

## Preschool Special Education

### Overview:

Preschool special education services are available for children age 3 to 5 who have disabilities or developmental delays that impact their ability to learn. These services are provided to eligible children free of charge by the NYC Department of Education (DOE). The Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) is responsible for coordinating special education evaluations for preschool children. Regional CPSE offices serve families in their **home** school districts, regardless of where their children attend school. For CPSE contact information, please visit the NYC DOE webpage <http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/SpecialEducation/Help/Contacts/CSECPSE>.

### The CPSE Process:



### Referral:

Prior to making a referral to the CPSE, families and teachers should work together to implement a variety of developmental and academic interventions to support the child. A referral must:

- Be made **in writing** to the CPSE that serves the family's home district; and
- Come from a parent, principal of a DOE school, or CPSE administrator.

A referral should:

- Request a preschool special education evaluation;
- Describe any specific areas of concern and any services the child received in the past;
- Provide full contact information to reach the family; and
- State the family's preferred language, if it is not English.

Another way to start the referral process is for someone else to submit a request. A request for referral may lead to a referral. A request for referral must:

- Be made **in writing** to the CPSE that serves the family's home district;
- Come from a professional staff member of the school the child attends or is eligible to attend, physician, judicial officer, or professional staff member of a public agency with responsibility for welfare, health or education of children;
- State the reasons for the referral and include test results, records, or reports upon which the referral is based;
- Describe interventions used to remediate the child's performance prior to the referral; and
- Describe the extent of parental contact or involvement prior to the referral.

Upon receipt of the referral, the CPSE will mail the parent:

- Notice of Referral;
- New York State Education Department Procedural (NYSED) Safeguards Notice;
- Consent for Initial Preschool Evaluation; and
- Listing of NYSED approved evaluation sites.

Upon receipt of the request for referral, the CPSE will, within 10 school days, agree to refer the child for evaluation, **or** provide the parent with a copy of the request for referral, inform the parent of his/her right to refer the child for an initial evaluation, and offer the parent an opportunity to meet.

### Evaluation:

The parent(s) will select an evaluation site. The CPSE administrator will assist the parent as necessary. The child will then undergo an evaluation that consists of: a psychological evaluation; a social history; a physical evaluation; an observation of the child; and other appropriate assessments as necessary to ascertain the physical, mental, behavioral and emotional factors which contribute to the child's suspected disability.

The evaluation site will:

- Explain the evaluation process and due process rights to the parent;
- Actively seek the parent's concerns, observations and relevant information;
- **Obtain written consent** for evaluation;

- Notify the CPSE that consent has been obtained;
- Conduct the necessary evaluations (formal and informal);
- Complete the evaluation summary report in the parent's preferred language; and
- Provide copies of the evaluation reports, including the evaluation summary report, to the parent and CPSE prior to the CPSE meeting.

### CPSE Meeting:

Upon receiving and reviewing the evaluation and summary reports, as well as documentation shared by the family, the CPSE will schedule a CPSE Meeting to assess whether the child is eligible for special education services. This meeting must take place within 60 calendar days of the date that the parent's consent was received, unless extended by mutual agreement. The parent(s) will be invited to attend the meeting. Other attendees include at least one of the child's special education teachers or providers (or a special education teacher or provider if the child does not yet have any special education teachers/providers), and may also include a representative of the evaluation site, additional teachers, and other individuals at the parent's discretion. **Preschool general education teachers are encouraged to attend** because at least one of the child's preschool general education teachers is required if the child attends a general education program.

The CPSE will determine that the child is eligible for services if the child's disability impacts his or her participation in age appropriate activities and there is a significant delay in cognitive, language and communication, adaptive, socio-emotional, or motor functional areas or the child meets the other criteria set forth in the regulations. If it is determined that the child is a Preschool Student with a Disability, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed. An IEP documents a student's current skills and abilities, establishes educational goals, and determines what special education supports and services will be provided to support the child's educational progress.

### IEP Implementation:

The IEP will include, among other individualized elements about the child, the following:

- Present levels of performance;
- Measurable annual goals;
- Recommended special education programs and services;
- Least restrictive environment, which considers the special education services needed by the child, exposure to children without IEPs, and proximity to the family's home ; and
- Accommodations and modifications.

#### Best Practices for IEP Implementation

- Ensure the IEP is maintained in a secure, locked location.
- Develop daily lesson plans and strategies to address student IEP goals.
- Collect ongoing assessment data to measure student progress toward IEP goals and inform planning and implementation strategies as needed.
- Hold ongoing meetings with providers (e.g., speech therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, SEIT teachers) to discuss and plan for support of students' progress and ongoing needs.
- Have regularly scheduled time for classroom teacher(s) and paraprofessionals to discuss plans for the day and for individual students.

### Annual Review:

The IEP must be reviewed at least once a year. The CPSE will schedule an Annual Review Meeting to assess the child's progress and decide whether the child's programs or services should be modified to reflect the child's least restrictive environment.

In addition, the CPSE will arrange for a reevaluation when requested by the parent(s), teacher, or service provider and when appropriate, as long as it does not occur more frequently than once a year, unless the parent and CPSE agree otherwise.

**Preschool Special Education Programs and Services:**

Before services are provided, the CPSE **must obtain parental consent**, and provide the parent(s) with prior written notice and a copy of the IEP.

There is an array of services available to support preschool students with disabilities. These services fall along a continuum from less restrictive to more restrictive. Less restrictive programs allow children to receive services alongside students without disabilities. More restrictive programs are available to children who require more specialized supports and services.

<b>Programs and Services</b>	<b>Description</b>
Related Services	Physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech/language therapy, counseling, orientation and mobility services, hearing, vision, and health services
Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT)	Certified special educator to work closely with a student on academic, emotional and social skills; can be delivered in small groups or one-on-one
Special Class in an Integrated Setting (Half and Full Day)	Recommendation for a classroom in which students with and without disabilities are educated together with two teachers (a general education teacher and a special education teacher)
Special Class (Half and Full Day)	Recommendation for a classroom that only serves students with disabilities whose needs cannot be met within the general education setting or integrated classroom
Residential Placement	Provided for a minimum of five hours per day, five days per week by a state-approved program at a site where children receive care 24 hours per day

Additional supports and services include a one-on-one paraprofessional, assistive technology, bilingual services, and behavioral supports.