

Special education overview

New York City schools work to ensure that all students with disabilities receive appropriate and high quality special education services.

Most special education students spend the majority of the school day alongside their non-disabled peers. Many students are part of collaborative team teaching classes (CTT), which are taught by both special education and general education teachers. Other students are enrolled in self-contained special education classes. Some students also attend school in District 75, which is a district that serves only children with severe disabilities.

Students who may need services are evaluated by a team of educators at their schools. An IEP (Individualized Education Program) is drawn up for those students who require special education services. A student's IEP meeting is attended by teachers who know the student as well as the child's parents. Students in non-public and charter schools receive evaluation services at the Committee on Special Education offices.

How are special education services provided?

Schools are assisted in providing special education services by three organizations:

Integrated Service Center (ISC)

Each borough has an Integrated Service Center (ISC) that offers schools one-stop assistance with most mandated and operational services, including some elements of special education. Each ISC has a Deputy Executive Director of Special Education and a team of experts and analysts who support schools. District 75 schools do not rely on the ISC. District 75 performs these mandated services for its schools.

The Committees on Special Education (CSEs) are housed at the Integrated Service Centers. The CSEs arrange for special education services for students in non-public and charter schools.

In each ISC, there is also an IEP specialist unit that oversees and enforces consistent standards for IEP development throughout the school system.

Office of Student Enrollment

The central Office of Student Enrollment facilitates student placement, enrollment, zoning, and choice programs on a citywide basis for all grade levels. If a student is recommended for special education services that are not provided by his current school, the Office of Student Enrollment places the student in collaborative team teaching or special education classes. The Office of Student Enrollment works with District 75 to identify and place students in need of District 75 programs as well.

School Support Organizations (SSO)

Starting in the 2007-08 school year, all schools selected a "school support organization." These organizations provide schools with instructional and curricular support—for general and special education.

How does the DOE provide parents with key information?

Parents have told us how important it is that they know which schools provide mandated special education services. To keep parents informed, we have created a Web-based Special Education Service Delivery Report that indicates the timeliness of special education evaluations and delivery of services. The report is available on each school's Web page by clicking on the "Statistics" link on the left side of the page. To find your school's Web page, go to www.nyc.gov/schools/FindASchool/.

Parents who have questions or concerns about the special education services their child is receiving should ask their school principal. If additional assistance is necessary, they should contact their District Family Advocate. Additionally, all parent coordinators, District Family Advocates, and Borough Directors have attended training on special education procedures and processes.

To make sure that our field personnel are able to respond in a timely and effective way to questions and concerns, the DOE operates a Special Education Staff Call Center so that principals, parent coordinators, and other school personnel can make a single phone call to get fast, accurate information to answer families' questions.

For more information about special education, visit <http://www.nyc.gov/schools/Academics/SpecialEducation/>.

For more information on District 75, please see the D75 Web site at www.schools.nyc.gov/d75.