

Liberty Central School District

Special Education Resource Guide

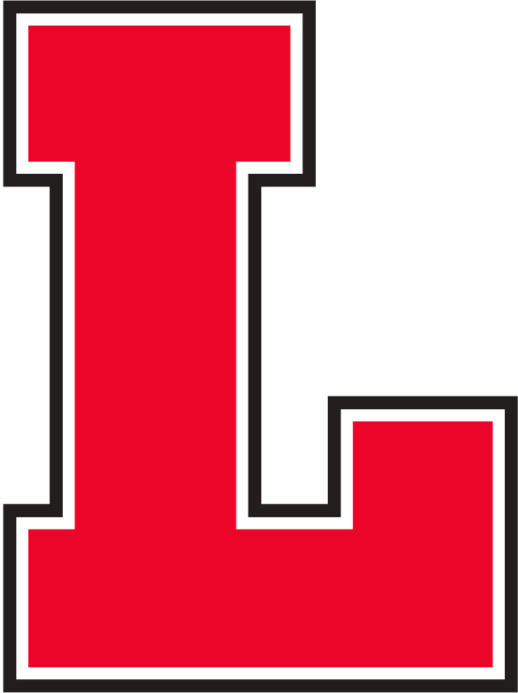


Table of Contents

Page

❖ Student Services Administration, Facilitators and School Psychologists	2
❖ Overview - Special Education Programs and Services	4
❖ Referral Process for Special Education	4
❖ The Committees on Special Education and Preschool Special Education (CSE and CPSE)	7
❖ Programs	8
❖ Preschool Students with Disabilities	10
❖ School-Aged Students with Disabilities	11
❖ Related Therapies and Services	13
➤ Counseling	
➤ Occupational Therapy	
➤ Physical Therapy	
➤ Speech-Language Therapy	
➤ Functional Behavior Assessment	
❖ Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act	16
❖ Glossary of Terms & Acronyms	17
❖ Additional Resources	18

Student Services

Student Services provides oversight for Special Education, psychological counseling and other related services as outlined on a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). The Student Services department is responsible for ensuring compliance with Commissioner's Regulations Part 200 for students with disabilities. The following staff members represent the department and are available to assist in navigation.

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Overview - Special Education Programs and Services

The Student Services Department supports both the mission and vision of the Liberty Central School District. In an effort to do so, the faculty and staff are dedicated to empowering students to contribute and thrive in a diverse community by acknowledging and pursuing their potential. The district is committed to collaboration - the bringing together of general and special education expertise for the purposes of supporting student success.

What is special education?

Special education is specially designed instruction that addresses the unique needs of a student eligible to receive special education services. Special education is provided at no cost to parents and includes the related services a student needs to access her/his educational program.

The services for any given student with a disability are determined on an individual basis by a multidisciplinary team. The decision-making process involves teachers, school counselors, psychologists, social workers, parents, administrators, the Committee on Special Education (CSE) and the student, as appropriate. CSE procedures for referral, evaluation, Individualized Education Program (IEP) development, placement and review are in accordance with the New York State Education Department (SED) Regulations.

All special education instruction is based on the New York State learning standards. The district utilizes an array of special education support and services in both integrated and nonintegrated settings to promote meaningful access, participation and progress in the general education curriculum.

Referral Process for Special Education

If you suspect that your child may have a physical, cognitive, or emotional disability, you have the right to refer your child to the District's Committee on Special Education.

What is a referral for special education?

A referral is a written statement asking that the school district evaluate the student to determine if he or she needs special education services. This written statement should be addressed to the chairperson of your school district's committee or your school principal.

Who can make a referral for special education?

A parent, the student's teacher or district designee can make a referral for special education.

What are the steps in the Special Education Process?



