

The Kent ISD Special Education department, in collaboration with the **Parent Advisors for Special Education (PASE)**, has developed this informational handbook to make the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process more manageable and user friendly for parents.

This document provides an overview of the special education identification, evaluation, eligibility, and IEP process. It also provides you with information which will help define your role and assist you from the beginning to the end of your child's journey in special education.

Keep in mind that developing an IEP is a learning process that usually occurs over time. While it may seem overwhelming, the IEP team and process is developed to support your child's growth and progress. When parents and schools work together collaboratively, positive experiences, achievement, and results can be realized.

**This handbook should be used in conjunction with the Special Education Parent Handbook with Procedural Safeguards and other resources from Kent ISD and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE)*

**Additionally, the MDE has a wealth of resources for families on their Family Matters webpage*

Kent ISD
We Lead Learning



KENT ISD A Parent's Guide To Navigating The

IEP

Process



Kent ISD Special Education NAVIGATING THE IEP PROCESS

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SPECIAL EDUCATION

A Child With A Disability:

- Has the characteristics for a specific disability as defined in the Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE). These rules can be found on the Michigan Department of Education website at www.michigan.gov/mde.
- Requires specialized instruction provided by special education teachers and/or related service providers, in order to progress within the general education curriculum to the maximum extent possible.
- Is between the ages birth to 26, who has not graduated with a regular high school diploma.

Why Would My Child Need An Evaluation?

An evaluation is completed to answer the following questions:

1. Does my child have a disability?
2. How is my child currently performing in school in regard to present academic, social, and functional abilities?
3. What are my child's educational needs?
4. Does my child need special education and/or related services, such as social work, speech and language, occupational, or physical therapy?
5. What accommodations or modifications, if any, are needed to participate in the general education curriculum?

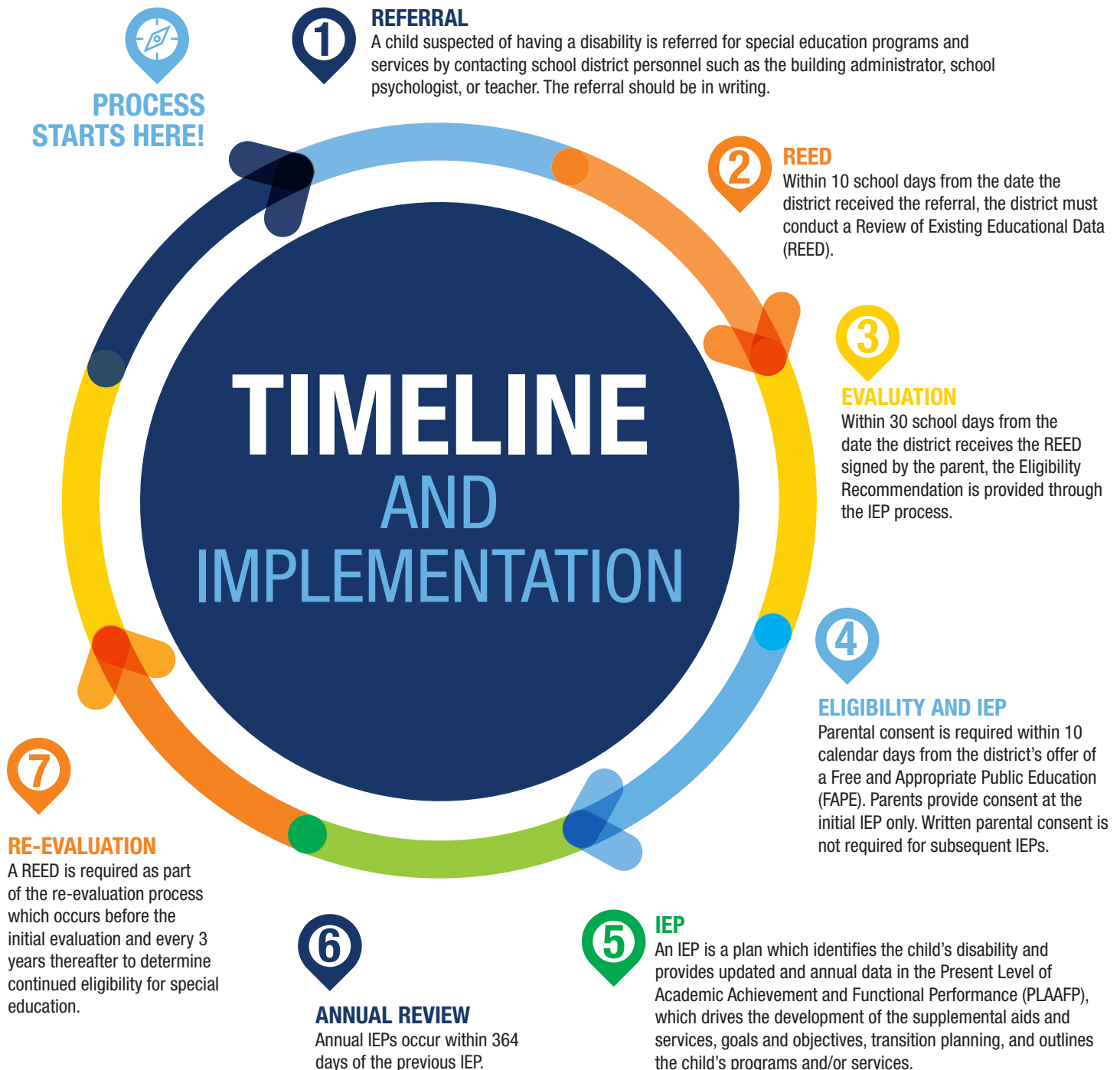
What Is Child Find?

