extensive experience with specific disabilities and services, and they will direct you to the right person for your situation.

Support from Resource Parents is strictly confidential.

**How do I contact a resource parent?**

- Contact Resource Parents at (510)307-4634 or (510)307-4669
- Email your concerns to jbishop@wccusd.net
- Fill out an intake form found here: English / Español

**Alternative Dispute Resolution**

If you are unable to reach an agreement with your child’s IEP team, inform them that you are requesting Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). Contact the West Contra Costa Unified School District Special Education Department at (510) 307-4630.
How Do I Escalate a Concern?

It is always ideal to work collaboratively with the local school site team and resolve any concerns or complaints that arise at that level. However, there may be a time when you need to seek out support or investigation from an external source. Here are options for resolution and a form to complete to know whom to go to and when.

Reasons to escalate a concern

The steps below should be used when an issue cannot be resolved in any less formal way. Typically, mediation or another dispute resolution option should not be requested until after you have disagreed with the decision made by the IEP team on the issue in question. If an issue has not yet been brought to the IEP team, start there.

Below are some types of disagreements that may be cause for dispute resolution:

- Need for more/different special education services or related services
- Concerns about how your child’s services are being delivered
- Classroom or school placement
- Compensatory services
- Eligibility for special education services
- The outcome of a manifestation determination review
- Assignment of a student to a particular teacher or service provider
- Assignment of a student to a particular school building, if that does not involve a change of placement
- Assignment of case management to other personnel

Need help? Here’s where to start.

Still need help? Time to start the dispute resolution process.

Learn more at www.gapublicschoolswwcc.org

59
Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) offered by WCCUSD

What is ADR?
Alternative Dispute Resolution is an informal method of settling disputes that may arise during the IEP process.

What are the components of Alternative Dispute Resolution?

ADR Intake:
The SELPA staff is available to listen to your concerns, help you identify key issues, provide information that may assist in resolving concerns, and explain the ADR process and options available to you.

Early and Local Conferencing:
SELPA staff as well as trained Resource Parents are available to offer suggestions and assist parents in resolving concerns in a timely manner.

Facilitated IEP Meeting:
A formal IEP meeting led by a neutral facilitator. The process enables the IEP team to focus on the IEP content and the student, honor time commitments and the IEP process, build relationships, and work toward a collaborative resolution.

Dispute Resolution Session:
A session that brings the parents and the district together to reach a mutually satisfying agreement with the guidance of a trained, impartial mediator. The mediator will help the parties try to find a solution that is acceptable to both sides. The parties decide whether or not the dispute is settled. The specifics of the agreement are put in writing and signed by all parties to signify the commitment of all parties to uphold the resolution.

If an agreement is not reached, either party can file for Due Process.

How Alternative Dispute Resolution Can Benefit You

More Satisfying
ADR uses neutral intervention and support to help parties build collaborative relationships. It allows parties to control and shape their own agreements.

No Cost
ADR options are provided at no cost. As opposed to Due Process, it does not involve the use of attorneys.

Fast and Efficient
Resolution through the ADR process is much faster than the 45-day timeline for Due Process.

Confidential
All participants are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding what is agreed upon through ADR.

"Our priority is helping families and schools resolve conflicts, preserve relationships, and reach agreements in the most collaborative and efficient way possible."

ADR Frequently Asked Questions:

How much does it cost?
ADR is provided at no cost to you.

Are Resolution Sessions or Mediation a mandatory part of ADR?
No. Local ADR sessions are voluntary and based on both parties wanting to reach a fair and equitable agreement. Parents and districts are free to withdraw from the process.

Do I need to bring an attorney or an advocate, or can I speak to someone who supports the process?
While you can bring anyone to the meeting, WCCUSD is happy to provide support within the district to help you with the ADR process. The Special Education Parent Liaison and Resource Parents who are trained in the ADR process can be reached by calling (510) 307-4669.

Information on this page comes directly from a WCCUSD brochure. Visit https://www.wccusd.net/Page/11212 to learn more.
Mediation

What is special education mediation?
Special education mediation is a process in which a mediator helps to resolve a dispute between a parent and school district personnel over a child’s special education program. A mediator is a neutral person who will help the participants arrive at a mutually satisfactory agreement.

What does it cost?
The mediator is paid by the state education agency, so there is no cost to either the school district or the parents.

When can I request mediation?
Parents may request mediation at any time to attempt to resolve a dispute. Typically, mediation is attempted prior to the filing of a due process petition, but it can be requested following the filing of due process. The state education agency is required to establish and implement procedures for mediation.

Do I have to do mediation?
Mediation is a voluntary process in which the parent and the LEA agree to have confidential discussions with a qualified and impartial individual with the goal to resolve disputes alleged in a state filed complaint. If the parties reach agreement on a resolution, the parties will enter into a legally binding agreement that documents the resolution. The parent and LEA may agree in writing to extend the complaint timeline so they can participate in mediation.

What happens after you request mediation?
After you fill out and send in your request for mediation you will get a letter in the mail or by email. This letter will tell you who your mediator is and when and where the mediation will take place. The mediation will be scheduled for as soon as possible at a location that is convenient to both parties.

On the day of mediation, the parties will get together with the mediator and talk about their concerns. Any discussion during mediation is confidential and cannot be discussed outside of the mediation. You may be required to sign something before the mediation begins saying that you will keep the information discussed at mediation confidential. The only things that are not confidential at mediation are:
- The agreement you and the school make, or
- Any disclosure that the child was abused or neglected. This would have to be reported to DHHS.

What happens if you reach an agreement during mediation?
If you reach an agreement during mediation, congratulations! This means that your case has been settled and there will be no further action with the Department of Education. The agreement will be written down and signed by the parent and the school representative. This agreement is what is called binding. That means that whatever both parties have agreed to, has to be done. Otherwise, the party who did not do what the agreement requires can be taken to court or have a complaint filed against them with the Department of Education.