- **Step 1:** Initial Referral for Special Education Services- Students suspected of having a disability are referred to a multidisciplinary team called the Committee on Special Education or the Committee on Preschool Special Education.
- **Step 2:** Evaluation Process- A formal evaluation is conducted to decide if a student has a disability that requires special education and related services. The evaluation also determines the specific areas of need and the best services for addressing that need. The evaluation that takes place must be individualized to the student and their suspected area of disability. The evaluations must be completed within the federal IDEA regulations of 60 days after the parent gives consent. If parents disagree with the results of the evaluation, they have the right to take their child for an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE).
- **Step 3:** Determining Eligibility for Special Education Services- Once the requested evaluations have been completed, the CSE will schedule another meeting to review results and determine eligibility for special education and related services. The CSE, including the student's parent or guardian, review the evaluation results and decide if the student is a "child with a disability" as defined by IDEA.

- **Step 4:** Individualized Education Program (IEP)- If the child is eligible to receive special education services, the CSE develops and implements an appropriate IEP, based on evaluation results, to meet the needs of the student. Based on the IEP, the Committee must determine the student's placement, ensuring that services are provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE).
 - The concept of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is central to the provision of special education programs and services. The CSE ensures that special education programs and services recommended for a student with a disability are provided to the maximum extent appropriate, with students who do not have disabilities and located in the student's home school district whenever possible. If programs available within district settings cannot meet a student's needs, the CSE will arrange for a program outside of the district. Many students attend general education classrooms with typical age classmates and receive support services within their general education classroom. As part of a full continuum of services, the District also makes available special education classrooms (special classes) for students whose needs require this level of service. The district's [Special Education 2 Year Plan](#) is available on the district website
- **Step 5:** Once consent for services has been received, the school ensures that the IEP is carried out exactly as written. The student will be assigned a case manager (special education teacher) and each of the child's teachers and service providers will be given access to the IEP and are responsible for its implementation.
- **Step 6:** Monitor Progress- The child's teachers and service providers keep track of the progress the child makes toward educational goals. Regular progress reports are provided during the year and the results are discussed at the annual IEP review.
- **Step 7:** Annual Review- The IEP is reviewed and, if needed, modified or revised by the Committee at least once a year (annual review) for the purpose of reviewing progress and planning for the continuation of services based on the student's individual needs.
- **Step 8:** Reevaluation- At least every three years, the child must be reevaluated for continued eligibility for special education and related services as well as to determine the child's educational needs. This evaluation is sometimes referred to as the "triennial."

**More information regarding your rights is set forth in the New York State Education Department's Parent's Guide to Special Education in New York State for Children Ages 3-21, available at <https://www.nysed.gov/special-education/parents-guide-special-education>

Explanation of Evaluation & Tests Performed

- Physical- sight, hearing, physical development; medical needs; physical & health factors which affect school progress- conducted by the school physician or child's pediatrician
- Psychological- general intelligence; learning strengths and weaknesses; - conducted by the school psychologist
- Academic Achievement - basic academic skills in the areas of reading, writing and math -conducted by the case manager or school psychologist
- Speech and Language- receptive/expressive oral language, production of sounds, voice, fluency, auditory-perceptual skills- conducted by the Speech-Language Pathologist or Speech Therapist (as applicable)
- Motor- coordination, strength, visual perception, visual-motor integration, sensory processing, self-care skills- conducted by the Occupational Therapist and/or Physical Therapist (as applicable)
- Social History- Parent's perception of child's development and other factors that may affect school performance- conducted by the school psychologist with parental input
- Classroom Observations- performance in the current educational setting; relationship to teacher and other students; learning styles, attention span- conducted by the school psychologist

The Committees on Special Education and Preschool Special Education (CSE/CPSE)

The Committee on Special Education and the Committee on Preschool Special Education are multidisciplinary teams appointed by the Board of Education which convene to determine eligibility. While the purpose of these committees is similar, CPSE is specifically for preschool students ages 3-5 and CSE is for school age students ages 5-22.