There are two primary ways in which children are identified as possibly needing special education and related services:

1. **Child Find** requires districts to identify, locate and evaluate all children with disabilities.
2. A referral can be made by a parent or school personnel. If a parent feels their child needs an evaluation, it should be put in writing to the building principal, teacher, school psychologist, and/or other school personnel.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS

TIMELINE AND IMPLEMENTATION





EVALUATION PROCESS

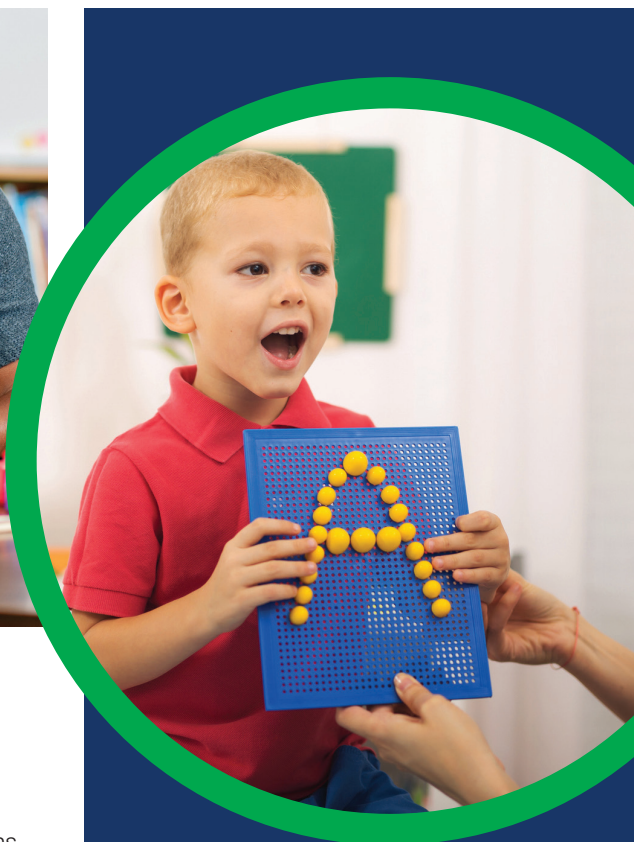
Review of Existing Educational Data (REED)

- The REED process provides a plan for the initial and re-evaluation and begins with a review of existing data available for the child and may include the child's classroom work, discipline records, performance on State or district assessments, information provided by the parents, and observations by teachers and related service providers.
- The IEP Team must also conduct a REED to decide what additional information is needed to determine that the student is no longer a student with a disability or no longer in need of special education programs or services. A district is not required to conduct additional assessments in order to terminate a student's eligibility. However, if the REED indicates a need for additional assessment, the identified assessments must be completed prior to the IEP meeting where the determination of eligibility will be made.
- The purpose of the REED is also to decide if the existing data is sufficient or if additional data is needed to support the student's IEP development. It is not required for a REED to be completed in a formal meeting.

Pattern of Strengths and Weakness (PSW)

- A PSW model is used in grades K-12 to determine the presence of a specific learning disability in the areas of oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading fluency, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, and/or mathematics problem solving.
- The determination of a learning disability is based on parent input, classroom teacher input, individually administered tests of academic achievement and intellectual development, classroom observation, student performance on state approved grade level standards, and other information determined by the evaluation team.

Other specific standardized and classroom assessments and/or checklists will be used to determine the presence of Early Childhood Developmental Delay, Cognitive Impairment, Emotional Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, Physical Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Speech and Language Impairment, or a Severe Multiple Impairment



PARENT TIPS:

- Provide detailed and relevant information on the parent input form to support the evaluation process.
- Discuss and bring examples (if applicable) to the evaluation and/or IFSP or IEP to support any concerns regarding your child.
- Provide any reports from outside therapists, psychologists, or psychiatrists to assist in providing a comprehensive evaluation.
- Consider reviewing the Parent Handbook with Procedural Safeguards prior to your child's IEP. You will receive this handbook as part of the IEP process.
- Please don't hesitate to ask your school psychologist or other related service provider for additional clarification if you have additional questions regarding your child's evaluation results.
- A re-evaluation is completed every three years to determine continued eligibility.

