

Lakehurst School District

Lakehurst Elementary School

Special Education Parent Handbook 2012 - 2013



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

CHILD STUDY TEAM

INTERVENTION & REFERRAL SERVICES TEAM

CHILD STUDY TEAM EVALUATION

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN

ANNUAL REVIEW AND EVALUATION

RELATED SERVICES

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF DIRECTORY



Introduction

As the parent of a special education student, you are a key part of the process that provides an appropriate and caring educational experience for your child. You are the advocate who remains a constant in your child's life as he or she progresses through the school system. This handbook is an effort to provide you with clear and accurate information that will help you work effectively with district personnel. It does not replace state laws and guidelines, which are detailed in separate booklets that you will receive throughout your child's education. This booklet is a resource in tandem with your personal communication with district professionals.

Special Education Services

The district provides special education programs and related services to all eligible students, ages 3-21. We offer a continuum of programs designed to educate students in the "least restrictive environment." This could include: modification of the general education program, resource center instruction, special class programs in district, and special class programs outside district (another public school, county special services, school district, or an approved private school for special education). Lakehurst's Child Study Team works with parents and teachers to screen, evaluate and determine whether a child needs special education.

Who is on the Child Study Team?

School Social Worker

The social worker conducts a needs assessment which is best known as a "social history evaluation." This needs assessment includes a study of biophysical factors that interfere with children's adjustment to and performance in school. It is through this evaluation that social, emotional, physical, behavioral, and cultural factors are identified in order to assess their impact on the student's learning. For certain students the school social worker provides counseling, crisis intervention, or consultation services.

Learning Disabilities Teacher-Consultant (LDT-C) (Learning Consultant)

The LDT-C reviews the student's educational history, confers with the classroom teachers and evaluates and analyzes academic performance and learning characteristics. The LDT-C's role is to determine the student's academic levels of functioning, areas of strengths and weaknesses, learning style, and educational needs.

School Psychologist

The school psychologist confers with the students' teachers and assesses the student's current cognitive (thinking and learning), social, adaptive, and emotional status. The activities involved in the evaluation vary at times from student to student but, in general, most children are given a cognitive assessment to determine a child's likelihood for success within the academic arena. For certain students the school psychologist provides counseling, crisis intervention or consultation services.

Case Manager

In addition to their respective roles, the social worker, school psychologist, and learning consultant also serve as case managers for students receiving special education services. Students are assigned a case manager at the time of the referral, however, periodically there are changes in assignments. The case manager coordinates the evaluation process and IEP development, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the IEP. The case manager facilitates communication between home and school and coordinates the annual review and reevaluation process. The case manager is knowledgeable about the student's educational needs and program, about special education procedures and procedural safeguards, and is responsible for transition planning. A speech/language therapist may also serve as a case manager.

I&RS The First Step In the Referral Process

The Intervention and Referral Services team (I&RS) serves as a resource for teachers and is an integral part of the pre-referral process. The purpose of the I&RS is to address any possible concerns teachers may have regarding their student's academic, social, or emotional functioning. Based on meetings with teachers, the I&RS develops case-specific strategies for use in regular education classrooms. Teachers then implement these strategies according to I&RS team recommendations. If the strategies are not effective, they may be revised or, if it is suspected that the student is potentially educationally disabled, a referral will be made to the Child Study Team (CST). I&RS team members often include, but are not limited to, the school principal, nurse, counselor, learning consultant, special education teachers, and regular education teachers. I&RS teams may also include parents, speech therapists, or reading specialists. Parents are always notified if their child is referred to I&RS. Parents can always request a CST evaluation before, during, or after the I&RS process. Written requests for CST evaluations should be directed to the Supervisor of Special Education.

The Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

Upon completion of the evaluation, an eligibility conference will be held to discuss whether the student meets the special education code criteria. A copy of the collaborative Child Study Team finding report will be given to the parents. Subsequently, but usually immediately following this conference, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) conference will be held.

At this meeting the student's educational strengths and needs will be considered to determine what goals and objectives will ensure that the student receives appropriate placement in an educational program. The evaluations, determination of eligibility for services, and (if eligible), the development and implementation of the IEP shall be completed within 90 calendar days of the district's receipt of parental permission to evaluate.

Child Study Team Evaluation

The Child Study Team will review the referral from the I&RS team and schedule a conference with the parents and teachers to determine if an evaluation is warranted, and if so, develop the evaluation plan. This group, together with others, is identified as the IEP Team and will

continue as such throughout the evaluation and in the development of Individualized Education Plans (IEP). In this meeting, if it has been determined that an evaluation is warranted, the Child Study Team and the parents will discuss which evaluations will be used to best determine strengths, limitations, and potential eligibility for services. Child Study Team evaluations usually include, but are not limited to, a social case history, psychological and educational assessments, speech and language assessments, and a screening by the school nurse. Data will be collected through observations, teacher interviews, record review, individual testing with a school psychologist and/or learning consultant, and interviews with the parents and the child. Parents will receive a letter confirming the meeting date, time, location, and participants. The IEP team includes, but is not limited to the following people:

- The child's parents;
- The child's teacher;
- The student, if appropriate;
- A person qualified to provide or supervise the provision of special education, i.e., a special education teacher, principal, or teacher consultant;
- Other individuals requested to attend the conference by parents or school officials;
- A representative of the Child Study Team.