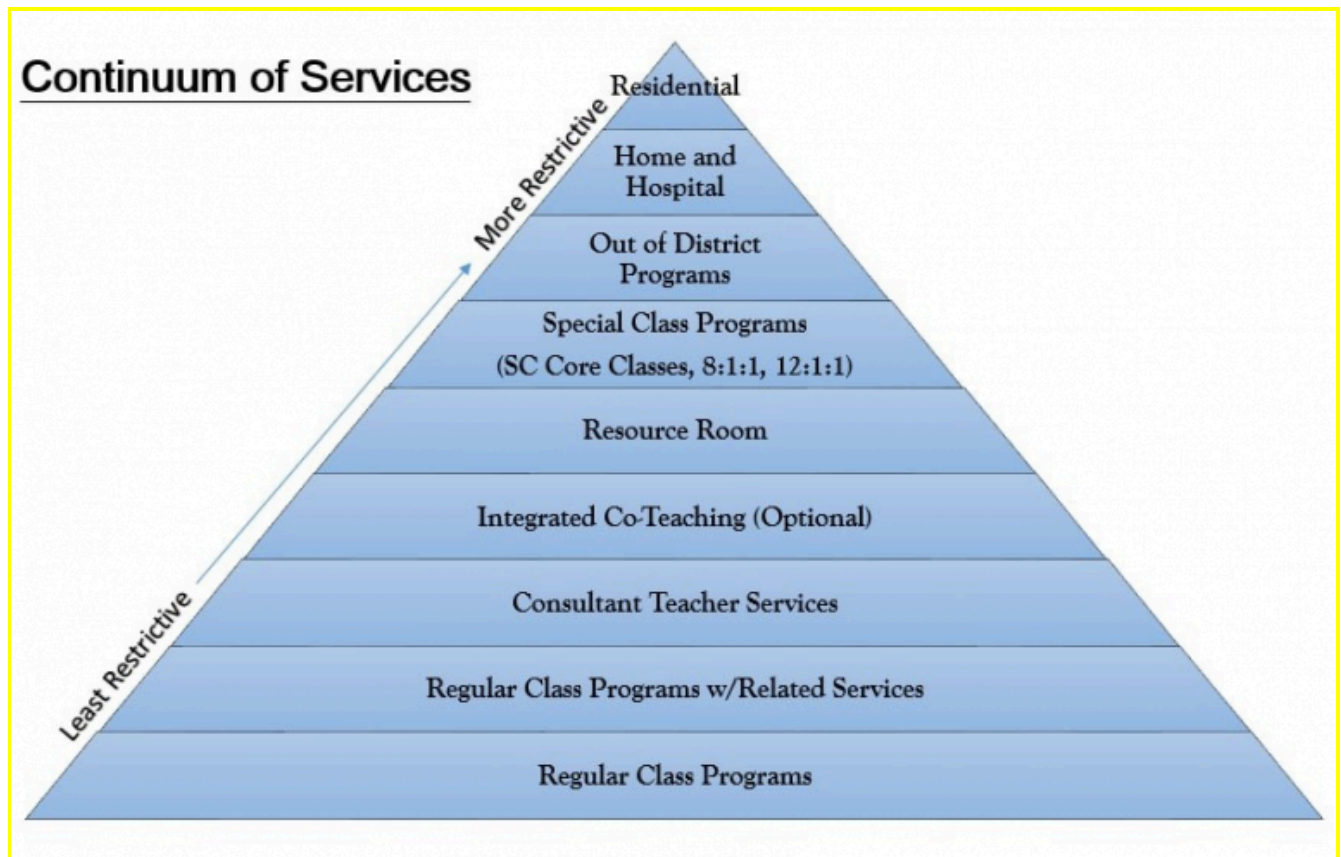
If determined eligible, the CSE/CPSE will:

- Make recommendations on classification, evaluation and educational programs and services
- Ensure the Individualized Education Program (IEP) of each student addresses the unique needs of the student relative to his or her disability in order to progress in the general education curriculum

- Ensure the IEP includes accommodations and modifications as they relate to student needs
- Consider input from all team members

Programs

The following range of programs and services are available for students with disabilities:



- Residential
 - Students are enrolled 24 hours a day and usually cannot obtain services in their community.
- Home and Hospital Instruction
 - Provided in unique situations- elementary 10 hours weekly, secondary 15 hours weekly
- Out of District Placement
 - An out-of-district placement places a student at a specialized school or program outside of their local school district, at the expense of either the

district, the child's parents, or a combination of both. Out-of-district placements include specialized education schools, charter schools, and residential schools.

