

Committee on Preschool Special Education

(CPSE)

The CPSE is responsible for the identification of preschool students ages 3-4 years old with disabilities. Additionally, the CPSE is responsible for the delivery of special education services to children who qualify. A wide range of services and programs are available to meet the educational needs of all preschool students with disabilities. Under federal law, preschool students with disabilities are entitled to receive a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

What is Preschool Special Education?

A statewide preschool special education program with school districts, municipalities, approved providers and parents. Evaluations and specially planned individual or group instructional services or programs are provided to eligible children who have a disability that affects their learning. Funding for these special education programs and services is provided by municipalities and the State.

How will I know if my Preschool Child needs Special Education?

If your child received early intervention services as an infant or toddler up to age three, and may still need special education, your service coordinator will assist you with transition planning and making a referral to the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE).

If your preschool-age child (3-5 years old) did not receive early intervention services, but has some delays or lags in development such as difficulty in talking, moving around, thinking, or learning or is facing physical or behavioral challenges—you, or professionals who know your child, may make a referral to the chairperson of the school district's Committee on Special Education (CPSE) which will assist you in completing the referral process.

The CPSE must include: the parent of the child, a regular education teacher (if the child is or may be participating in the regular education environment), a special education teacher or related service provider, a representative of the local school district who serves as the chairperson of the CPSE, an individual who can interpret evaluation results, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise about the child, an additional parent member (unless the parent(s) of the child request that this person not participate), and a licensed or certified professional from the Department of Health's Early Intervention Program (for a child in transition from the Early Intervention Program). A certified or licensed preschool representative from the municipality must be notified of scheduled meetings; however, the CPSE meetings can be held whether or not the municipal representative attends.

Evaluation:

When your child is referred to the CPSE, you will be given a list of agencies approved by the State Education Department to provide preschool special education evaluations. You will be asked to select one of the approved evaluators, and then sign a consent form for your child to be evaluated at no cost to you or your family.

The CPSE will also give you a copy of the due process procedural safeguards notice. If your child's evaluation is not timely or, if you disagree with the evaluation results or the recommendation of the CPSE, you have the right to ask for an independent evaluation, mediation or an impartial hearing.

A copy of the evaluation report, including a summary of the evaluation, will be provided to you and to other CPSE members. You will be asked to meet with them to talk about the evaluation results.

If the CPSE finds your child is not eligible for special education programs and/or services, you will be given the reasons for the decision in writing.

How will my child receive special education programs/services?

If your child has a disability that is affecting his/her learning the CPSE will find your child to be an eligible "preschool student with a disability". The CPSE will also recommend the program and services to meet your child's individual needs and determine where they will be provided.

If your child is an eligible preschool student with a disability you and the other committee members will generate an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that will list the recommended services to be provided, how often, and for how long. The recommendations will be forwarded to your local school district Board of Education for approval.

What programs or services will my child receive?

If approved by the CPSE, arrangements will be made for your eligible child to receive one or more of the following special education programs and/or services recommended by the CPSE including, but not limited to:

- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Counseling
- Assistive Technology
- Parent Education
- Special Education Itinerant Teacher: a special education teacher works with your child in the setting recommended by the CPSE.
- Special Class in an Integrated Setting: a class of preschool students with and without disabilities
- Special Class: a class with preschool students with disabilities
- Transportation if appropriate