

# Parent/Staff Special Education Reference Manual

**Holmdel Special Education Services Pre K-12  
Department of Special Services**

**36 Crawfords Corner Road Holmdel NJ 07733**

This reference manual is intended to provide the reader with information regarding special education services in the Holmdel Public Schools, along with additional information to support students with disabilities.

# MISSION STATEMENT

## *A Commitment to Excellence:*

*The mission of the Holmdel Township Public Schools is to provide a comprehensive and caring educational environment that will develop the potential of every student into achievement. In partnership with our community, the School District will support all of our students' efforts to meet and exceed the New Jersey Student Learning Standards, and to become responsible and resourceful citizens and lifelong learners.*

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All the information contained within is accurate as of July 2023. The manual will be updated as changes occur in staffing, program offerings, and state or federal requirements.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Holmdel 's Mission Statement applies to every child in our district. We welcome you in sharing the responsibility, and privilege, of educating your child.

As the parent of a special education student, you are a key part of the process that provides an appropriate 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 was prepared to provide you with clear and accurate information that will help you work effectively with district personnel regarding special education issues. It does not replace state laws and guidelines, which are detailed in separate handbooks that you will receive throughout your child's education. This book is a resource for you to use in tandem with your personal communication with district professionals in understanding the special education process.

## **ABOUT SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

A referral to the Child Study Team may be initiated by a parent/guardian, teacher, school nurse, school administrator, special services staff, medical specialist and other professionals or agencies concerned with the welfare of students when an educational disability may be suspected.

As part of "Child Find", public schools are required by law to develop a process for identifying potentially educationally disabled students. An educationally disabled student is one who may be experiencing difficulties of a physical, emotional, academic, intellectual, or social nature to the extent that the student is not able to function effectively in a regular education program. If a child is suspected of having an educational disability, the Child Study Team, parent and general education teacher will determine the scope of the evaluation necessary to determine the basis of the difficulties and provide data to assist in determining whether the student is eligible for special services. If the student is found to meet criteria to be classified as eligible for special education and related services an individualized educational program (IEP) is developed to address the educationally-disabling condition.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) confirms that parents/guardians are integral members of the IEP Team that plans an appropriate school program and IEP for the educationally disabled child. Parents and school personnel work together throughout this process in developing an appropriate program to meet the unique needs of each student. The district provides the full continuum of program options as outlined in the New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C. 6A:14).

The complete rules and regulations pertaining to Child Study Team procedures and students with disabilities are contained in the New Jersey Administrative Code, Title 6A, Chapter 14, Special Education. Parents/Guardians may obtain this document by contacting the Department

of Special Services at 732-946-1186 or by accessing the website @ <http://www.state.nj.us/education/specialed/>

## **CHILD FIND**

School districts are responsible for identifying children with disabilities living within the district who may have educationally disabling conditions and be in need of special education and related services. They also must evaluate these children to see if they need special education and/or related services. Each district must have policies and procedures in place for all children with disabilities residing within the district, and must be able to report to the state of New Jersey which children have been located, identified and evaluated. This includes children with disabilities attending private schools located within the District and students aged 3 - 5, regardless of where they attend school.

An ongoing effort must be made to locate and identify every child with a disability, ages three to 21. This search applies to disabled children who are already attending school and those who are not yet enrolled.

The district's Child Find activities include but are not limited to:

- Letters to doctors, particularly pediatricians
- Notices to area nursery schools
- Information to community organizations
- Postings at all libraries
- Fliers sent to area stores for posting
- Community newsletters and the district website

If you have a pre-school age child and have noticed that your child may not be developing skills such as walking, talking or playing like other young children of the same age, you may wish to talk to your pediatrician. S/he can assess your child in relation to typical developmental scales and can either reassure you that your child is within expected parameters or encourage you to seek the advice of a specialist such as a developmental pediatrician and/or neurologist.

Children from birth to age three are referred to New Jersey Early Intervention Services (NJEIS). NJEIS operates under the Division of Family Health Services, which implements New Jersey's statewide system of services for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities and their families. NJEIS can be reached at: 1(800) 367-6543; their website is: <http://www.njeis.org/>

If your school-age child is having difficulties in school, first talk to his or her teacher. The Holmdel School District offers many supports for students within general education. General Education interventions are available and progress monitoring takes place via Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS).

If you know of any child who may need special education and/or related services, please have their parents or guardians call the Office of Special Services at (732) 946-1186. For further information about scheduled Child Find activities, call or log on to [www.holmdelschools.org](http://www.holmdelschools.org).

## **PRESCHOOL**

When a preschool age child transitions from an early intervention program, a CST member participates in the transition planning conference arranged by the Department of Health. A written request for initial evaluation is forwarded to the district 120 days prior to the preschooler attaining age three to allow time for the CST to evaluate the student and if the student is eligible, prepare an IEP to be implemented by the child's third birthday. When a preschool age child is referred for an initial evaluation, a Speech-Language Specialist participates, as a member of the CST, in the meeting to determine whether to evaluate and to formulate the nature and scope of the evaluation. Parents whose child did not receive services through Early Intervention, but are concerned with their child's development may request to meet with the Child Study Team for possible evaluation. This request should be put in writing to the Director of Special Services.

Three and four year old half day integrated programs are available, as well as, a three to four year old full day self - contained program. If a preschool child is found eligible, the Child Study Team will recommend a program.