- Special Class Programs
 - Provides primary instruction that is specifically designed to meet the needs of a group of students in a self-contained setting, separate from their non-disabled peers.
- Resource Room
 - Provides specialized supplementary small group instruction in addition to classroom instruction.
- Integrated Co-Teaching
 - Provides academic and specifically designed instruction in the general education setting to an integrated group of students.
- Consultant Teacher Services
 - Provides aid to students in the general education environment
- Regular Class w/Related Services
 - Provides students in the general education setting with services that will assist the student in accessing the general education curriculum. (Developmental, corrective or other supportive services.)
- Regular Class Programs
 - Provides a curriculum designed for all children to meet state standards.

****Adaptive Physical Education (APE)**

In New York State, all elementary and secondary school students must receive physical education as part of their education program. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) entitles all students with disabilities to receive a free, appropriate public education, including appropriate physical education. Adaptive physical education means a specially designed program of developmental activities, games, sports, and rhythms suited to the interests, capabilities, and limitations of students with disabilities who may not safely or successfully engage in unrestricted participation in the activities of the regular physical education program.

Related Services

Related services include developmental, corrective and other supportive services to assist a student with a disability such as:

- Speech/language therapy

- Audiology
- Psychological services
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Counseling services
- Orientation and mobility services
- School health services
- School social work
- Assistive technology

Preschool Students with Disabilities

A three or four-year-old child suspected of having a delay may be referred to the CPSE for a multidisciplinary evaluation. The child may be referred to the CPSE by his/her parents, designee for the school district in which the student resides or a designee of a public agency with responsibility for education of the student. With written consent of the parent, the child is evaluated using results from, at a minimum, a physical examination, psychological evaluation, social history, observation of the child and other appropriate assessments to evaluate physical, mental, behavioral and emotional factors that may impact the child's ability to learn.

A CPSE meeting is held to review the evaluations and determine eligibility for an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) based on specific criteria. Qualifying students will be classified as a Preschool Student with a Disability and will receive programs and services designed to their individual needs.

Continuum of Preschool Programs and/or Services

- Related Services Only
- Special Education Itinerant Services (SEIS)
- Related Services and SEIS
- Special Class/Integrated Setting
- Special Class
- 12 month Special Services/Programs

School-Aged Students with Disabilities

Students between the ages of 5 and 22 qualify for special education services if they meet the criteria for one or more of the 13 areas of disability classifications, as determined by the CSE and as defined in Part 200.1 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

Autism	Deafness
<p>A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before the age of three, that adversely affects a student's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines and unusual responses to sensory experiences.</p> <p>The term does not apply if a student's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the student has an emotional disturbance.</p>	<p>A student with a hearing impairment so severe that the student is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, which adversely affects educational performance.</p>
Deaf-Blindness	Emotional Disturbance
<p>A student with a hearing and visual impairment, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational problems such that the student cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for students with deafness or students with blindness.</p>	<p>A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a student's educational performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors. • An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers. • Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances. • A generally pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression. • A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. The term includes schizophrenia.

