

# Steps in the Special Education Process

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University of Connecticut Center for Excellence in  
Developmental Disabilities

Families As Partners Training

# Purpose of Special Education

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- To ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living

# Steps in the Process

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- Referral
- Evaluation
- Eligibility determination
- Individual Education Program (IEP)
- Placement
- Implement program
- Monitor progress

# Referral Process

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- Before referral to special education, a team of educators meets to consider the questions that prompted referral.
- Are there steps or strategies that can be pursued to support the student?
  - Is the problem a result of inadequate or inappropriate instruction?

# Referral to Special Education

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- Written request for an evaluation of a student who is suspected of having a disability and who may need special education.

# Referral

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Can be made by:

- Parent or guardian
- School personnel
- Professional or agency to whom parent has given permission (i.e. Birth to Three; physician)
- Student (if 18 or older)

# Referral

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- Written notification to parent
- Written consent of parent
- IEP team determines evaluation procedure

# Who is on the IEP Team?

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- **Parents and student**
- At least one **regular educator** if child is or may be in regular education
- At least one **special educator** of child
- **District representative** who is knowledgeable of general ed curriculum and can allocate funds
- Someone who can **interpret evaluations**
- Others who have **knowledge or expertise** related to child

# Evaluation

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- The process used by the IEP team to determine eligibility for special education services
- Comprehensive enough to identify full range of needs
- Non-discriminatory testing procedures
  - IDEA 2004 rephrases the “native language” requirement

# Evaluation

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In all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities

# Eligibility Determination

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- IEP team convenes when evaluation is complete
- IEP team determines whether child is eligible under one or more of the IDEA eligibility categories

# Eligibility Categories

AUTISM	DEAF-BLINDNESS	DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY (3-5)	EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE
HEARING IMPAIRMENT	INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY	MULTIPLE DISABILITIES	ORTHOPEDIC IMPAIRMENT
OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENT	SPEECH LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT	TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY	SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY
VISUAL IMPAIRMENT			

# What if there is Disagreement?

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- Parent may request independent educational evaluation at public expense.
- District must provide or request a due process hearing.
- Results of IEE only need to be *considered*

# Individual Education Program (IEP)

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- Is a LEGAL document
- Is the centerpiece of IDEA
- Is developed by the IEP team
- Is reviewed at least annually
- Details the special education and related services the district will provide to meet the student's individual needs

# IEP Components

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- Prior written notice
- Present level of performance
- Measurable goals and objectives
- Special and related services
- Time with non-disabled peers
- Accommodations and modifications
- Initiation, intensity, frequency, location of services
- Statement of how progress will be measured
- Transition planning for students >15 yrs

# Prior Written Notice

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- For significant decisions made regarding eligibility, evaluation, IEP, or placement
- Must contain a description of the action proposed or refused
- In parents native language
- Provided at least 5 days **before** decision is put into place

## Present Levels of Performance

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- Objective, measurable statements
- Effect of disability on participation in regular education curriculum
- Includes **strengths** and needs
- Needs reflected in goals and services

# Measurable Goals and Objectives

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- Written for services related to child's disability/needs
- Using clear, understandable language
- Measurable, measurable, measurable

## Poorly Written Goals

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- Sally will demonstrate investment in the learning process
- Tom will improve social skills
- Jenny will increase her reading skills by 75%
- Allison will reduce disruptive behavior by 75%

# Clear and Measurable Goals

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- Given daily individual reading instruction, Pam will increase her independent reading level from 4<sup>th</sup> grade to 6<sup>th</sup> grade, as measured by the ABC reading assessment
- Given a verbal prompt, Dan will begin a task within 1 minute, four out of five times

# Special Education and Related Services

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- Supplementary aids and services, program modifications, supports for school personnel
- To enable child to progress in the regular education curriculum
- Must include all needed services, whether or not they are available in district

# Special Education and Related Services

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- Amount of time for services must be clear to all who develop/implement IEP
- Range of times is not acceptable (OSEP)
- Methodologies and approaches must be discussed but law does not require that they be included in the IEP document

## Extended School Year (ESY)

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- Summer, extended day, extended week
- Determined by IEP team
- Regression is not the only criteria for summer program
- Cannot be “cookie cutter”

# Behavioral Intervention Plan

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- Whenever behavior impedes learning of student or others
- Functional behavior analysis and plan created or revised