The **Preschool Integrated Program** is designed to educate children with special needs with their typically developing peers in a collaborative classroom environment where students experience a variety of early reading and math concepts, language development, fine and gross motor skills, related arts and social skills. The curriculum used in these programs, Tools of the Minds, is state approved, developmentally appropriate, and based on best practice in early childhood education.

The **Preschool Disabled Program** is designed for students with identified developmental delays in the areas of speech and language, motor, behavioral and/or cognitive functioning whose needs cannot be appropriately addressed in a general education setting. This program is designed to provide intervention in each of the developmental areas.

## **ABOUT CHILD STUDY TEAM**

The Child Study Team is a multidisciplinary educational team that is responsible to locate, identify, evaluate, determine eligibility, and develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for students suspected of having educational disabilities. This group of specialists is employed by the Holmdel Public School district to provide consultative, evaluative and prescriptive services to teachers and parents. The team provides evaluative services to children from ages three to 21 that have been identified as having a potential disabling condition.

Consultative services are available for any school-aged student exhibiting difficulty in learning or behavior. The Child Study Team (CST) together with district teachers, administrators, and I&RS committees make recommendations for programs and placements which will appropriately address the needs of students who are experiencing school-related issues.

### *Members of the Child Study Team (CST)*

The CST consists of a Learning-Disabilities Teacher Consultant (LDTC), School Social Worker, and School Psychologist. In cases involving a preschool student, the Speech-Language Specialist may function as an additional member of the CST.

The functions of the CST members include the following:

- Participating in the evaluation of students
- Participating in the determination of eligibility for special education and/or related services
- Designing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating progress and techniques to prevent and/or remediate educational, social, functional, emotional or behavioral difficulties
- Designing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and delivering appropriate related services to students
- Providing consultation services and support to special and general education staff

### *Case Manager*

A Case Manager is a member of the CST who is assigned to a student when it is determined that a student will be evaluated. Every student who receives special education and/or related services is assigned a Case Manager. The Case Manager coordinates the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of progress/effectiveness of the individual education plan (IEP). The Case Manager facilitates communication between the home and school and coordinates the entire process. The Case Manager is the parent's first line of contact other than day to day classroom-related issues, in which case, the classroom teacher should be consulted first.

### **PRE-REFERRAL PROCESS**

The Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) team serves as a resource for teachers and is an integral part of the pre-referral process. I&RS members typically include, but are not limited to, the school principal or his/her designee, nurse, counselor, CST members and teachers. I&RS may also include parents, special education supervisors, speech therapists, or reading specialists. The purpose of the I&RS is to address concerns teachers may have regarding their students' academic, social, or emotional functioning. Based on meetings with teachers, the I&RS team develops case-specific strategies for use in regular education classrooms. Teachers then implement these strategies according to I&RS recommendations. Parents are informed about the progress of their child through contact with the teacher. If the strategies are not effective, they may be revised and go through a multi-tiered system of support or, if it is suspected that the student is potentially educationally disabled and in need of special education, a referral will be made to the Child Study Team.

Parents can request their child be brought before the I&RS team. They would do this by contacting the child's teacher and/or principal.

***\*Parents are always notified if their child is referred to I&RS.***

## **IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL**

Whenever a parent, teacher, staff member or other person with knowledge of a child/student's development believes that s/he may be a child with a disability that requires special education and/or related services, a written request should be made to the Director of Special Services. The request should be sent to the Director of Special Services and should detail the reason for suspecting the student may have a disability that requires special education. This referral must be made in hard copy with a signature; emailed referrals are not accepted. This is referenced in BOE Policy 2460 (18).

The Director of Special Services reviews the referral and assigns it to a designated case manager. The assigned case manager then will schedule a meeting to discuss the referral within 20 calendar days of the request (excluding school holidays but not summer vacation). This meeting is attended by the Child Study Team, the parent/s and the student's general education teacher. If this Team determines that an evaluation is warranted, the specific assessments to be included are written on a plan. Parental consent is required for the CST evaluation to proceed.

## **PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS**

IDEA requires school districts to provide parents of a child with a suspected disability a notice containing a full explanation of the procedural safeguards (legal rights) available under IDEA and other state and federal regulations. This handbook is called, "Parental Rights in Special Education" (PRISE). Parents can obtain a copy of PRISE in any of the district's schools or at : <https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/parents/ParentalRightsinSpecialEducation2023.pdf>

The procedural safeguards must be given to you one time each school year and at the following times:

- When your child is first referred for evaluation;
- When you request a copy of the procedural safeguards;
- When your child is removed for disciplinary reasons and the removal results in a change in placement;
- When you file a request for due process with the Department of Education;
- When you submit a request to the Department of Education to conduct a complaint investigation.

## **EVALUATION**

Informed, signed, parental consent must be received in order for the school to proceed with the CST evaluation. It is important for the parent to understand the components of the evaluation and how the results of the evaluation will be used to determine eligibility for special education services.



An initial evaluation shall consist of a multi-disciplinary assessment in all areas of suspected disability. The evaluation is required to include at least two assessments conducted by at least two members of the Child Study Team in those areas in which they have appropriate training, or are qualified through their professional licensure or educational certification, and other specialists in the area of disability as required or as determined necessary.