	The term does not apply to students who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance.
Hearing Impairments	Intellectual Disabilities
Impairments in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, adversely affect the student's educational performance, but that is not included under the definition of deafness in this section.	Significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, which adversely affects a student's educational performance.
Learning Disabilities	Multiple Disabilities
A disorder in which one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, manifests itself as an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor disabilities, intellectual disabilities, emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage. A student who exhibits a discrepancy of 50 percent or more between expected achievement and actual achievement determined on an individual basis shall be deemed as having a learning disability.	Concomitant impairments (such as intellectual disability – blindness, intellectual disability – orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes educational needs that cannot be accommodated in a special education program solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blindness.
Orthopedic Impairments	Other Health Impairments
A severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a student's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by a congenital anomaly (e.g. clubfoot, absence of some member, etc.), impairments caused by disease (e.g. poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.) and impairments from other causes (e.g. cerebral palsy, amputation, fractures or burns which cause contractures, etc.).	Having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened awareness to environmental stimuli that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that is due to chronic or acute health problems including, but not limited to, a heart condition, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia, diabetes, attention deficit disorder or Tourette Syndrome, which adversely affects a student's educational performance.

Speech or Language Impairments	Traumatic Brain Injury
<p>A communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment or a voice impairment, which adversely affects a student's educational performance.</p>	<p>An acquired injury caused by an external physical force or by certain medical conditions such as stroke, encephalitis, aneurysm, anoxia or brain tumors with resulting impairments that adversely affect educational performance. The term includes open or closed head injuries or brain injury from certain medical conditions resulting in mild, moderate or severe impairments in one or more areas, including 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 include injuries that are congenital or caused by birth trauma.</p>
Visual Impairments	
<p>Impairments in vision that, even with correction, adversely affect a student's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.</p>	

Related Therapies and Services

Counseling

Counseling services are provided by the school guidance counselor, social worker, or psychologist. This related service helps students improve their social, emotional, and coping skills. Goals may address appropriate school behavior and self-control, peer relationships, conflict resolution, withdrawal and low self-esteem.

Occupational Therapy

School Based occupational therapy is focused on supporting a child's overall ability to access her/his educational program within the school environment. Occupational Therapy may include: fine motor functioning, sensory processing, visual motor and visual perceptual skills, and self-care skills/activities of daily living.

What are some signs that would indicate that school based occupational therapy may be necessary for a student?

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- difficulty cutting with scissors
- inefficient grasp on writing utensils
- illegible handwriting

- difficulty coloring, drawing and tracing
- difficulty with alertness, attention or self-regulation
- deficiencies in daily living skills
- need for physical support or adaptations for posture, alertness, attention, etc.
- difficulty with sensory integration

With parental consent, school based occupational therapists evaluate recommended students to determine whether school occupational therapy services are warranted as part of the IEP (individualized education plan). If it is recommended that a child receives occupational therapy at school, the therapist will set goals and objectives related to supporting the child's success and independence at school.

Physical Therapy

School based physical therapy is provided when a student needs therapy services to function in an educational environment and is provided at no cost to the parents. School based physical therapy works on skills necessary for a student to function at school as opposed to medically based physical therapy where the focus is on a student's medical needs. This type of physical therapy is usually recommended by a doctor and is provided in a clinic, hospital or at home and is usually paid for by insurance companies or Medicaid.

With parental consent, school based physical therapists evaluate recommended students to determine whether therapy services are warranted as part of the IEP (individualized education plan). If it is recommended that a child receives therapy at school, the therapist will set goals and objectives related to supporting the child's success and independence at school.

What are some signs that would indicate that school based physical therapy may be necessary for a student?

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- having difficulty negotiating the school - walking patterns, stair climbing, opening/closing doors, up/down ramps, wheelchair skills, etc.
- gross motor skills (large motor skills) - jumping, skipping, hopping, etc.
- posture - does not sit properly, slumps on desk frequently, etc.
- self care skills - transferring on/off toilet, getting backpack on/off, etc.
- balance skills - falls frequently, stumbles when walking, etc.
- coordination skills - difficulties throwing, catching and kicking, etc.
- transition skills - on/off school bus, walking in the classroom line, going from sitting to standing, etc.

