

### **Student Assistance and Referral**

When a student shows signs of needing some type of special help, the student may be referred to the building Student Assistance Team (SAT). The SAT is made up of administrators, counselors, teachers and other personnel as needed. The student may be referred to the SAT by the school staff, a parent, or through self-referral. The SAT reviews the student's records and other information, recommends regular education intervention strategies and support, and develops a time-line for reviewing the success or failure of these interventions. After the review, the SAT may decide that there is sufficient information to substantiate the need for a multidisciplinary evaluation.

### **Multidisciplinary Evaluation**

When a student is referred for a multidisciplinary evaluation, it is provided at no cost to the parent. The evaluation is conducted by a certified educational diagnostician and includes tests of intelligence, achievement, other assessments that may provide more specific information about the student, and input from the student's teachers and parents. Other professionals may also be involved in the evaluation process. Students receiving special education services are re-evaluated every three years. IEP teams that include parents are involved in the re-evaluation process.

### **Placement Process**

Once a multidisciplinary evaluation has been completed, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting is scheduled. Parents (and the student, if appropriate) are invited to attend this meeting which is usually held at the student's school. The purpose of this meeting is for the parents and school personnel to jointly review the results of the evaluation, determine eligibility for special education services, and decide on the services which will best meet the educational needs of the student. In addition to parents, other participants may include the school principal or designee, a member of the special education staff, the student's teacher(s), and other school personnel as needed. One of the members of the team must be knowledgeable about the evaluation.

### **The IEP team discusses the following issues:**

1. Present levels of performance: Reasons for referral, evaluation results, and current classroom performance are discussed. This discussion provides information about the effect of a possible exceptionality on the student's educational performance.
2. Exceptionality/Eligibility: New Mexico regulations (6.31.2 NMAC) identify eligibility under thirteen exceptionalities briefly described below:
  - Autism - A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects educational performance.
  - Deafness - A hearing impairment which is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.
  - Deaf-Blind - A combination of hearing and visual impairments which produces such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that these needs cannot be met through services solely for deaf or blind children.
  - Hearing Impairment - An impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance but which is not included under the definition of deafness.
  - Mental Retardation - Significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning which exists concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and is manifested during the developmental period.
  - Multiple Disabilities - A combination of impairments such as mental retardation, blindness, orthopedic impairment, etc., which produces such severe educational needs that these needs cannot be accommodated by services solely for one of the impairments.
  - Orthopedic Impairment - A severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Examples are impairments caused by a congenital anomaly, disease or other causes such as polio, cerebral palsy, amputations.
  - Other Health Impairment - Limited strength, vitality, or alertness including heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness to the educational environment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Condition is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, ADHD, diabetes, epilepsy, heart condition, leukemia, etc.
  - Emotional Disturbance - A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree which adversely affects educational performance: a) an inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or other health factors; b) an inability to build or

maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; c) inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; d) a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or e) a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

- Specific Learning Disability - A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an inability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or to perform mathematical calculations. This category includes conditions such as dyslexia, perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction and developmental aphasia. It does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor disabilities, of mental retardation or emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.
- Speech or Language Impairment - A communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance.
- Traumatic Brain Injury - An injury to the brain caused by an external physical force resulting in total or partial functional disability or psycho-social impairment, or both that adversely affects a child's educational performance.
- Visual Impairment - A visual impairment, including blindness or partial sight, means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance.
- Developmentally Delayed - A child aged 3 through 9 with documented delays in development which are at least two standard deviations or 33 per cent below chronological age in at least one of the following areas: language, cognitive abilities, motor, social/emotional development, or self-help/adaptive functioning; and who, because of that condition, needs special education and related services.
- Gifted - A school-aged child whose intellectual ability paired with subject matter aptitude/achievement, creativity/divergent thinking, or problem-solving/critical thinking meets state eligibility criteria and for whom an IEP team determines that special education services are required to meet the child's educational needs.

3. The IEP team determines if a student is exceptional as defined by the definition. If a student needs services in addition to or in place of the regular program, the student is eligible for special education services. In determining need, the committee must decide if the identified exceptionality is adversely affecting the student's educational performance at a level which requires modifications beyond those available in the regular education program. If the student is determined to be eligible for special education services, the committee then develops an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

4. Individualized Education Program (IEP) The IEP is a written statement of a student's needs, the services to be provided to meet those needs, and the way in which the student's progress will be evaluated. The IEP team identifies specific skill areas to be addressed through specialized instruction to meet the student's educational needs and determines the annual goals and objectives in these targeted areas. The IEP team determines the location and the amount of time necessary to provide instruction in the goals and objectives. A continuum of placements ranging from delivery of services within the general education classroom to delivery of services in a pullout setting are considered for each student. The program is designed to allow the student to make progress toward meeting the IEP goals and progress in the general curriculum. The parent, or guardian, will be asked to give written consent before initial placement in special education. Each student's IEP must be reviewed at least once a year. However, parents or school staff may request an IEP review at any time it is needed.

#### **Minimum Level Services**

Student receives consultation or itinerant special education services not to exceed 10% of the school day per week.

#### **Moderate Level Services**

Student receives special education services not to exceed 50% of the school day.

#### **Extensive Level Services**

Student receives special education services 50% or more of the school day.

#### **Maximum Level Services**

Student receives special education services in an amount which approaches the full school day.

#### **Examples of Special Ed. Services Available**

All Sites

Related Services: speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, clinical counseling, health services, transportation.

Living Skills Programs (2 elementary sites, middle and high)  
Behavior Intervention Programs (Positive Support Programs)  
Inclusive services (special education support in the general ed setting)

**Elementary:**

Resource Room for academic support  
Preschool for Developmental Delays (Barranca and Pinon)

**Middle School:**

Resource Seminar (addresses organizational skills and provides academic support)  
Self-contained core academic classes

**High School:**

Resource Seminar (addresses organizational skills and provides academic support)  
Self-contained core academic classes

Work Study

Services for Preschool Children with Disabilities

Services are provided for children ages three and four who are in need of special education and related services because of significant delay or deficit in one or more areas of development including cognitive, physical, motor, language, social/emotional, self-help, vision or hearing. A multidisciplinary diagnostic evaluation is required, and the delivery model for services is determined by the IEP team.