The specific assessments a child needs is decided on an individual basis based upon the presenting issues. The evaluation plan will include assessments by professionals trained to assess specific areas. Persons from varying disciplines including but not limited to a school psychologist, school social worker, learning disabilities/teacher consultant, behavior consultant, speech-language therapist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, audiologist, and/or physician (i.e. neurologist, psychiatrist, neurodevelopmental pediatrician) may conduct assessments as part of the student's evaluation.

Examples of evaluations that might be conducted include:

- A psychological evaluation, which includes a standardized aptitude test that measures cognitive functioning, a clinical interview, observation and, as needed, social-emotional and adaptive behavior rating scales;
- A social history, which includes developmental, medical, and educational histories, and parent, teacher, and student interviews;
- An educational evaluation, which includes achievement testing, learning style inventory, and a classroom observation; and
- A medical evaluation/health appraisal, which could include a physical examination, visual and/or auditory acuity testing.

At this step of the process, parents will receive *Parental Rights in Special Education* (PRISE). After parent consent for initial evaluation of a preschool age or school age student has been received, the District has 90 calendar days to complete the evaluation, determine eligibility for special education services, and, if eligible, develop and implement an IEP for the student.

Parents are welcome to provide the school with information about their child that they want the CST to review and consider when determining if their child has a disability that requires special education and related services.

In the event that a parent does not give permission for the school to evaluate the child and the school personnel believe that the child is in need of special education, the school system may request due process seeking to pursue the initial evaluation of the child.

#### *Other Professionals Involved in Evaluating as Needed*

School Physician – A medical examination may be conducted to determine if any physical factors can account for the student's difficulty in school. This may include a vision and hearing screening and/or a standard physical examination.

Neurologist/Neurodevelopmental Pediatrician – This examination may be conducted if there is concern about possible open or closed head injuries (traumatic brain injury), autism or a pervasive developmental disorder, which would impact your child’s education performance.

Psychiatrist – This evaluation is conducted by a consulting psychiatrist to determine what emotional factors, beyond the scope of the psychological, may be influencing your child’s educational performance.

Audiologist – This is an evaluation by a professional whose specialty is in hearing. The student will be examined and tested by the audiologist to determine whether some dysfunction of the ear and the associated hearing mechanisms may contribute to school performance.

Behaviorist – These professionals specialize in identifying, analyzing and shaping challenging behaviors. Behavior specialists conduct comprehensive assessments including interviews, and observations in order to identify the function of problem behaviors (*Functional Behavioral Assessment –FBA*). These specialists use the data collected to suggest behavioral strategies, develop behavioral intervention plans as appropriate and collaborate with and/or train additional team members (teachers, therapists, aides) on the implementation of the supports. The behaviorist will also analyze and evaluate data on existing behavior intervention plans to determine if the treatment has been successful, or if modifications are needed. Holmdel School District currently has a certified behaviorist (BCBA) on staff.

## **INDEPENDENT EVALUATIONS**

If you disagree with the school’s evaluation results, you can request an independent evaluation. The maximum allowable cost for an independent evaluation will be limited to the reasonable and customary rate, as determined and approved by the Board of Education annually. This Board approved rate shall be provided to the parent upon request. The testing is done by a licensed professional not employed by Holmdel School District. The results of the independent evaluation must be considered by the IEP team. The district has the right to file due process if they do not agree with providing the requested evaluations.

## **AREAS OF DISABILITY**

The following disabilities are included in New Jersey Special Education Administrative Code at N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.5 (c):

- Auditory Impairment
- Autistic
- Intellectual Disability
- Communication Impairment
- Emotional Regulation Impairment

- Multiple Disabilities
- Deaf/blindness
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Preschool Child With a Disability
- Social Maladjustment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment

\*For a comprehensive list of the required criteria for each of these categories, see Special Education NJ Administrative Code, Chapter 6A:14-3.5

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Upon completion of the initial CST evaluation, an eligibility conference will be held to discuss whether the student meets the criteria to be eligible for special education and/or related services. A copy of the Child Study Team reports will be provided to the parents 10 days prior to the eligibility conference .

An eligibility conference is held to determine if a child has a disability and needs special education and/or related services. This meeting is attended by the child's parents and professionals who are knowledgeable about the child's learning and behavior in the school environment. The team should discuss every area of physical, behavioral and academic functioning that was thought to affect the child's educational performance. The team must decide if the student (a) meets the eligibility criteria for a disability as outlined in the New Jersey Special Education Administrative Code, Chapter 14, Title 6A; (b) if the disability adversely affects educational performance; and (c) is in need of specially-designed instruction and related services. All three criteria must be met in order for the student to be found eligible for special education. A student with a disability may also be deemed ineligible if that disability does not adversely affect the child's educational performance or if the student does not require special education to access the general education program.

## **THE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)**

Parents shall be given written notice of a meeting early enough to ensure that they will have an opportunity to attend.

Meetings shall be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time and place during the school day. If a mutually agreeable time and place cannot be determined, the parent(s) shall be provided the opportunity to participate in the meeting through alternative means, such as video conferencing or via telephone.