Who makes the decision during a mediation?
A parent may participate in mediation with the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) or request a hearing with the OAH, seeking a decision by an Administrative Law Judge.

I would like mediation. How do I request it?
A request for mediation must be sent to the CDE via US mail, fax, or email. A request for mediation form (PDF) can be accessed on the CDE Quality Assurance web page. If you have any questions related to requesting a mediation for a complaint filed, please contact either the investigator assigned to your case provided the case is opened, or the Complaint Support Unit, at 1-800-926-0648.

It is important to note that both parties (parent and school district) must agree to mediation. In addition, the parent and public agency may agree in writing to extend the complaint timeline so they can participate in mediation.

Learn more at www.gapublicschools.wcc.org
Written State Complaint

The CDE encourages parents or other individuals to work collaboratively with the local educational agencies (LEAs) to resolve differences at the earliest possible point of disagreement. Despite best efforts, sometimes there is a need to have an additional investigation into an issue and this is where the state can play a role. The California Department of Education’s (CDE) role is to be a neutral fact-finder and to promptly resolve complaints. CDE does not act as an advocate for either party.

The Role of the CDE
- Reviews the complaint and determine if all the required components are addressed, including contacting the LEA and complainant
- Adheres to timelines
- Sends investigation report copies as appropriate
- Provides technical assistance to LEAs for corrective actions
- Reconsiders investigation reports when requested and according to the state law
- Retains all documents in accordance with CDE policy

What is a written state complaint?
A written signed complaint is a formal request to the CDE to investigate allegations in which the complainant believes the student’s school district or charter school has violated federal or state special education law or regulation. Complaints may concern one student or a group of students.

A common reason for this type of complaint is when the complainant believes the school district is not providing the services included in the child’s individualized education program (IEP).

What information must be included in a special education state complaint?
Written state complaints must include the following details:
- A statement that a public agency (including the name of the LEA) has not followed a requirement of federal or state special education law (this is called the allegation)
- The supporting facts on which the statement is based (information that supports his/her belief that a violation has occurred)
- The signature and contact information for the person or organization filing the complaint

If the complaint concerns a specific child, the following information must also be included:
- The child’s name and address
- The name of the child’s school
- In the case of a homeless child or youth, contact information for the student
- A description of how the alleged violation affected the student (i.e. the nature of the problem to the student), including facts relating to the problem
- A proposed resolution of the problem to the extent known and available to the complainant at the time the complaint is filed with the CDE

Who may file a complaint?
Anyone, including parents, students, teachers, and agency representatives may file complaints. The person filing a complaint is the complainant. The complaint must meet requirements as explained in law and summarized in this document.

Is there a time limit for submitting a complaint to the CDE?
Complaints must allege a violation that occurred not more than one year prior to the date that the complaint is received.

Where is a complaint filed?
You may email your complaint request to speceducation@cde.ca.gov
You may also fax your complaint to: 916-327-3704
California Department of Education Special Education Division
Complaint Resolution Unit
1430 N Street, Suite 2401
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901

Learn more at www.gopublicschoolswwc.org
What happens after I file a written state complaint?

1. The request is screened to ensure all the required information has been provided and an investigator is assigned. They look to ensure that all required information is complete and within the correct timeframe. If anything is missing or clarification is needed, the CDE will reach out to the complainant.

2. Once the allegations are confirmed and the required information is obtained, both the complainant and the local education agency will receive a notification letter indicating the allegations to be investigated. The CDE will also provide a courtesy copy of the complaint request to the LEA. The CDE encourages cooperative, collaborative relationships by making available voluntary mediation of complaints. (Please see the chapter section on mediation).

3. The LEA will be given an opportunity to respond to the complaint. The investigator will inform the LEA of the alleged violations and request the LEA to submit a response with materials addressing the allegations and/or any related materials the LEA wishes the CDE to consider within a prescribed time period.

CAUTION: If either the LEA or the complainant does not fully cooperate with the CDE investigation, a ruling may be made in favor of the other party.

4. The investigation is based on a gathering of facts about the allegation(s) through:
   - Communication to confirm the allegation(s) and obtain clarification or additional information and facts, from both the complainant and district specific to the allegations
   - Review of documents submitted by both parties
   - Interviews arranged with school staff, if necessary
   - A visit to the school may occur if the CDE decides it is necessary

   Although not a comprehensive list, the following are examples of what may be reviewed:
   - Service logs and schedules
   - Assessment documents
   - IEPs
   - IEP team meeting minutes
   - Prior written notices
   - Settlement Agreements

5. The investigator shall review all relevant documents and information gathered and determine whether the LEA has violated a requirement of federal or state special education law and provide a written decision referred to as the complaint investigation report.

What is a written state complaint investigation report?

The purpose of the state complaint investigation report is to provide a written decision that addresses each alleged violation of special education law. The report includes:

- Allegation summary (the problem you allege)
- General investigation procedures (how CDE made its decision of compliance or noncompliance)
- Applicable law and regulation
- Findings of Fact
- Conclusions (compliance or noncompliance)
- Corrective actions and timelines for completion, if applicable

The CDE sends copies of the investigation report to the complainant, the LEA, and the parent, if different from the complainant.

What if there is noncompliance?

If the report finds noncompliance, it will include corrective actions and the CDE may require the school district to:

- Conduct further assessments
- Submit plans outlining proposals to correct violations and prevent future ones
- Initiate personnel training in the areas of violations
- Provide compensatory education or reimbursement
- Review and/or revise procedures and practices
- Participate in monitoring and reporting activities
- Convene an IEP meeting

The outcome of the written state complaint is a final decision, which must include “corrective actions” that are required to address the needs of the student or group of students involved in the complaint and appropriate future provision of services for all children with disabilities, if the district is found out of compliance.

What if I disagree with the report?