Speech-Language Therapy

School-based speech and language therapy services target skills imperative for school success. A delay in skills must show an adverse effect on a child's academic performance within the classroom.

With parental consent, school based speech and language pathologists evaluate recommended students to determine whether therapy services are warranted as part of the IEP (individualized education plan). If it is recommended that a child receives therapy at school, the therapist will set goals and objectives related to supporting the child's success and independence at school.

Communication Disorders

The following are general definitions of communication needs that may be present in a child with speech and language deficits:

➤ **Language Disorder**

- Difficulty understanding and using language to communicate thoughts and ideas
- Vocabulary weakness, trouble with grammar and trouble following directions

➤ **Articulation or Phonology Disorder**

- Difficulty producing sounds and sound combinations in speech
- Speech can be difficult to understand and distracting to the listener

➤ **Pragmatic or Social Language Disorder**

- Difficulties with communicating in a socially acceptable manner
 - Children with concerns in this area struggle with turn-taking, maintaining conversational topics, asking and responding to questions appropriately and using and understanding body language cues.

Functional Behavior Assessment

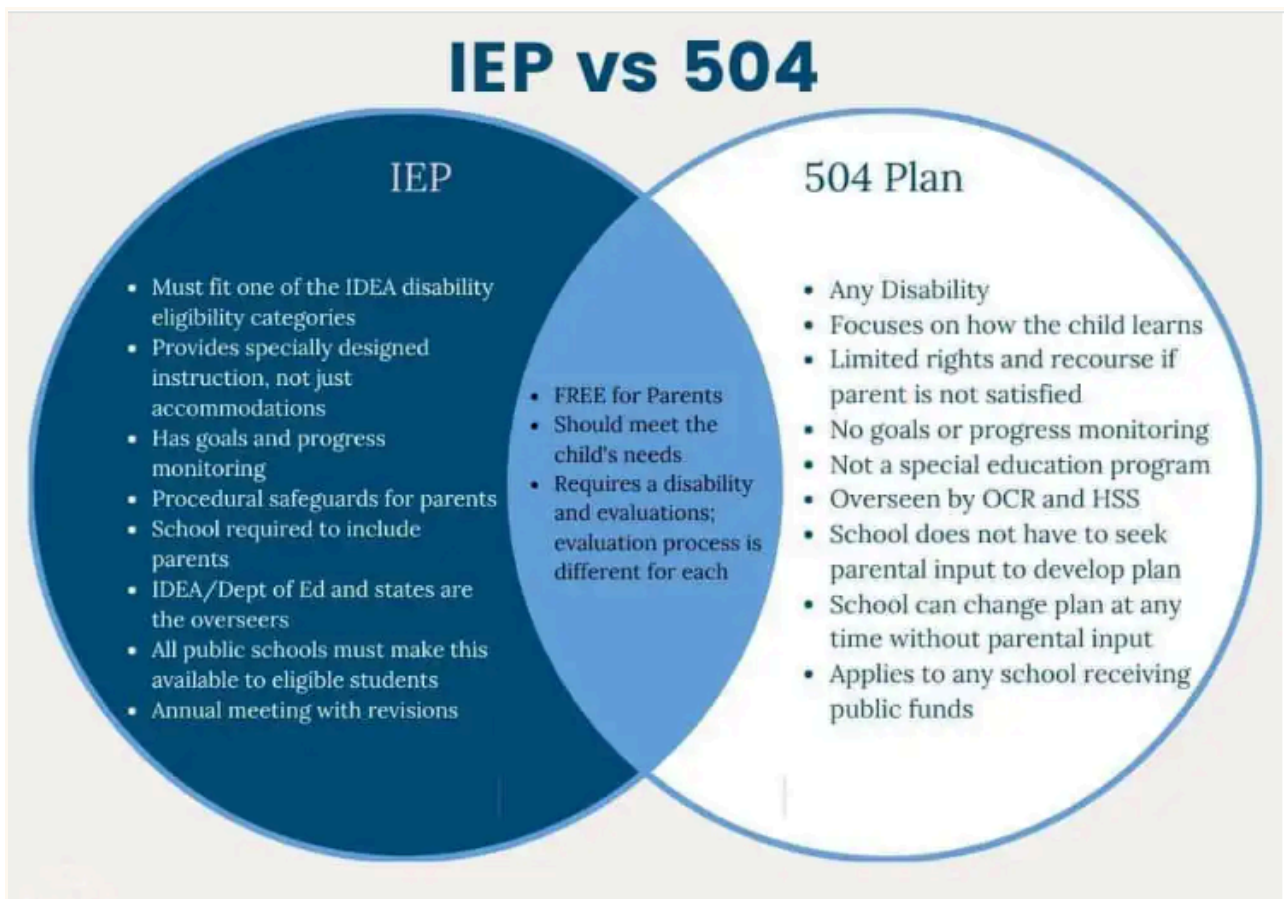
A functional behavioral assessment (FBA) is a process for gathering information about behaviors of concern, whether the behaviors are academic, social or emotional. The FBA may lead to a behavior intervention plan (BIP). A behavior intervention plan is a written improvement plan created for a student based on the outcome of the functional behavior assessment (FBA). The FBA should identify what is maintaining or causing a challenging behavior, and the BIP specifies the actions to take to improve or replace the behavior. A BIP is an individualized plan with more intensive support and oversight. A BIP could result in changes in instruction, types of support or intervention, or the environment. A BIP focuses on teaching alternative behaviors to meet the child's needs and serves the same function as the behavior of concern. The process of creating a BIP is led by a team and includes the parents, teachers, support staff, and the student.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