The IEP Team must include the following participants:

- The parent(s) of the child
- At least one general education teacher of the child
- At least one special education teacher or, where appropriate, at least one special education provider of the child
- A representative of the local education agency (LEA) who is:
  - is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities
  - is knowledgeable about general curriculum
  - is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the local educational agency
- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results. This person may be the LEA representative described above

Additionally, the following may participate as IEP Team members:

- At the discretion of the parent or the school system, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel, as appropriate; and
- The child, when appropriate

At a meeting of the IEP Team, data will be reviewed to determine the student's educational strengths and needs. Goals and objectives will be developed to address identified needs. The team will then determine the appropriate program for each individual student, ensuring participation in the general education setting to the greatest extent appropriate. Signed parental consent is required to implement an initial IEP. Any IEP prepared thereafter is implemented 15 days after you receive written notice of the proposed action, unless you request mediation or due process to challenge the IEP.

Generally, IEPs are designed to be implemented 15 days after development, unless parents and school personnel mutually agree to an earlier implementation date. Typically immediately following the eligibility determination an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) conference will be held, as long as you are willing to waive time to consider the student's eligibility.

The IEP document should identify the student's present levels of functioning, how the disabling condition negatively impacts the student's education, the special education programming and related services needed to address those along with the frequency, location and duration of each, the projected date for the beginning of the services, modifications and accommodations and goals and objectives. It may take time to make arrangements to fully implement the IEP, for example, if a child is assigned to another school for services and transportation must be arranged; if supplemental aids must be acquired and/or staff must receive specialized training.

\*For a comprehensive list of the required elements of an IEP, see Special Education NJ Administrative Code, Chapter 6A:14-3.7 (e) 1-17.

### *Accommodations and Modifications in the Classroom and for Testing*

The IEP team determines whether accommodations, modifications of curriculum or testing, or alternative testing are needed. The Team's decision is documented in the student's IEP and is based on the student's evaluation results, current level of functioning and unique learning characteristics.

### **LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE)**

Every child eligible for special education is entitled to an appropriate program implemented in the Least Restrictive Environment:

- To the maximum extent appropriate, a child with a disability is educated with children who do not have disabilities.
- A full continuum of alternative placements is available to meet the needs of children with disabilities.
- Special classes, separate schooling or removal from general education classroom is allowed only when the nature or severity of the child's disability makes it impossible to satisfactorily educate the child in the general education classroom, even with the use of supplementary aids and services
- The child must be educated in the school the child would attend if he or she did not have a disability, unless the IEP requires some other arrangement.
- To the maximum extent appropriate, a child a disability participates with children without disabilities in nonacademic and extracurricular services and programs, such as athletics, recreation, special interest groups and clubs, and lunch and recess periods. Children in out-of-district placements may need to be returned to the district in order to effectuate such participation. {NJAC 6A:14-3.7(e)(17)}

Some of the factors that are considered when deciding least restrictive environment are:

- What reasonable efforts the school district can make to accommodate the child in the general education classroom, with supplementary aids and services.
- A comparison of the benefits provided in a general classroom and the benefits provided special education class
- The potentially beneficial and harmful effects which a placement may have on the child or other children in the class.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY AIDS AND SERVICES**

Supplementary aids and services are provided by paraprofessionals, teachers, or related service providers in the general education classroom to enable students with disabilities to be educated as much as appropriate with nondisabled peers. Supplementary aids and services may include the use of assistive technology, specialized equipment or use of audio visual aids such as BookShare.

### **Paraprofessionals/ Monitors**

As the IEP team plans, they may decide that a student needs a paraprofessional to support the student or classroom teacher. The paraprofessional will address the overarching needs of the student identified by the IEP team. However, on a daily basis, paraprofessionals work under the direction and supervision of certified school professionals. A paraprofessional serving in a special education position may assist teachers in a variety of responsibilities and perform a multitude of tasks that are both instructional and/or non-instructional in nature.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Resource Programs** provide specialized instruction by a special education teacher to students with disabilities, in the general education classroom (in-class resource program) or in a separate Resource Center (pull-out resource program). An individual student may receive either in-class or pull-out resource services, or both, depending on his or her individual needs.

**In-class Resource Programs (ICR)** may be provided up to the student's entire instructional day, and may provide support from a special education teacher to enable the student to participate in the general education curriculum, or replacement instruction that modifies the general education curriculum and instructional strategies as required for the student's individual needs.

**Pull-out Replacement resource classes** may be provided for up to three subject areas per day, at the elementary level. At the secondary level, replacement pull-out resource classes may be provided for the entire instructional day. As needed, Satz Middle School and Holmdel High School offer resource replacement classes in core academic subjects required for high school graduation, including English, mathematics, science, foreign language and history.

**Self-Contained Classes (Multiply Disabled/Language Learning Disabled)** are for students in need of more intensive and specialized instruction. Special class programs offer instruction in the core curriculum content standards, but the general education curriculum and instructional strategies used are modified based on the student's IEP. For some students, this may include a modified curriculum emphasizing functional life skills and/or prevocational/vocational skills. Students placed in a special education class typically remain in this class for a major portion of the day, but may also participate in Resource/General Education classes as appropriate to their needs.

## **STARS Program (18-21)**

The Students Transition to Adulthood Ready for Success (STARS) Program offers an opportunity for students with disabilities 18-21 years of age who have completed the academic requirements for high school to focus primarily on their desired post-secondary goals in areas of employment, independent living and lifelong learning. The STARS Program places individualized focus on functional academics, communication skills, adult health and wellness, independent living skills, self determination training, career exploration, employability, and community integration promoting progress toward post-secondary goals and a smooth transition to adult life upon exiting school. To meet the required 150 a week physical exercise state requirement and to best ensure a healthy lifestyle will continue after students exit the STARS program, Option 2 is utilized. By utilizing Option 2, STARS participants learn to log their weekly exercise and engage in community adult recreation activities that can continue through adulthood.