California offers a reconsideration process for written state complaint decisions. As explained at the end of the investigation report, either party (complainant or public agency) may request reconsideration. The reconsideration process steps are:

- Send your reconsideration request no later than 30 days from the date appearing on the investigation report
- Email your request to speceducation@cde.ca.gov or fax the request to 916-327-8878

Identify the reason(s) for your request:
1. Findings are insufficient to reach a conclusion of law
2. Findings of fact are not supported by substantial evidence
3. Conclusion(s) are inconsistent with the law
4. Corrective action(s) fail to provide a proper remedy

Findings are insufficient to reach a conclusion of law

Finding(s) of fact are not supported by substantial evidence

Conclusion(s) are inconsistent with the law

Corrective action(s) fail to provide a proper remedy

Learn more at www.gopublicschoolswwcc.org
What is the “right to request a hearing”?  
You have the right to request a hearing if you disagree with the school district about the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of your child or the provision of a free and appropriate public education. The hearing (often referred to as a “fair hearing” or an “administrative hearing”) is conducted by the state; your child may attend the hearing with you. If your case goes to a hearing in front of a judge, you have the right to:

- be accompanied by an attorney or other expert;
- present, confront, cross-examine, and compel the attendance of witnesses;
- receive a written or electronic record of the hearing;
- prohibit the introduction of evidence that has not been disclosed at least 5 days before the hearing;
- receive written or electronic findings of fact and a decision no more than 45 days after the school has received the hearing request; and
- receive reasonable attorney fees if you are the prevailing party.

Mediation is also available in special education cases. You may request mediation instead of a hearing and you may make your request at any point in the hearing process. If you decide to participate in mediation, you will have the opportunity to meet with school district representatives in the presence of a trained mediator. The mediator can help you resolve the disagreement instead of going in front of a judge for a hearing, which can take longer and cost more money.

To learn more about your hearing rights and the hearing process, including the option for mediation, visit the website of the Special Education Division of the Office of Administrative Hearings at https://www.dgs.ca.gov/OAH/Case-Types/Special-Education.

**Free or Low-Cost Special Education Attorneys Providing Services in Northern California**  
The lawyers listed below were found on the CA Dept. of General Services website. GO WCC has no personal relationship with these attorneys and is not endorsing their services. This list can serve as a starting point when looking for legal advice and support.

- **Kathleen Aberegg**  
  Law Office of Kathleen Aberegg  
  1034 Emerald Bay Road, Number 226  
  South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150  
  Phone: 415-370-4924  
  Email: kaalawoffice@att.net  
  Website: www.stanfordiep.com  
  Ages Served: All Age Groups

- **Jennifer Chang**  
  Law Office of Jennifer S. Chang  
  915 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1775  
  Los Angeles, CA 90017  
  Phone: 323-931-5270  
  Email: Jennifer@jenchanglaw.com  
  Website: www.educationrightsattorney.com  
  Ages Served: All Age Groups

- **Robin Miller**  
  Law Office of Robin Miller  
  1791 Solano Avenue, Number E-3  
  Berkeley, CA 94707  
  Phone: 510-859-3290  
  Email: robin@robinmillerlaw.com  
  Website: www.robinmillerlaw.com  
  Ages Served: All Age Groups

- **Natashe Washington**  
  Law Offices of Natashe Washington, P.C.  
  725 Washington Street, Suite 300  
  Oakland, CA 94607  
  Phone: 510-394-4356  
  Email: legal@natashe washington.com  
  Website: www.natashe washington.com  
  Ages Served: Preschool, Elementary, and Secondary School

- **Youth and Education Law Project - Mills Legal Clinic**  
  Contact: William Koski, Director  
  Stanford Law School  
  559 Nathan Abbott Way  
  Stanford, CA 94305  
  Phone: 650-724-1900  
  Fax: 650-724-4426  
  Email: bkoski@law.stanford.edu  
  Website: https://law.stanford.edu/youth-and-education-law-project/  
  Ages Served: Preschool, Elementary, and Secondary School

- **Forrest & Becker Law Group, APC**  
  Contact: Matthew Becker, Partner  
  6518 Lonetree Boulevard,  
  Number 1059  
  Rocklin, California 95765  
  Phone: 916-873-7478  
  Email: matthew@fbfirm.org  
  Website: www.fbfirm.org  
  Ages Served: Elementary and Secondary School and 18+
What is Bullying?

California Law defines bullying as “any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct” committed by a student(s) directed towards another student(s). Bullying acts or conduct can include written communication, electronic acts, sexual harassment, hate violence, harassment, threats, and intimidation. Different forms of bullying are:

- **Verbal bullying:** taunting, teasing, name-calling, and threatening
- **Physical bullying:** hitting, tripping, kicking, spitting, and pushing
- **Social bullying:** spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, demanding money or property, or intimidation
- **Cyberbullying:** electronic acts including the use of texting, social media websites such as Facebook or YouTube, and email to humiliate targets.

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- **Cyberbullying:** electronic acts including the use of texting, social media websites such as Facebook or YouTube, and email to humiliate targets.

What is Disability Harassment?

The Department of Education Office of Civil Rights has stated that disability harassment is conduct that creates a hostile environment that limits people with disabilities from participating in or benefiting from school activities or services. Disability harassment, unlike bullying, may also include conduct that is not directed at a specific target, is not motivated by the intent to cause harm, and involves isolated incidents. However, bullying can be disability harassment if the bullying is on the basis of disability and/or targets people with disabilities.

What to do?

Help your child learn how to seek out help when they feel hurt or see another child being bullied. Be prepared to intervene if necessary.