A 504 plan is a school specific accommodation plan for students with a diagnosed disability where special education instruction is not necessary. It provides accommodations in the general education setting and is authorized by [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#).

Under Section 504, an individual with a disability is defined as a person who: (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as learning; (2) has a record of such an impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

If a parent has a concern and believes their child may be eligible under Section 504, they should reach out to their child's counselor.



Glossary of Terms & Acronyms

A wide variety of acronyms and specialized terms are used within the realm of special education.

AAC: Alternative Augmentative Communication
ABA: Applied Behavioral Analysis
ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act
APE: Adaptive Physical Education
ASL: American Sign Language
BIP: Behavioral Intervention Plan
BOCES: Boards of Cooperative Educational Services
BOE: Board of Education
COTA: Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant
CPSE: Committee on Preschool Special Education
CSE: Committee on Special Education
EIS: Early Intervention Services
EIP: Early Intervention Program
ELL: English Language Learners
ENL: English as a New Language
ESSA: Every Student Succeeds Act
ESY: Extended School Year
FAPE: Free Appropriate Public Education
FBA: Functional Behavioral Assessment
FERPA: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP: Individualized Education Program
IESP: Individualized Educational Service Program
LEA: Local Educational Agency
LRE: Least Restrictive Environment
NYSED: New York State Education Department
OEL: Office of Early Learning
OSE: Office of Special Education
OT: Occupational Therapy
SED: State Education Department
SEIS: Special Education Itinerant Service
SEQA: Special Education Quality Assurance
SLP: Speech Language Pathologist
TOD: Teacher of the Deaf

Additional Resources

[A Parent's Guide to NYSAA - all languages](#)

[NYS Diploma Requirements - English](#)

[NYS Diploma Requirements - Spanish](#)

[NYS Diploma Resources - all languages](#)

[Additional Options for NYS Graduation - English](#)

[Additional Options for NYS Graduation - Spanish](#)

[Action Toward Independence](#)

[New Hope Community](#)

[The Center for Discovery](#)

[Office for People With Developmental Disabilities](#)

[Sullivan County BOCES](#)

[Sullivan County Dept of Community Services](#)

[Parent's Guide to Special Education - English](#)

[Parent's Guide to Special Education - Spanish](#)