Full year 10 Credits

## **EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR (ESY)**

Extended school year (ESY) services are special education and related services in accordance with his/her IEP that are provided to a student with a disability beyond the regular school year. The need for ESY services must be determined annually on an individual basis by the IEP team. The team makes recommendations for services based primarily on a regression/recoupment model. This refers to the amount of skills that a student loses during extended breaks and the period of time it takes the student to recoup the skills lost.

## **OUT OF DISTRICT PLACEMENTS**

Out of district placements include Public School Districts, State Approved Schools for the Disabled, State Operated Programs, Home Instruction and accredited schools that are not approved by the State that meet the requirements of N.J.A.C. 6A:14-6.5. Home Instruction is considered extremely restrictive and should only be utilized on a temporary basis.

## **IEP AMENDMENTS**

An IEP may be amended without a meeting of the IEP team if:

- (1) The parent requests in writing a specific change to the IEP and the school district agrees

or

- (2) The school district provides the parent a written proposal to change the IEP and, within

15 days of receiving that proposal, the parent consents in writing to the proposed change and returns the amendment to the district.

Any changes that are incorporated into an amended IEP will be provided to the parent within 15 days of when the district receives consent from the parent to make the change. The IEP amendment does not affect the requirement for the IEP to be reviewed at a meeting annually. {NJAC 6A:14- 3.7(d)(1),(2) and (3)}

### **IEP REVIEW AND REVISION (ANNUAL REVIEW)**

An IEP meeting must be held at least once a year for each child, and more often if necessary, to review and revise the IEP and to determine the child's special education program and placement. The team, including the parent, discusses the student's present levels, strengths, weaknesses, and the progress of the student toward meeting the IEP goals and objectives. Appropriate revisions of a child's IEP are determined by the Team based on these discussions taking into account parent and teacher reports, data as to the student's functioning and progress the student is demonstrating. The annual IEP review meeting is usually held around the same time every year, near the date of the previous year's IEP meeting.

### **REEVALUATION**

Absent extenuating circumstances, a reevaluation is generally to be completed once every three years. The reevaluation includes a review of all assessments, information from the parent, the observations of teachers and related services personnel.{NJAC 6A:14-3.8}. Based upon that review, the IEP team determines what additional data are needed to determine if the child continues to meet criteria to be classified as eligible for special education, and if so, what changes, if any, should be made to the child's program or related services.

The school district must obtain a parent's consent before the CST can begin the reevaluation. The reevaluation must be completed within 60 days from the date the parent provides consent for the assessments to be conducted.

### **RELATED SERVICES**

Related Services may be provided to students, ages three through twenty-one, who are eligible for special education and related services. Related services can include speech/language, occupational and physical therapies, counseling, behavior analysis and intervention/consultation, social skills, special transportation, etc.

#### *Speech*

The development of age-appropriate speech and language skills is important to the learning process and to a student's social and emotional growth, as it helps them comprehend what is



said, express their thoughts, make requests and communicate with others. A student of school age can be found eligible for speech and language services only.

### *Referral for Speech Services*

Among the many services available to students within our district, including students not eligible for special education, are those services provided by our speech therapists. Therapists are trained in techniques to identify, support and remediate a student's speech and language needs. There are two ways in which our district identifies which children may be eligible for speech and language services.

- A child can be referred for evaluation by the child's teacher.
- A child can also be referred by the child's parent who may send a letter to the Office of Special Services. (Parents are encouraged to reach out to their child's teacher to discuss specific concerns before making a formal request.)

Within 20 days of receipt of a referral a meeting will be convened to discuss with parents, teachers and speech therapist if evaluation for speech services is warranted. If an evaluation is agreed upon, once it is completed, parents, teachers, and speech therapist will reconvene another meeting within 90 days to discuss assessment results and, if necessary, development of a speech-only IEP.

### *Speech disorders can include the following problems:*

- Articulation disorders, which include difficulties producing sounds in syllables or saying words incorrectly to the point that it impacts academic performance or social interactions.
- Fluency disorders include problems such as stuttering, the condition in which the flow of speech is interrupted by abnormal stoppages, repetitions, or prolonging sounds and syllables.
- Resonance or voice disorders requiring prior evaluation and prescription by the student's ENT include problems with the pitch, volume, or quality of a child's voice that distracts listeners from what is being said. These types of disorders may also cause pain or discomfort for the child when speaking.

Language disorders can be either receptive or expressive. Receptive disorders refer to difficulties understanding or processing language. Expressive disorders include difficulty using language to communicate wants and needs and/or to interact appropriately with others.

Speech-language therapy involves having a speech-language specialist work with a child on a one-to-one basis, in a small group or directly in a classroom, to address the difficulties involved with the student's language. Speech-language therapy uses a variety of therapeutic strategies, including:

- Language Intervention: involves having a speech-language specialist engage and facilitate language based activities. The therapist may use pictures, books, objects, Augmentative Alternative Communication, classroom materials, or ongoing events to stimulate language development.
- Articulation therapy – articulation, or sound production, exercises involve having the therapist model correct sounds and syllables for a child, often during play activities. The level of play is age-appropriate and related to the child's specific needs. Articulation therapy can involve a variety of cues including a variety of visual, verbal, and/or tactile cues demonstrating how to make certain sounds, including how a child should move his tongue to produce specific sounds when appropriate.