Here are a few actions you can take:

- If your child is reluctant to report bullying, go with them to talk to a teacher or school administrator
- Ask about the school’s policy on bullying and their plan to support children who are bullied
- Document instances of bullying and keep records
- Stay on top of the situation by following up with the school to see what actions are being taken
- If the situation continues or escalates, bring it up at your next IEP meeting or request an emergency meeting
- In extreme cases, the police can become involved

The U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights has stated that disability harassment is a form of discrimination that violates Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

California law requires school districts to adopt policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying in school.

How can parents tell if their child is being bullied?

Pay attention to the child and any changes in behavior, mood, or appearance such as:

- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Dropping grades and academic performance
- Avoiding school, truancy, tardiness or otherwise expressing dislike of school.
- Evidence of physical altercations or injury, such as cuts, bruises, or torn clothing.
- Depression, anxiety, loneliness, or low self-esteem.

Sometimes students with disabilities are not aware that they are being bullied, so it is important for parents to communicate with their children, asking them about their relationships with their peers.

Learn more:

Bullying & Disability Harassment of Students with Disabilities

https://www.stopbullying.gov/
Special Education in Charter Schools
Chapter Six
How does special education work in charter schools

All charter schools are responsible to make a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) available to all students with disabilities. This legal obligation applies to ALL public schools under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Charter schools are public schools; therefore, they hold the same responsibility.

It’s against the law for charter schools to turn away students because of their special education needs. They cannot choose not to enroll a child because they have an IEP or a 504 plan. They also cannot discourage children with disabilities from attending or applying by saying it’s not a “good fit.”

Many children with learning differences are at charter schools. That includes a quarter of a million students who get services, according to the National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools.

Table of Contents
1. Who Provides Services in a Charter School? 68
2. What is a SELPA and What Does This Mean for Charters? 69
3. Charter School Special Education Administrator Directory 70
4. Is Special Education Different in Public Charter vs Direct-run Schools? 71
5. Transferring an IEP: How To Move Your IEP Document Between Districts/School Systems 72
6. Comparing Two IEPs 73
7. Choosing the Right Setting for Your Child 74
8. Qualities of a High-Quality Special Education Program 75
Who Provides Services in a Charter School?

The answer to this question is not cut and dry. There are different paths depending on how the school is legally configured.

Option #1
The charter school is considered to be an independent Local Education Agency (LEA).

When a school is its own LEA, under state law, that charter school bears the exact same legal requirements for providing special education services as any other LEA (or district).

This means that children are served by charter school staff or contractors, evaluated by a school site team, and provided services in alignment with the charter school standard. The charter school plays a key role in hiring and evaluating staff.

Option #2
The charter school is considered part of an existing LEA.

In this case, the LEA (or District) retains most or all of the responsibility for special education in the charter school. The charter school is considered a school within that LEA and is responsible for following LEA policy.

This means that children are served by district staff, evaluated by a district team, and provided services in alignment with the district standard.

The charter must work with the district to ensure that students are appropriately identified for special education, support service delivery, and implement and monitor the Individualized Education Program of each eligible student.

Option #3
The charter school is part of a larger network of charter schools that together create an LEA.

When a school is part of a larger network or schools, that collective network bears the exact same legal requirements for providing special education services as any other LEA (or district). The evaluation process or location of services may not be at your specific site but rather somewhere else in the family of schools.

This means that children are served by charter network staff or contractors, evaluated by a charter network team, and provided services in alignment with the charter network standards. The charter network plays a key role in hiring and evaluating staff.

Option #4
The charter school is an independent LEA but contracts with a local district LEA for services for special education students.

In some cases, a charter school is an independent LEA but has the opportunity to contract with a local district for special education services. In these cases, the district retains most or all of the responsibility for special education in the charter school. The charter school is considered a school within that LEA and is responsible for following LEA policy.

This means that children are served by district staff, evaluated by a district team, and provided services in alignment with the district standard.

The school must work with the district to ensure that students are appropriately identified for special education, support service delivery, and implement and monitor the Individualized Education Program of each eligible student.

Learn more at www.gopublicschoolswwcc.org
What is a SELPA and What Does This Mean for Charters?

**What is a SELPA?**

Beginning in 1977, all school districts and county school offices were mandated to form consortiums in geographical regions of sufficient size and scope to provide for all special education service needs of children residing within the region's boundaries. Each region, Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA), develops a local plan describing how it will provide special education services.

Large school districts are often a SELPA all to themselves. This is the case with WCCUSD. Smaller school districts combine their efforts to create a unified SELPA to adequately serve their students. This is the case with the Contra Costa SELPA. This SELPA includes 16 Local Education Agencies (LEAs): Acalanes, Antioch, Brentwood, Byron, Canyon, John Swett, Knightsen, Lafayette, Liberty, Martinez, Moraga, Oakley, Orinda, Pittsburg, Walnut Creek, and the Contra Costa County Office of Education. Together they work to ensure that appropriate programs and services are available for students with disabilities under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004).

**What are SELPAs responsible for?**

SELPAs are expected to champion the belief that all students can learn and that special needs students must be guaranteed equal opportunity to realize their dreams and ambitions, SELPAs facilitate high-quality educational programs and services for special needs students and training for parents and educators. The SELPA collaborates with county agencies and school districts to develop and maintain healthy and enriching environments in which special needs students and families can live and succeed.

The role of a SELPA administrator is to ensure that:
- All individuals with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.
- All regular education resources are considered and, where appropriate, utilized on a local or regional basis to meet the needs of students with disabilities.
- A system exists at the regional level for the identification, assessment, and placement of disabled students.
- A viable system for public education is functioning in the community, with broad participation and interaction involving parents and other agencies serving children and young adults.
- An annual compliance monitoring system was implemented, that continues to assure non-compliant items that have been identified through Self Reviews, Verification Reviews, Focused Monitoring or Complaints have and continue to be rectified.

**How do SELPAs work in charter schools?**

As charter schools began to enter the California landscape, they faced challenges in joining a traditional SELPA. SELPAs were either not allowed or could not allow charter school LEAs to become SELPA members. To address this challenge, the State Board of Education requested the California Department of Education review SELPA options to ensure students with disabilities receive Free and Appropriate Public Education.