# Manifestation Determination

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- If school is considering removal of more than 10 days, must determine if behavior is a manifestation of child's disability
- If YES, cannot remove the child. Must address behavior as part of IEP
- IDEA 2004—burden of proof shifts from school to family

## Participation with Non-Disabled Peers

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- Broad requirement covering entire day
- In CT, includes participation in extracurricular activities per P.J. settlement agreement

# Modifications and Adaptations

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- Tests, homework, assignments, grading and more
- Regular educator must participate in determination of modifications

# Testing Accommodations

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- Participation in state and district wide assessments
- Modifications as appropriate

# Progress Reporting

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- At least as often as reporting for regular education students
- Must specify whether rate of progress is sufficient to achieve annual goal

# Transition

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- First IEP meeting after the student's 15<sup>th</sup> birthday
  - Instruction
  - Related services
  - Community experiences
  - Post school activities (work, college, etc.)
  - If appropriate, daily living skills

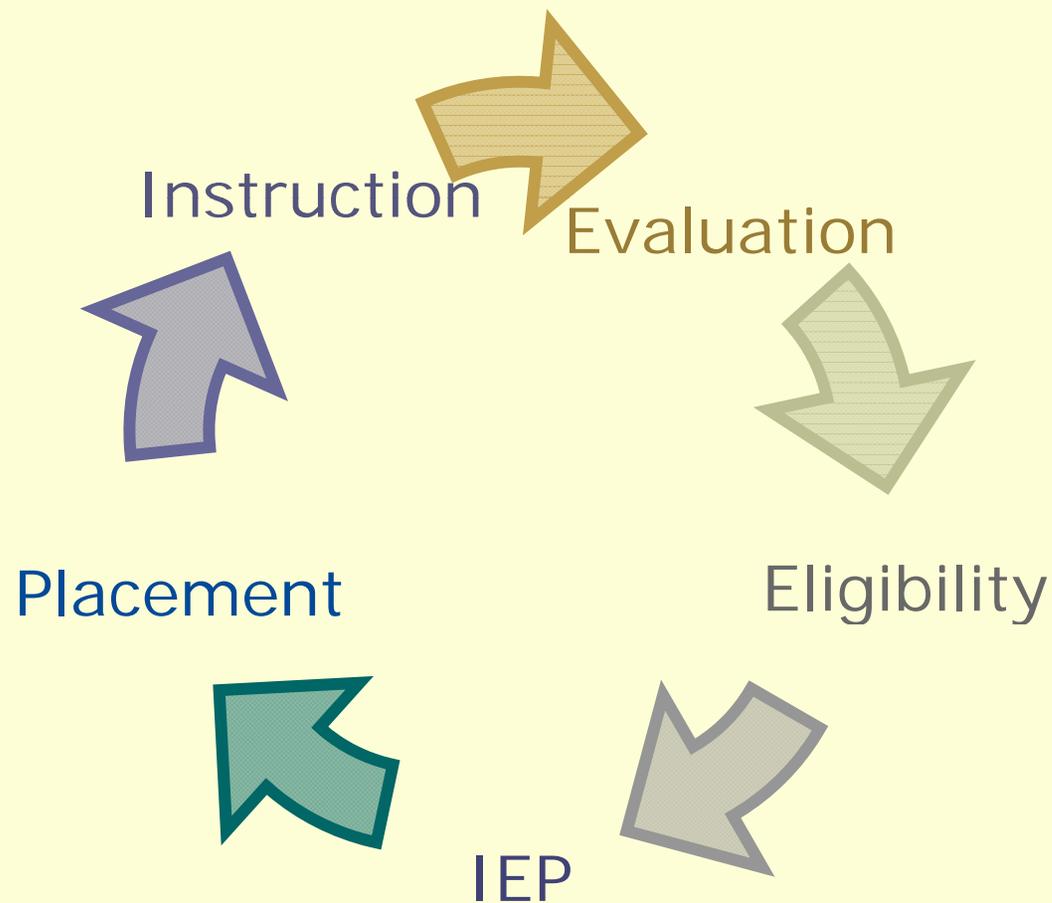
# Placement

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- Individually determined
- Based on the child's IEP
- Determined by the IEP team
- In the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- Determined at least annually

# The IEP Cycle:

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# It's a partnership...

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## What **educators** bring:

- Professional skills and experience
- Individual areas of expertise
- Access to research and professional development

## What **parents** bring:

- Lifelong commitment and knowledge of their child
- Individual areas of expertise
- Community linkages