### Orientation and Mobility (O&M)

Orientation And Mobility is part of the educational process for students with visual impairments to prepare them to travel safely, efficiently, and independently in their home, school, and community environments. The O&M specialist provides in-service training to general and special education personnel, administrative personnel, sighted peers, and parents concerning the O&M needs of the student and appropriate methods of interacting with the students who are visually impaired. Strong O&M skills increase the student's independence and overall safety.

### Social Skills

Social skills are interactions with others that create healthy and positive relationships. Children learn social skills through experiences with peers, examples and instructions from their parents, and time with adults.

It is vital for children to use social skills because they are the route to creating and developing positive ways of interacting with others. They enrich social experiences, and decrease the chance for negative interactions. Being the building blocks for friendships, social skills give children the chance to learn from their peers and learn how to be considerate with those they meet in the future. When used effectively, social skills can give children a sense of confidence and mastery over their environment.

### Occupational Therapy

School based Occupational Therapy (OT) is provided when a student needs services to function in an educational environment.

*What skills do occupational therapists typically address?*

- Fine motor skills: managing classroom tools and other manipulatives
- Visual perceptual skills: provide strategies for interpreting visual information
- Sensory motor processing skills: help to effectively process and organize information from all senses so that the student can effectively interact with the environment

- Self-care skills: dressing, grooming, hygiene, and feeding
- Pre-vocational skills: address prerequisite skills such as organization, sequencing, and time management
- Home management skills: basic meal preparation, home safety awareness, light housekeeping skills

The need for OT services is identified through the use of formal and informal assessments conducted by the therapist. Direct OT services consist of group and/or individual sessions provided in class or out of class where the child's specific goals are addressed through hands-on, purposeful activity. Consultation is provided, as needed, to maintain an ongoing communication between the therapist, parent, teacher and student to problem solve and try different adaptations to allow the student to function appropriately in his/her educational environment without the need for direct services.

### Physical Therapy

School based Physical Therapy (PT) may be requested when there are those unique situations in which gross motor skill deficits may significantly impact a student's ability to access their education. The school therapist works on school related goals to help the student access and benefit from their educational program. PT services can take place in a variety of school settings such as a classroom, hallway, gym, and playground or in separate therapy room. Collaboration with educational staff to modify the child's environment and daily school activities can also be part of school therapy.

### Behavioral services

Behavioral intervention plans and strategies are employed, as appropriate, to address behaviors that negatively impact a student's education. In addition, the Behaviorist may collaborate with CST members and teachers to develop strategies for students that may require additional support without requiring a behavior intervention plan.

## **OTHER FACTORS CONSIDERED WHEN DEVELOPING THE IEP**

### Transition

Transition services are a coordinated set of activities designed within a results oriented process, focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child to facilitate his or her movement from school to post- school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living and community participation. {34 C.F.R. 300.532(c) (3) (ii)}

One of IDEA's primary purposes is to prepare children with disabilities for postsecondary education, employment and independent living. {20 U.S.C. 1400(d) (1) (A); 34 C.F.R. 300.1(a); N.J.A.C. 6A:14-1.1(b) (1)} Supports are provided to students to ensure successful adjustments as they transition from one level or building to the next. At the IEP meeting, specific suggestions or plans are made depending upon the needs of the child and then included in the IEP as appropriate. IDEA sets forth numerous obligations for the school district to provide transition planning and services, beginning when the child turns 14, or earlier where appropriate. The IEP must describe, consistent with the child's strengths interests and preferences, a course of study and related strategies and activities designed to assist the child in developing or attaining postsecondary goals related to training, education, employment and, if appropriate, independent living. {N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(e) (11)}

At age 14 the student must be invited to the IEP meetings along with the parent. It is not mandatory for the student to attend every meeting but the parents are encouraged to bring him/her whenever appropriate. Parents are also encouraged to discuss issues that will be addressed in the meeting with the student prior to attending the meeting. Identifying and increasing student awareness of interests, strengths and preferences can be accomplished through completion of interest inventories and other informal assessments. Career exploration as well as student interests, strengths and preferences should be a consideration when developing the student's course of study.

Starting with the IEP that will be in place when the child turns 16, or earlier if appropriate, the IEP must add appropriate measurable postsecondary goals and "transition services" (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals. {N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(e) (12)} Postsecondary goals must be based on age appropriate transition assessments and related to training, education, employment and if, appropriate, independent living. In supporting the Student/Person-Centered process, students are encouraged when appropriate to present at their IEP meeting to share their interests, strengths, preferences and dreams for their future.

Transition services can include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and if appropriate, the acquisition of daily living skills and a vocational evaluation. To facilitate this process, the Holmdel school district utilizes a Transition Coordinator. The Transition Coordinator provides services and resources for students, parents, and staff in the areas of vocational evaluation, transition planning, employment skills development, and when appropriate, employment placement for students as follows:

- Provides vocational counseling and assists in student career and transition planning.
- Provides for the vocational evaluation of secondary students with special needs as requested by IEP Teams on a priority basis.
- Provides special services staff with the resources needed to develop and implement effective transition plans
- Assists students, as needed, in the acquisition of basic employment skills.
- Provides job placement services to students based on educational needs. These may be at job sites in the community and/or within the school district.
- Serves as a liaison between community business partners and adult support agencies, transition agencies and special services staff. Trains and directs job coaches to support transition programming for students.
- Provides families with transition information and resources.
- Collaborates with transportation, CST and the guidance department to coordinate student community Work Based Learning (WBL) schedules.