Two options were created. The first is that the charter partners with their local school district for services and therefore joins the SELPA that the district is a part of OR a charter is its own LEA and provides its own special education services and joins a charter-only SELPA.

**What are charter-only SELPAs?**

For charters that are their own LEA and provide their own special education services, they can join a SELPA that specifically serves only charter schools.

Currently, there are five charter-only SELPAs in California: El Dorado Charter SELPA, Fresno County Charter SELPA, Los Angeles County Charter SELPA, Desert Mountain Charter SELPA, and Sonoma County Charter SELPA.

A charter can join any one of these SELPAs, even if they are not close by geographically.

Learn more at www.gopublicschoolswcc.org
All schools were contacted to gather information. Schools without data did not respond.
Is Special Education Different in Public Charter vs District-run Schools?

Public Charter and District-run schools all have the same legal obligation to serve students with special needs. All federal and state laws apply to both settings.

No two schools are alike, even if they are in the same system. As we explore special education within WCCUSD, we see a large range of diversity in styles of instruction, seniority of staff, commitment to inclusion, and more. Therefore it is hard to make statements about global differences. The best thing you can do is visit each school you are considering to see their programming in action.

With all this in mind, here are some differences worth considering when exploring a public charter vs a district-run school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Charter Reflections from LD Online</th>
<th>District-run</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pros</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cons</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Charters tend to have flexibility with curriculum and instructional methods.</td>
<td>• Larger districts have an established infrastructure that is designed to serve a wide range of learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• This can create classrooms more conducive to inclusion.</td>
<td>• Across the district portfolio of schools, hubs can be created to bring high-quality services to learners who share similar instructional needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Start-up charters provide educators and parents with an opportunity to develop a fully inclusive program from the ground up. Therefore, charters are more likely to serve children in a fully inclusive setting</td>
<td>• Districts have a larger budget to work with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Charters often offer numerous opportunities for parental involvement. This can reduce isolation for families and create more opportunities for special needs children to engage with their peers.</td>
<td>• Enrollment of students with disabilities - Some data suggests that charter schools do not enroll special education students at the same rate as their surrounding district-run schools. There are also stories of students being “counseled out” who have higher needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cons</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pros</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The legal identity of charter schools - Read “Who provides services in a charter school?” in this guide to learn more.</td>
<td>• Larger districts tend to be less flexible in terms of curriculum and style of instruction. This can slow innovation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Special education infrastructure - When a new charter opens they do not always have plans for how to support the range of needs that their future students may have. This lack of systems and structures can impact the quality of service delivery.</td>
<td>• The relative newness of charters - Charters are relatively new and may lack the depth of staff and programming to properly serve all special needs students. Additionally, charters tend to spend less money on special education, and authorizers often cite insufficient funding for special education as an ongoing challenge.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Learn more at www.gopublicschoolswcc.org
There may come a time when it is necessary to switch your child’s school. This may mean moving to a different school within your current district/system or maybe moving across the country. There are key things to know about the process.

Under the federal special education law, all public schools (district and charter) must provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for children with disabilities. But not every school provides special education services in the same way. The rules for eligibility and delivering services to students can vary.

Here are steps to take when transferring school settings.
1. Notify your current and future school district of your plans in writing. The sooner the special education teams know about your plans the better. This will allow for a timely transfer of records and key information.

2. Request and review your child’s school records. When changing schools, your child’s education records will be sent to the new school. Be sure you know what information is contained in these records and correct any inaccuracies before they get transferred to the new site.

3. Engage the new district or school to understand how they will proceed with your child’s IEP. If your child already has an IEP and you move to another school district or charter school within the same state, your child’s new school has a choice. It can either accept your child’s current IEP or develop a new one. To develop a new IEP, the school district has to go through the standard IEP process including a full evaluation.

4. Talk to the new district about any pending special education services. If your child was in the process of being evaluated when you moved, make sure the new school district knows that. You can also request an evaluation from your new district if the process hasn’t yet begun. It is ideal to wrap up any outstanding evaluations before transferring.

5. Identify the new district’s IEP coordinator and introduce yourself. Every public school district has a staff member who coordinates IEPs. Check the school website for the coordinator’s name and contact information. If you can’t find it, ask the principal.

Write a letter to the coordinator, describing your child’s strengths and hobbies, as well as services that have worked in the past. Be sure to mention activities your child enjoys, like science club, choir, or a sport.

Six school switching scenarios and what happens to your child’s IEP

Scenario #1: Switching schools within the school district
When you move schools within the school district, your child’s IEP stays in place. An IEP is a legally binding program created by you and the local school district. Since you didn’t move out of the district, the IEP doesn’t change. However, the people who provide related services will likely be different.

Scenario #2: Switching to another school district in the same state
When you move to another school district in the same state, your child’s new school needs to provide what’s known as “comparable services.” That means the school must provide the same type of services at the same frequency as what’s in your child’s current IEP. The services may not be exactly the same, but they must be similar.

Scenario #3: Switching to a school district in another state
When you move to another state, your child may face different criteria around eligibility for special education services. Your child’s new school must decide if your child qualifies under the state’s rules. That may require a new evaluation. If your child is found eligible, the school will develop a new IEP. While the new school is evaluating your child, it must continue to provide comparable services.

Scenario #4: Switching to a private school (or out-of-district placement)
Private schools don’t have to provide IEPs. If you decide on your own to move your child from a public to a private school, the IEP won’t follow you. Your child may be able to get a service plan from the school district where the private school is located. However, this type of plan won’t offer as many services as a standard IEP.

Scenario #5: Switching schools for a military transfer

Scenario #6: Switching schools as a foster child
To learn more about scenarios 5 and 6, visit Understood.org.