Program Overview

The New Jersey Administrative Code for special education and the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ensure that children with disabilities receive a free, appropriate, public education in the least restrictive environment. In accordance with the least restrictive environment, the first placement option considered is the regular education classroom with the necessary supplemental aids and supports to enable the student to meet his/her educational goals. Other programs include, but are not limited to:

- **Collaborative Programs**

Collaborative programs take place in the general educational classroom. Two or more teachers work in a coactive and coordinated fashion to jointly teach all students in the general education classroom.

- **Resource Center Programs**

Resource programs offer small group instruction in a separate room and/or in the general education classroom for a short period of time each day. Resource programs can either replace or support general education instruction.

Replacement instruction takes the place of instruction in the classroom. Alternative teaching strategies are used to meet the learning needs of each student.

Support instruction provides students with instruction in study skills and assistance in organizing and/or understanding material that is being taught in the regular education classroom.

- **Self-Contained Classrooms**

Special classes offer small group instruction in a special education classroom. Students remain in this class for a major portion of the day.

Annual Review and Evaluation

The IEP Team will meet once a year, or more if necessary, to review and revise the IEP. The Team will discuss strengths, weaknesses, and progress of the student and plan for the following year accordingly. In addition to annual reviews, the Child Study Team must complete a re-evaluation of the student once every three years. The IEP Team determines the scope of the reevaluation by reviewing existing data. Further assessments are not conducted if the IEP Team finds that continuing eligibility could be determined from existing data. However, if a re-evaluation is warranted, the IEP Team will determine the assessments needed and obtain parental consent. Once testing is complete, the IEP Team meets to discuss findings and plan programming.

What Other Related Services Does the School District Offer?

There is a range of services offered through the school district in order to meet the goals of a child's IEP. Not all services are needed by each child, and a child may need a particular service at one time in his/her educational career, but not at other times. For example, a child who requires speech therapy in first grade may have met the speech goals in his/her IEP by third grade and no longer need this service.

Counseling

Counseling may be provided by certified school psychologists, social workers, or guidance counselors.

Occupational Therapy (OT)

Occupational therapy helps with the student's fine motor, and especially hand-writing skills, along with the daily living skills necessary for the child to master the job of being a student.

This includes organization and caring for belongings, as well as other skills appropriate to the child's age and level in school.

Physical Therapy (PT)

Physical Therapy assists with the student's gross motor skills, total body movements/posture, and mobility. In addition, P.T. works on muscle tone, range of motion, postural ability, bilateral co-ordinates, quality of movement, balance and equilibrium. The P.T. is also a consultant to teachers and other school personnel to enhance student performance in their academic placement.

Speech/Language Therapy

The Speech and Language Services assists students with disorders of articulation, language, voice, fluency, and auditory skills. Therapeutic interventions are designed and implemented for those children whose difficulty interferes with their academic success or ability to communicate effectively. The Speech and Language Specialist provides individual and/or small group opportunities for the sequential development of speaking and listening skills.

Transportation

Transportation can be provided as a related service if needed. This may include special transportation equipment, transportation aides and special arrangements for other assistance to and from and in and around school. For out of district placements, transportation is consistent with the school calendar of the receiving school.



Community Resources

Advocacy

NJ Protection and Advocacy, Inc. 800-922-7233
Parent Education Network 800-522-5827
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, Inc. (SPAN) 800-654-SPAN
Autism NJ 800-4-AUTISM
NJ Coalition for Inclusive Education 732-613-0400
National Ctr. for Learning Disabilities 212-545-7510
National Federation of the Blind 410-659-9314

Education

Dept. of Ed. Office of Sp. Ed. Programs 609-633-6833
Education Resource Info. Center (ERIC) 800-328-0272

Government Agencies and Committees

Division of Developmental Disabilities 800-832-9173
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation 856-757-2775
Library for the Blind and Handicapped 800-792-8322
NJ Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired 732-255-0720
NJ Developmental Disabilities Council 609-792-7114
Early Intervention Project Child (ages 0-3 years) 609-588-8515

Organizations and Support Groups

Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (CHADD)
National 800-233-4050
National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities
(NICHCY) 800-695-0285
Parents of Blind Children — NJ (POBC-NJ) 973-377-0976
United Cerebral Palsy Assoc. of NJ (UCP) 888-322-1918
Variety Club, The Children's Charity 215-735-0803

Student Services Directory

Dr. Clifford E. Barneman - Supervisor of Special Services

Child Study Team

Dr. Clifford Barneman - School Psychologist
Yvette Durrett, M.S.W, L.C.S.W. - School Social Worker
Michele Welch, M.A. - LDT-C

Sharon Cruser - Child Study Team Secretary

Speech & Language Specialist

Heather Murray, M.A.

Occupational Therapist

Paula Connolly-Close, M.A.

Physical Therapist

Dr. Michael Mundry

Adaptive Physical Education

Jennifer Gennarelli
Bryan Vargas

Paraprofessionals

Joyce Ball
Maryanne Capasso
Leigh Ann Fedor
Kimberly Foca
Laura Mahoney
Karla O'Malley
Carolyn Potkay
Karen Robinson
Shirley Seaman
Carolynn Surgent

Joyce VanPelt
Alexis Visicaro