## **STRIVE**

STRIVE (Student Transition Readiness Independent Vocational Experience) is an in-district job sampling program. The program's goal is to expose students with disabilities who are 14 years or older to a range of job related experiences to identify interests/preferences and strengths. Students in this program participate in training and activities designed to improve workplace readiness skills (sometimes referred to as "soft skills"). A strong emphasis is placed on developing executive functioning (problem solving, decision making, working memory, prioritizing, mental shifting) and promoting self-determination and self-advocacy. Students are recommended to STRIVE by their case managers.

## **DISMISSAL FROM SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Following review of additional evaluations and data and a reevaluation, a determination may be made, during an eligibility determination meeting with the IEP team, including the parents or guardians, if the student no longer meets criteria for special education and related services, the child may be recommended for declassification.

If the parents or guardians disagree with the recommendation to dismiss the child from special education, they must request mediation or due process with the New Jersey Department of Education Office of Special Education within 15 calendar days.

Parents have the right to revoke consent to special education at any time. If that occurs, written notice will be provided to the parents of the proposal to declassify the student. That action will become effective 15 days later unless the parent revokes the revocation of consent in that time period.

## **MEDIATION AND DUE PROCESS**

There may be a time when the parent/guardian and the school district disagree. Many disagreements can be resolved by communication with your child's teacher, case manager, the school principal, or other school district personnel. There are also procedures established under state and federal law to address your concerns, such as complaint resolution, mediation, or a due process hearing.

A parent or guardian can request a mediation, due process hearing or complaint investigation regarding any issue relating to identification, evaluation, classification, educational placement or the provision of FAPE. {U.S.C. 1415(b) (5), (b) (6) (A), (e) and (f); N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.6, 2.7(a) and 9.2}

The NJDOE has developed information about dispute resolution which can be found at [https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/policy/disputeresolution/Files%20\(docs%20and%20images\)/summaryof%20due%20process.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/policy/disputeresolution/Files%20(docs%20and%20images)/summaryof%20due%20process.pdf)

### *Mediation*

The NJDOE must offer mediation, a less formal procedure for resolving disputes. Mediation must be voluntary on the part of the parent or guardian and the school district. {N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.6(a)} Any discussions that occur in mediation are confidential and may not be used as evidence in any subsequent due process or court proceedings.

The state provides a qualified and impartial mediator who is trained in effective mediation techniques to conduct the mediation.

A mediation conference must be scheduled by NJDOE within 15 calendar days of receipt of the written request and completed within 30 days. Mediation must be held at a time and place that is reasonably convenient to all parties. The mediator does not reach a decision in the dispute, but rather assists the parties in an impartial manner, in identifying issues, exploring options for resolution and, if possible, reaching an agreement. {N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.6(d)(4)and (5)}

At the request of the parties, the mediator may adjourn the mediation for not more than 45 days, in order to allow the parties to obtain additional information or explore settlement options.

If the mediation conference results in an agreement between the parties, the mediator will set forth the agreement in writing and the parent or guardian and the school district officials sign it. If the mediation session does not result in agreement, the mediator will document the date and the participants in the meeting. No record of the mediation will be made. {N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.6(d) (6)}

### *Due Process*

A due process hearing is conducted before an administrative law judge (ALJ) at the Office of Administrative Law (OAL). The ALJ in a due process hearing listens to, and accepts documentary and testimonial evidence and legal arguments from both the parents or guardian and the school district.

The ALJ must issue a formal written decision that summarizes the evidence in the case and explains the reasons for the decision; it is final and binding on both parties, though it may be appealed.

Stay Put applies pending the outcome of mediation, a due process hearing, or any judicial proceeding. This means that no change may be made to the child's classification, program or placement while the dispute is pending, unless both parties agree, or emergent relief is granted during the course of a due process hearing. {NJAC 6A:14-2.6(d) (10) and 2.7(u)}

A school district may request a due process hearing when it is unable to obtain parental consent to conduct an initial evaluation or reevaluation or to release student records. A school district must request a due process hearing when it denies a written parental request for an independent evaluation, or seeks to remove a child from school on the grounds that the child is dangerous. {N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.7(b) and (n)}.

### **HOLMDEL RESOURCES**

Office of Special Services

36 Crawfords Corner Road

Holmdel, NJ 07733

Director of Special Services: Amanda Lamoglia (732) 946-1186

Supervisor of Special Services: Kami Goldberg (732) 946-1186

Special Education Parent Advisory Group:

Holmdel SEPAC (Special Education Advisory Committee)

SEPAC BOARD

- Provides direct input on the policies, programs, and practices that impact services and

supports for children with disabilities and their families.

- Increases the involvement of families of children with special needs in making recommendations on special education policy.
- Advises on matters that pertain to the education, health and safety of children with special needs
- Advises on the unmet needs of children with disabilities.