Takeaways
• Comparable services stay in place until the new school adopts your child’s current IEP as it is or develops a new one.
• If you transfer to another school district or charter school in or out of state, your child may need a new IEP.
Comparing Two IEPs

When your child moves from one school to another, outside of your current school district or system, the new school may elect to offer a new IEP plan. Here is a tool to compare your existing plan and the new offer.

### Current Active IEP

**Special Education Eligibility Category**
- Has your child’s qualifying category changed?

**Service Offerings**
- What services are being offered to your child and with what frequency?

**Inclusion Timing**
- How often will your child be in a mainstream classroom?

**Accommodations**
- What accommodations are being offered?

**Modifications**
- What modifications are being offered?

**Goal Targets**
- Are there any shifts in your child’s annual goals?

### Proposed New IEP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example: Individual Counseling</th>
<th>Example: Group Counseling</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: 30 min each week</td>
<td>Example: 30 min each month</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Don’t Forget**
- Comparable services stay in place until the new school either adopts your child’s current IEP as is, or develops a new one.
- To develop a new IEP, the school district has to go through the standard IEP process including a full evaluation.

Learn more at www.gopublicschoolswwcc.org
Choosing the Right Setting for Your Child

Each school has a unique approach to teaching and learning. It is these differences that allow all children to find the best fit somewhere. The question is, how do you find the best setting for your child?

Below are a set of characteristics to think about when exploring a school for your child.

**Style of Instruction**

**Direct Instruction**
This is the most traditional style of teaching where students learn directly from their teacher. Some examples are lectures, questioning, explicit teaching, and demonstrations.

**Indirect Instruction**
This style is mainly learner-driven with the teacher becoming a resource to students. Some examples of indirect instruction are problem-solving, case studies, and class discussions.

**Experiential Learning**
This style is learner-focused and leverages activities to guide learning. Some examples of experiential learning are field trips, simulations, experiments, games, and role-playing.

**Independent Study**
This option involves students studying on their own under the guidance or supervision of a teacher. Students often work on their own, setting their own pace. Therefore they need to be self-starters. Examples include essay research and writing, computer-driven instruction, journals, and packaged learning modules.

**Interactive Instruction**
This relies heavily on discussion and sharing with a lot of peer interaction. Successful learners in this style require observation, listening, interpersonal and intervention skills. Interactive instruction allows for a range of groupings and methods, such as debates, role-playing, simulations, brainstorming, peer learning, discussion, and cooperative learning.

**Timing**

**Traditional Secondary Schedule**
Classes are generally 45 minutes per day and students rotate between 6-8 classes depending on the school. In this setting your child will navigate a large number of transitions throughout the day, needing to organize input from many different teachers and peer groupings.

**Block Schedule**
In a block schedule setting, students need to stay in class for longer blocks of learning. Classes can last 90+ minutes. This option allows for fewer topics per day, but deeper learning as they only navigate 3-4 classes. In some schools (like El Cerrito High School) students complete a year-long class in just one semester. This fast-paced setting can be difficult for learners who need more time to process.

**Setting**

**Self-Contained Classroom**
Here a child has one primary teacher throughout the majority of the school day for all core academic subjects. This setting can allow for deeper relationship development and fewer transitions.

**Departmentalized Teaching**
In a departmentalized school, students rotate through teachers based on subject matter. This can be found even in the elementary setting. Here teachers teach 1-2 areas of expertise and students move between instructors. Students navigate numerous transitions throughout the day.

**Opportunities for Enrichment**

**Arts, Athletics, Clubs, and Other Supports**
Does your child have strengths outside of traditional academic subjects? Is there some part of their school experience where they can lean into these strengths?

Access to high-quality enrichment can have a positive impact on a student’s overall academic success.

When considering a school, think about what instructional style, timing, and setting best fit your child. What enrichments pique their interests? Don’t be afraid to ask all your questions, as the setting and learning environment are essential to student success.
Qualities of a High-Quality Special Education Program

Many schools and districts offer special education programming but not all have the same quality. It can be very hard to assess the quality of the offerings at schools you are considering for your child.

We turn to WestEd to identify the main categories and essential features of a high-quality special education program.

**STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERTISE**
1. Highly qualified staff
2. Expert knowledge of policies and regulations
3. Staff-wide expertise in social-emotional and behavioral needs
4. High-quality professional learning

**EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES & LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**
5. Student access to the general curriculum
6. Positive learning environment
7. Student Engagement
8. Family support and engagement

**EFFECTIVE EDUCATION PRACTICES**
9. Data-driven decision-making
10. Effective secondary transition
11. Culturally competent practice
12. Effective early childhood transition from part C to part B

**TEAMWORK AND COLLABORATION**
13. Authentic team approach
14. Creativity

**SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**
15. Community partnerships (e.g., with child- and family-serving agencies, and businesses)
16. Adequate funding of special education programs

Explore the rubric created by WestEd to learn more about each category. They offer details on what constitutes a program that is meeting, exceeding, and failing to meet standards. See below for one example from the rubric.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Features</th>
<th>Examples from a program demonstrating the highest standard</th>
<th>Examples from a program demonstrating an acceptable standard</th>
<th>Examples from a program demonstrating an unacceptable standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Staff-wide expertise in social-emotional and behavioral needs</td>
<td>• Staff and administration receive specialized training in how to respond to mental health issues, including how to respond in non-academic settings and/or during out-of-school time. • Specialized instructional support personnel are present to facilitate the delivery of instruction and support.</td>
<td>• Administration and school staff are aware of connections between mental health, physical health, and school success, and they work to address the needs of students. • Supports include academic, social-emotional, and behavioral health.</td>
<td>• Supporting student mental health is the responsibility of staff according to their respective role (e.g., school psychologist, school counselor, school nurse, social worker). • Strategies are not aligned to support physical health and mental health.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resources
## Resources

