



Autism In Orange County: Autism Resource Kit
Autism Services through the Ages
www.orangecountynyddconnection.com

School Age Five – Twenty One

If your child has not received special education pre-school services and you have a concern that there may be a disability, contact your local school district's Director of Special Services or Pupil Personnel. (Please refer to the list of school contacts available in this Resource Kit).

Step 1: Initial Referral for Special Education Services

Students suspected of having a disability are referred to a multidisciplinary team called the Committee on Special Education. The "referral" is a written request asking the school district to evaluate the child to determine if he or she needs special education services. This written statement should be addressed to the chairperson of the local school district's special education committee. Referrals can be made by the parent/guardian, the child's teacher or other professional in the child's school, doctors, judicial officers (such as a family court judge or a probation officer) or a designated person in a public agency. A student, over eighteen and younger than 21, who is an emancipated minor may refer him or herself. The referral may result in a request to have the child tested to see if he or she needs special education services.

Step 2: Individual Evaluation Process

The Committee arranges for an evaluation of the student's abilities and needs. Before an evaluation is conducted, you will be asked for your suggestions about evaluating your child and be given information about the kinds of tests that will be used. If you have questions about the purpose or type of evaluation proposed, you should discuss them with the chairperson of the Committee. Evaluations tell what your child needs to be involved in to participate and progress in general education curriculum.

An initial evaluation to determine your child's needs must include:

- a physical examination
- a psychological evaluation (if determined appropriate for school-age students, but mandatory for pre-school children)
- a social history
- observation of your child in his or her current education setting
- other tests or assessments that are appropriate for your child (such as a speech and language assessment or a functional behavioral assessment)
- vocational assessments (required at age 12)

As a parent, it will be helpful to share with the Committee the important information you have

Disclaimer: The information contained herein is provided as a service and is intended for informational purposes only. Please contact service providers for specific information pertaining to yourself or child

© 2007 Orange County Department Of Mental Health. All rights reserved



Autism In Orange County: Autism Resource Kit
Autism Services through the Ages
www.orangecountynyddconnection.com

about your child's skills, abilities and needs, including copies of any evaluations you have on your child.

Step 3: Review of Evaluation Results

After the evaluation is completed, the child's parents/guardians will be invited to a meeting, as a member of the Committee, to talk about the results. If the parent can not attend, they have the right to ask the district to change the time or place of the meeting. Based on that information, and information that the parent/guardian provides, the Committee decides if the child is eligible or ineligible to receive special education programs and/or services.

Step 4: Determining Eligibility for Special Education Services

The parent/guardian will receive a written notice that explains the Committee's decision, and the information on which that decision was based. If the parent/guardian disagrees with the decision of the Committee, they may request mediation and/or an impartial hearing to resolve the disagreement

A. Child is determined eligible for special education services

If the Committee decides the child is eligible for special education services, the Committee must identify the one disability category that most appropriately describes the child. In order to be eligible, a child must have a disability that affects his or her ability to learn.

- The educational classification does not prescribe the program or services your child will receive, nor is it a medical diagnosis.
- If your child has a medical diagnosis of Autism, Pervasive Developmental Disorder or Asperger's Syndrome, it does not guarantee special education services through the local school system
- Not all students with a medical diagnosis placing them on the spectrum receive an "Autism" educational classification.

The Committee will then develop and implement an individualized education program (IEP) to meet the child's needs. For school-age students, special education services and programs may include specially designed instruction and supplementary services provided in the regular class, consultant teacher services, related services, resource room programs, special classes, home and hospital instruction or placement in an in-State or out-of-State approved private school, and/or 12 month special service and/or program.

Disclaimer: The information contained herein is provided as a service and is intended for informational purposes only. Please contact service providers for specific information pertaining to yourself or child

© 2007 Orange County Department Of Mental Health. All rights reserved



Autism In Orange County: Autism Resource Kit
Autism Services through the Ages
www.orangecountynyddconnection.com

B. Child is Deemed Ineligible for Special Education Services

If the parent /guardian, with the Committee, decide that the child does not require special education services or programs, the Committee will provide information indicating why the child is ineligible. If the child is of school-age, the Committee will also send information to the principal of the child's school. The principal will be able to work with professionals in the school or with the child's current teacher, the reading teacher, the guidance counselor, or another specialist to help the child. The committee may make a referral under Section 504 (a Federal civil rights law) which is another multidisciplinary team within the school. There will be a written notice that explains the Committee's decision, and the information on which that decision was based. If you disagree with the decision of the Committee, you may request mediation and/or an impartial hearing to resolve the disagreement.

Step 5: Individualized Education Program (IEP)

If the child is eligible to receive special education services, the Committee develops and implements an appropriate IEP, based on evaluation results, to meet the needs of the student.

The IEP development process must consider:

- Child's strengths;
- The parent/guardian concerns for the child's education;
- The results of the child's individual evaluation;
- The results of any State or district wide tests or assessments; and
- Any unique needs related to the child's disability (such as communication needs, behavior, etc.).

The IEP evolves from a discussion that begins with how the child is doing in school (current level of functioning). From that base, the Committee agrees on the goals the child should be working toward. The Committee then discusses the supports and services and modifications that the child needs to reach those goals.

Step 6: School Placement

Finally, the Committee determines where those special education services will be provided (location and placement). The location where services will be provided and the student's placement must be in the **least restrictive environment**. This can include placement at the local district level, a BOCES classroom in a local district building, BOCES center of satellite program or private school.

Disclaimer: The information contained herein is provided as a service and is intended for informational purposes only. Please contact service providers for specific information pertaining to yourself or child



Autism In Orange County: Autism Resource Kit
Autism Services through the Ages
www.orangecountynyddconnection.com

Step 7: Annual Review/Reevaluation

The IEP is reviewed and, if needed, modified or revised by the Committee at least once a year (annual review). The student has a reevaluation at least once every three years, to review the student's need for special education programs and services and to revise the IEP, as appropriate. A reevaluation may also occur when conditions warrant or when requested by a parent or teacher.

NOTE: For Students ages 14+ a transition plan should be in place. Please See Transition Planning Section in the Resource Kit.

Reference:

Special Education in New York State for Children Ages 3–21 A Parent's Guide
<http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/parentguide.htm#plan>