### **GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND COMMITTEES**

#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

**The Holmdel School District has included the Government and Community Resources for informational purposes only. The Holmdel School District does not endorse any of the organizations listed on these pages.**

New Jersey Department of Education  
NJDOE Office of Special Education

P.O. Box 500; Trenton, NJ 08625-0500;  
(609) 292-0147

<https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/>

Monmouth County Office: 732-431-7810

Early Intervention, Project Child Find: 1-800-322-8174

National Association for Down Syndrome NADS: <http://www.nads.org>

National Info Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities

Phone: 800-695-0285

<http://www.nichy.org>



Division of Developmental Disabilities:

Phone: 800- 832- 9173 <http://state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/>

NJ Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired: (732) 308-4001

[www.state.nj.us/humanservices/cbvi/](http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/cbvi/)

New Jersey Department of Children and Families:

<https://www.nj.gov/dcf/>

United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights:

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>

Statewide Parent Advocacy Network:

[www.spanadvocacy.org](http://www.spanadvocacy.org)

New Jersey Department of Human Services Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing

<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddhh/>

NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

[www.nj.gov/labor/dvrs](http://www.nj.gov/labor/dvrs)

Supplemental Security Disability Insurance

Phone: 800-776-1213

<http://www.ssa.gov>

## **COMMUNITY BASED RESOURCES**

Parents of Autistic Children (POAC):

[www.poac.net](http://www.poac.net)

ARC of New Jersey

[www.arcofmonmouth.org](http://www.arcofmonmouth.org)

732-493-1919

New Jersey Coalition for Inclusive Education: <http://njcie.org/>

FRA (Family Resource Associates) 732-747-5310

<http://www.frainc.org>

ASPEN (Asperger, Autism Spectrum Education Network) <http://www.aspennj.org>

Learning Disabilities Association of New Jersey: (732) 645-2738

<https://www.ldanj.org/>

Traumatic Brain Injury:

Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey; <http://bianj.org/>

International Dyslexia Association, New Jersey Branch:

<http://nj.dyslexiaida.org/>

The Judy Center for Down Syndrome:

<http://www.imusenvironmentalhealth.org/our-services/joseph-m-sanzari-childrens-hospital/the-judy-center-for-down-syndrome/>

Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey:

<http://www.efnj.com/>

Tourette Syndrome Association of New Jersey, Inc.: <http://njcts.org/>

New Jersey Speech, Language and Hearing Association: <http://www.njscha.org/>

Cerebral Palsy of New Jersey:

<https://cpfamilynetwork.org/resources/resources-guide/cerebral-palsy-of-north-jersey-cpnj/>

New Jersey Association of the Deaf, Inc.

<https://www.deafnjad.org/>

NJ Children's System of Care (CSOC)

[www.nj.gov/dcf/about/divisions/dcsc/](http://www.nj.gov/dcf/about/divisions/dcsc/)

[www.performcarenj.com](http://www.performcarenj.com)

Perform Care 1-877-652-7624

Mobile Response 732-842-2000

## **EXPLANATION OF COMMON ACRONYMS**

|      |  |
|------|--|
| ADA  | Americans with Disabilities Act            |
| ADHD | Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder   |
| AI   | Auditorily Impaired                        |
| AT   | Assistive Technology                       |
| AU   | Autism                                     |
| BIP  | Behavior Intervention Plan                 |
| CI   | Communication Impaired                     |
| COTA | Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant |

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| CST   | Child Study Team   |
| DB    | Deaf-Blindness   |
| DDD   | Division of Developmental Disabilities                       |
| DOE   | Department of Education                                      |
| DCF   | Division of Children and Families                            |
| ERI   | Emotional Regulation Impairment                              |
| ESERS | Eligible for Special Education and Related Services          |
| ESY   | Extended School Year   |
| FAPE  | Free and Appropriate Public Education                        |
| FBA   | Functional Behavior Assessment                               |
| HI    | Hearing Impaired   |
| ICR   | In-Class Resource (co-taught with Special Education Teacher) |
| IDEA  | Individuals with Disabilities Education Act                  |
| IEP   | Individualized Education Plan                                |
| INTPS | Integrated Preschool   |
| LLD   | Learning and/or Language Disability                          |
| LDTC  | Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant                     |
| LEA   | Local Education Agency (School District)                     |
| LPT   | Licensed Physical Therapist                                  |
| LRE   | Least Restrictive Environment                                |
| MID   | Moderate Intellectual Disability                             |
| MD    | Multiple Disabilities  |
| OCD   | Obsessive Compulsive Disorder                                |
| OCR   | Office for Civil Rights                                      |
| ODD   | Oppositional Defiant Disorder                                |
| OHI   | Other Health Impaired  |
| OI    | Orthopedically Impaired                                      |
| OT    | Occupational Therapist/Occupational Therapy                  |
| OTR   | Occupational Therapist Registered                            |
| POR   | Pull Out Replacement   |
| PSD   | Preschool Student with a Disability                          |
| PT    | Physical Therapist/Physical Therapy                          |
| SC    | Self-Contained   |
| SI    | Supplemental Instruction                                     |
| SLD   | Specific Learning Disabilities                               |
| SM    | Social Maladjusted   |
| ST    | Speech Therapist/Speech Therapy                              |
| TBI   | Traumatic Brain Injury                                       |
| VI    | Visually Impaired  |

*\*Updated: September 2022*