### Transition & Adult Day Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>URL</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Think College</strong></td>
<td><a href="https://thinkcollege.net/">thinkcollege.net</a></td>
<td>Think College is dedicated to developing, expanding, and improving research and practice in inclusive higher education for students with intellectual disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>College to Career (C2C) Program</strong></td>
<td><a href="https://alameda.edu/students/c2c/">click</a></td>
<td>The College to Career (C2C) program at the College of Alameda is housed within the Student Accessibility Services (SAS) department. C2C is a three-year program for students with intellectual disabilities who are consumers of the California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>West Contra Costa Adult Education</strong></td>
<td><a href="https://www.wccadulteducation.com/">click</a></td>
<td>WCCAE offers free to low-cost classes for adults 18 and older. Courses vary from high school diplomas &amp; high school equivalency certificates to Career Technical Education (CTE) course and job training programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WorkAbility I: A California Transition Program</strong></td>
<td><a href="https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/sr/wrkabletyi.asp">click</a></td>
<td>Program provides pre-employment skills training, employment placement and follow-up for high school students in special education who are making the transition from school to work, independent living, and postsecondary education or training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department of Rehabilitation</strong></td>
<td><a href="https://www.dor.ca.gov/">click</a></td>
<td>Works to provide services and advocacy resulting in employment, independent living, and equality for individuals with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NIAD</strong></td>
<td><a href="https://niadart.org/">click</a></td>
<td>NIAD gives people with disabilities the skills and experience to express themselves, be independent, and earn income as an artist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vistability</strong></td>
<td><a href="https://vistability.org/">click</a></td>
<td>They provide direct services and advocacy to assist those served in achieving their highest level of personal independence and self-sufficiency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ability Now</strong></td>
<td><a href="https://abilitynowbayarea.org/">click</a></td>
<td>Offers adults with developmental and physical disabilities the most comprehensive and cutting-edge services available by promoting self-advocacy, independent living skills, and leisure skills, enhancing our participants' ability to live more independent and fulfilled lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RES Success</strong></td>
<td><a href="https://www.ressuccess.org/">click</a></td>
<td>Provide an enriched environment with purposeful, goal-oriented activities that help participants succeed in their pursuit of educational, vocational, and social goals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Resources

