

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Getting the appropriate services for your child can be very difficult, but you are the only one that can make it happen. The reward for your persistence is a better future for your child. Here are some tips to help you be the best advocate for your child: 1) get **involved**, 2) try not to get **frustrated**, and 3) make sure you **write** down exactly who you talk to, what was said, and when.

WHAT KINDS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES ARE THERE?

Your child can either receive special education services in a general education classroom or in a special class, also called a self-contained class.

Special Education Services in a General Education Classroom

Children can be in a general education classroom and get services either in the classroom or outside of the classroom. Here are the types of services available:

- Children can receive **Related Services**, which include many different types of services and are described below.
- Children can receive lessons individually or in small groups settings. This is used to be called **Resource Room** and is now called direct **Special Education Teacher Support Services**.
- A special education teacher can help the general education teacher develop lesson plans to help disabled children in the general education classroom. This used to be called a **Consultant Teacher** and is now called indirect **Special Education Teacher Support Services**.
- A special education teacher and a general education teacher can work full-time together in a general education classroom. This is called **Collaborative Team Teaching**.

Special Classes

There are many different kinds of special classes. Here are some examples:

- Special Class (full or part-time) in a neighborhood school. This usually is referred to as a special education classroom.
- Special Class full-time in Specialized Public School. These schools are in District 75 and are also known as Citywide programs.
- Private School
- Agency or Hospital Instruction. For example, when a child is in the hospital, the Department of Education can provide a teacher to go to the hospital to teach the child.
- Residential Placement.

Related Services and Other Support Services

There are many services that children who are in a general education classroom or a special class can receive. Here are some examples.

- **Counseling.** One-on-one or group counseling is available.
- **Hearing Education Services.** Lessons in communication, such as speech reading, are available to children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- **Occupational Therapy (OT).** This includes many different types of therapy that help children with daily activities. For example, OT may be helpful if a child cannot grip a pencil very well or if a child has problems concentrating.
- **Orientation and Mobility Instruction.** This is for children who are blind or visually impaired and helps them get around. For example, a child could be taught how to use the sound at the traffic light to cross the street.
- **Physical Therapy.** This is for children with physical disabilities. It helps them improve their ability to, for example, walk, sit up, or keep balanced.
- **School Health Services.** These also are for children with physical disabilities. For example, if a child has diabetes, he can get help keeping track of his blood-sugar level or injecting his insulin. Or if a child is in a wheelchair, she can get help moving from the wheelchair or help eating.
- **Speech/language therapy.** This is to help children who have problems, for example, saying certain sounds or letters.
- **Vision Education Services.** If a child is blind or visually impaired, he can get lessons, for example, in Braille and large print.
- **Other Support Services and Supplementary Aids.** These include a whole bunch of different services. Some examples are Toilet Training, Travel Training (which teaches children how to take public transportation to school), Assistive Technology (which could be a computer or a special seat in the classroom), and Special Transportation Paraprofessional (someone who goes with a child on the school bus)

HOW TO GET THE RIGHT SERVICES

If your child is receiving special education services:

- What kind of services is your child getting?
- Are these the same services listed on your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP)?
- Have those services been effective?
- What you can do make sure that your child gets the services on his/her IEP or what you can do to change the services on your child's IEP:
 - Talk to the Special Education Coordinator
 - Talk to the Principal
 - Request a meeting at the Committee on Special Education
 - Request an impartial hearing

If you child is NOT receiving special education services:

- Does your child have a disability?
 - In order to get special education services, a child must have a disability and special education services must be able to help the child learn
 - A child is not disabled if the child's poor performance in school is because the child never went to school or had a lot of absences
- What is a disability?

autism	multiple disabilities
deaf-blindness	orthopedic impairment
deafness	other health-impairment
hearing impairment	speech or language impairment
emotional disturbance	traumatic brain injury
learning disability	visual impairment including blindness
mental retardation	
- If you think that your child has a disability that is affecting his or her learning, write to the Committee on Special Education to ask that your child be evaluated. Once the evaluations are done, you will be invited to come to an Education Planning Conference or a Committee on Special Education Review meeting to discuss what services, if any, should be provided.

RIGHTS OF PARENTS

- **Right to be informed.** The Committee on Special Education (CSE) must tell you your rights. They must tell you if your child has been referred to be evaluated for special education services and tell you about meetings scheduled by the CSE to talk about recommendations for your child.
- **Right to get copies of your child's school records,** including special education records such as copies of evaluations.
- **Right to Participate.** You have the right to go to any meetings scheduled by the CSE to talk about recommendations for your child. You may also bring other people with you to these meetings to help you with the process.
- **Right to Challenge.** You can challenge any decision made by the CSE about the education of your child.
- **Consent.** Generally, your child cannot be evaluated or placed in a special education class without a parent's consent.

ALTERNATIVES TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

- Pupil Personnel Team Intervention Plans. This is a plan to help your child not fall behind. The Pupil Personnel Team, which is made up of the principal and the guidance counselor and may include teachers or other school staff, meets and comes up with a plan to help your child.
- School reading programs such as Reading Recovery and Resource Room
- After-school tutoring programs

**If you have any questions, please contact Kristen Woolf at The Partnership for the Homeless,
1 (800) 235-3444, ext. 135**