

PRESCHOOL SERVICES



AT WHAT AGE ARE PRESCHOOL SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION CHILDREN WHO NEED THEM?

Children between the ages of 3 and 5 years old who are eligible for special education are entitled to preschool services.



ON WHAT BASIS IS ELIGIBILITY DETERMINED FOR PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES?

In order to be eligible for preschool special education services, a child must qualify under at least one of the following disability categories: autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, hearing impairment, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impaired, serious emotional disturbance, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment in voice, fluency, language and articulation, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment, or established medical disability.

To be eligible for preschool services, in addition to qualifying under one of the disability categories, a child must also (1) need specially designed instruction and services ("DIS") and (2) have needs that cannot be met with modification of a regular environment in the home or school, or both, without ongoing monitoring or support.

A child is not eligible for preschool education and services if the child's educational needs are due primarily to: (1) unfamiliarity with the English language; (2) temporary physical disabilities; (3) social maladjustment; or (4) environmental, cultural, or economic factors.

WHAT TYPES OF EARLY EDUCATION SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN?



- ✓ Observing and monitoring the child's behavior and development in his or her environment.
- ✓ Presenting activities that are developmentally appropriate for the child and are specially designed to enhance the child's development.
- ✓ Interacting and consulting with family members, regular preschool teachers, and other service providers to demonstrate developmentally appropriate activities.
- ✓ Assisting parents to seek and coordinate other services in their community that may be provided to their child by various agencies.
- ✓ Providing opportunities for young children to participate in play and exploration activities to develop self-esteem and pre-academic skills.
- ✓ Providing access to various developmentally appropriate equipment and specialized materials.
- ✓ Providing related services.

Any of these services may be provided to individuals or small groups. When group services are provided (for example, a preschool program), they must not exceed 4 hours per day unless the IEP team determines that the child's needs necessitate additional hours per day.

WHAT SETTINGS ARE APPROPRIATE FOR A PRESCHOOL CHILD TO RECEIVE EARLY EDUCATION SERVICES?

- ✓ A regular public or private nonsectarian (non-religious) preschool program.
- ✓ A child development center or family day care home.
- ✓ The child's regular environment, including the child's home.
- ✓ A special site where preschool programs for both children with disabilities and children who are not disabled are located close to each other and have an opportunity to share resources and programming.
- ✓ A special education preschool program with children who are not disabled attending and participating for all or part of the program.
- ✓ A public school setting that provides an age appropriate environment, materials, and services.



WHAT IS THE TRANSITION PROCESS WHEN A PRESCHOOL CHILD RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES IS READY FOR KINDERGARTEN OR FIRST GRADE?

Prior to transitioning a child receiving preschool special education services to kindergarten or first grade, an appropriate reassessment of the child must be conducted by the school district to determine if the child is still in need of special education and services. This law discourages removing children too rapidly from special education who have made gains in their preschool special education programs. For children who require less intensive special education programs than they did when they were preschool age, the IEP team must identify a way of monitoring the continued success of the child. For children who are determined to no longer be eligible for preschool services, the child's present performance levels and learning style must be noted by the IEP team. This information then must be made available to the assigned regular education teacher upon the child's enrollment in kindergarten or first grade.