## Transition & Adult Day Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Website/Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Futures Explored</td>
<td><a href="https://www.futures-explored.org/">https://www.futures-explored.org/</a> (925) 332-7183</td>
<td>Led by the choices of individuals with intellectual and development disabilities, Futures Explored creates equitable access to relevant programs, supports, and advocacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Growth Art Center</td>
<td><a href="https://creativegrowth.org/">https://creativegrowth.org/</a> 355 24th St Oakland, CA 94612 510.836.2340 x 115 <a href="mailto:info@creativegrowth.org">info@creativegrowth.org</a></td>
<td>A non-profit that advances the inclusion of artists with disabilities in contemporary art and strengthens community by providing a supportive studio environment and gallery representation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open House Center</td>
<td><a href="https://sites.google.com/view/openhousecenter/home">https://sites.google.com/view/openhousecenter/home</a> 2600 Stanwell Dr #120 Concord, CA 94518 <a href="mailto:ohc@openhousecenter.org">ohc@openhousecenter.org</a></td>
<td>A non-profit social and wellness day program for adults with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Family Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Website/Contact Information</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Bay Regional Center</td>
<td><a href="https://rceb.org/">https://rceb.org/</a> 500 Davis St, San Leandro, CA 94577 (510) 618-6100</td>
<td>Works in partnership with many individuals and agencies to plan and coordinate services and supports for people with disabilities, family members, and community leaders in the Alameda and Contra Costa counties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARE Parent Network</td>
<td><a href="https://www.careparentnetwork.org/">https://www.careparentnetwork.org/</a> 2051 Harrison St # C, Concord, CA 94520 (925) 313-0999</td>
<td>A dedicated group of professionals who are parents of children with special needs. They share information and support to help you be the best advocate you can be for your child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Familia</td>
<td><a href="https://livelafamilia.org/">https://livelafamilia.org/</a> (510) 300-3500</td>
<td>A community outreach nonprofit in the greater Bay Area. Provides services throughout Alameda and Contra Costa counties, with a comprehensive selection of programs to meet a variety of mental health and community support needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congreso Familiar</td>
<td><a href="http://www.congresofamiliar.org/">http://www.congresofamiliar.org/</a> <a href="mailto:info@congresofamiliar.org">info@congresofamiliar.org</a></td>
<td>Is dedicated to promoting education and leadership skills within Spanish speaking families who have children or family members with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for Families of Children with Disabilities</td>
<td><a href="https://www.supportforfamilies.org/">https://www.supportforfamilies.org/</a> Juno Duenas <a href="mailto:jwelsh@supportforfamilies.org">jwelsh@supportforfamilies.org</a> <a href="mailto:info@supportforfamilies.org">info@supportforfamilies.org</a> (415) 282-7494</td>
<td>A parent-run San Francisco-based nonprofit that supports families of children with any kind of disability or special health care need as they face challenges. All families are welcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Rights and Education Defense Fund (DREDF)</td>
<td><a href="https://dredf.org/">https://dredf.org/</a> Susan Henderson <a href="mailto:shenderson@dredf.org">shenderson@dredf.org</a> <a href="mailto:info@dredf.org">info@dredf.org</a> (510) 644-2555</td>
<td>A leading national civil rights law and policy center directed by individuals with disabilities and parents who have children with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Family Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **California Children Services (CCS)** | Provides specialized medical care, therapy and treatment, and equipment for families eligible through residency, medical condition, and financial situation. | [https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/](https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/)  
(925) 313-6400 |
| **Child Health & Disability Prevention Program (CHDP)** | Provides preventive health care for children of low-income families or in foster care. | [https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/chdp/Pages/default.aspx](https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/chdp/Pages/default.aspx)  
(800) 495-8885  
(925) 313-6150 |
| **Contra Costa County Dept of Employment & Human Services** | Financial assistance, food stamps, Medi-Cal, IHSS, for low income families. | Hercules – (510) 262-7700  
Richmond– (510) 412-3000 |
| **Deaf Counseling, Advocacy and Referral** | Promotes and advocates for the rights of full access to American Sign Language and English, education, employment, and cultural identity of, by, for, and with Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late-Deafened, and DeafBlind people. | [https://dcara.org/](https://dcara.org/)  
(510) 343-6670  
info@dcara.org |
| **Down Syndrome Connection** | Dedicated to encouraging the unlimited potential in children and adults with Down syndrome throughout the San Francisco Bay Area | [https://www.dscba.org/](https://www.dscba.org/)  
(925) 362-8660  
info@dscba.org |
| **George Mark Children’s House** | Focuses on quality of life and continuity of care for children with illnesses that modern healthcare cannot yet cure, or for those who have chronic medical conditions. | [https://georgemark.org/](https://georgemark.org/)  
2121 George Mark Lane  
San Leandro, CA 94578  
(510) 346-4624 |
| **Through the Looking Glass** | Provides and encourages respectful and empowering services—guided by personal disability experience and disability culture—for families that have children, parents, or grandparents with a disability or medical issues. | [https://lookingglass.org/](https://lookingglass.org/)  
3075 Adeline St, Ste. 120  
Berkeley, CA 94703  
(510) 848-1112  
TLG@lookingglass.org |
| **WCCUSD Resource Parents** | Trained parent volunteers are available to provide information, support, and confidential consultation to parents of students with special needs. | Parent Handbook  
(510) 307-4634 |
| **WCCUSD Parent Library at Cameron School** | A lending library for parents, donated by the CAC and members of the community, containing books and tapes on a variety of disabilities, teaching strategies, and parenting techniques. | (510) 231-1445 |
| **Parents Helping Parents** | Provides support, resources, and information about raising your child of any age with any disability or special needs diagnosis. | [https://www.php.com/](https://www.php.com/)  
San Jose (408) 727-5775  
CA toll free (855) 727-5775  
info@php.com |
| **LUNAS (Latinos Unidos Navegando Autismo y Servicios)** | A platform that provides information to parents and the community about Autism Spectrum Disorders | [https://www.autismlunas.org/](https://www.autismlunas.org/) |
| **Disability Voices United** | A statewide organization directed by and for individuals with disabilities and our families, advocating for: Choice and control, Equity and accountability, Meaningful outcomes | [https://disabilityvoicesunited.org/](https://disabilityvoicesunited.org/) |
## Programs and classes that teach skills on the Survival Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Category</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying food groups</td>
<td>The Food Pyramid</td>
<td>The Food Pyramid For adults, teenagers and children aged five and over.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking Skills</td>
<td><a href="https://accessiblechef.com/#backtotop">https://accessiblechef.com/#backtotop</a></td>
<td>A collection of free visual recipes and other resources to help teach cooking skills to individuals with disabilities at home or in a special education classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Library Service</td>
<td><a href="https://www.loc.gov/nls/thatallyouread/">https://www.loc.gov/nls/thatallyouread/</a></td>
<td>A free library service available to U.S. residents and citizens living abroad whose low vision, blindness, or physical handicap makes it difficult to read a standard printed page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drivers License</td>
<td><a href="https://www.dor.ca.gov/">https://www.dor.ca.gov/</a></td>
<td>Driver's License / ID Application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6400 Manila Ave El Cerrito, CA 94530</td>
<td>California Driver's Handbook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Consent Law</td>
<td><a href="https://www.teenhealthrights.org/Consent">https://www.teenhealthrights.org/Consent</a> &amp; Confidentiality Laws</td>
<td>On this website, lawyers from The National Center for Youth Law answer your questions about teens' legal rights and responsibilities related to sex, pregnancy, and being a young parent in California.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth Control</td>
<td>Planned Parenthood</td>
<td>Birth control is how you prevent pregnancy. There are lots of different birth control options out there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hilltop-Richmond Health Center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2970 Hilltop Mall Rd 307 #307, Richmond, CA 94806 (510) 222-5290</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Accessible Technology</td>
<td><a href="https://www.cforat.org/">https://www.cforat.org/</a></td>
<td>Access to computers and technology for people with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(510) 841-3224 <a href="mailto:info@cforat.org">info@cforat.org</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Organization for Rare Disorders</td>
<td><a href="https://rarediseases.org/">https://rarediseases.org/</a></td>
<td>A patient advocacy organization dedicated to individuals with rare diseases and the organizations that serve them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 (800) 999-6673 1 (844) 259-7178 Español</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical Money Skills</td>
<td><a href="https://www.practicalmoneyskills.com/teach/lesson_plans/special_needs">https://www.practicalmoneyskills.com/teach/lesson_plans/special_needs</a></td>
<td>These important financial lessons are for special needs students. Parents &amp; educators can customize lesson plans to best fit their students' needs and learning styles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Family Documents
School Service Providers
### Case Manager

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: ______________________________</th>
<th>Phone Number: ___________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email: _________________________</td>
<td>Organization: ________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency: ___________</td>
<td>Days: ___________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notes: _________________________</td>
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<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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Service: ___________________________

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<tr>
<th>Name: ______________________________</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email: _________________________</td>
<td>Organization: ________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link to Goal: ________________________</td>
<td>Link to Goal: ________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency: ___________</td>
<td>Days: ___________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circle one: Group Individual</td>
<td>If group, size of group: ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes: _________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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<td>If group, size of group: ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes: _________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image6.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learn more at www.gapublicschoolswcc.org
Meeting Notes
My Child’s Current IEP

PUBLIC SCHOOLS
WEST CONTRA COSTA
Previous Assessments