INITIAL OR RE-EVALUATION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION ELIGIBILITY

Ages Birth to 26

Students initially qualify for special education through a team consisting of **two or more** of the following: Professionals, such as Certified Teacher, School Psychologist, Speech and Language Pathologist, Social Worker, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist. It is important to note that eligibility for special education services is based on an educational determination of a disability, which includes meeting the criteria for a specific disability and finding that a student is in need of specialized instruction through programs and/or services. An outside medical diagnosis alone does not qualify a student for special education yet it may assist in providing additional data when qualifying a student for special education if there is evidence of an adverse impact in the general education setting.

Through the evaluation process, your child may qualify under the following school-based eligibility from the Michigan Administrative Rules Special Education (MARSE) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):

- **AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)**

Considered a lifelong developmental disability that is characterized by qualitative impairments in reciprocal social interactions, communication, and/or restricted range of interests/repetitive behavior that adversely affects educational performance.

- **COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT (CI)**

Characterized by a lack of development primarily in the cognitive domain and an impairment in adaptive behavior that adversely affects educational performance.

- **DEAF-BLINDNESS (DB)**

Children who have both hearing and visual impairments that adversely affects educational performance.

- **DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING (DHH)**

Characterized by students who are deaf or hard of hearing and refers to students with any type of degree of hearing loss that adversely affects educational performance.

- **EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY (ECDD)**

A child through 7 years of age who exhibits a delay in 1 or more areas of development (such as communication, cognition, fine and/or gross motor, social emotional, etc.) equal to or greater than 1/2 of the expected development that adversely affects educational performance.

- **EMOTIONAL IMPAIRMENT (EI)**

Children with significant behaviors and/or emotional concerns that are exhibited over time and adversely affect educational performance.

- **OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENT (OHI)**

Characterized by having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli which results in limited alertness to the educational environment that adversely affects educational performance.

- **PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT (PI)**

Characterized by a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects educational performance.

- **SEVERE MULTIPLE IMPAIRMENT (SMI)**

Characterized by 2 to 3 standard deviations below the mean and with 2 or more of the following conditions (hearing, visual, physical, health).

- **SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY (SLD)**

Characterized by a disorder in one or more basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may exhibit itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, or to do mathematical calculations and adversely affects educational performance.

- **SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DISABILITY (SLD)**

Characterized by a communication disorder that adversely affects educational performance, such as a language impairment, articulation impairment, fluency impairment, or voice impairment.

- **TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI)**

An acquired injury to the brain which is caused by external physical force and results in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment or both and that adversely affects educational performance.

- **VISUAL IMPAIRMENT (VI)**

Characterized by a visual impairment which, even with correction, adversely affects educational performance.





QUALIFYING FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

Individualized Education Program (IEP) Development

Developing your child's IEP involves two main things:

- (1)** The IEP meeting(s), where you and school staff members, and your child when applicable, work together to decide on educational programming for your child; and
- (2)** The IEP document, which puts the decisions from that meeting into a written and legal document. This document provides your child's present level of academic and functional performance, supports, services, and programming needed.

The IEP team will discuss your child's strengths, your concerns, areas of need, and what type of educational programming would be appropriate to address the identified needs.

1. Where and when do IEP meetings take place?

You and the school agree on where and when to have the IEP meeting. Usually, meetings are held at school before, during, or after the regular school day. The school must tell you in writing:

- The purpose of the meeting; the time and place for the meeting, who will be there; and
- That you may invite other people who have knowledge or special expertise about your child to the meeting.

Also –

- The school must hold the IEP meeting within 30 school days from the date the district receives the REED.
- You must agree to the program, in writing, before the school may carry out your child's initial IEP.
- The IEP must be reviewed at least once every 12 months and revised as necessary and does not require a parent signature.
- You may ask for an IEP meeting at any time if you feel that changes need to be made to your child's educational program.

2. Does the IEP meeting have to be in person?

- No. When holding an IEP meeting, you and the school may agree to use other means of participation. For example, some members may participate by video conference or conference calls.

3. Who attends the IEP meeting?

Under IDEA, certain people are required to be part of the IEP team. It is important to note that there doesn't have to be a different person for every role. Often, one person may carry more than one responsibility on the team.

- **You, as Parent(s) or Legal Guardian**
- **School Administrator or District Designated Representative** – a member of the school district who knows about the general education curriculum and the resources available to the school.
- **General Education Teacher** – at least one general education teacher, if your child is (or may be) participating in the general education class.

Continues on page 8

QUALIFYING FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

Continues from page 7

- **Special Education Teacher** – at least one special education provider who works with your child.
- **Evaluation Personnel** – someone who knows about your child's evaluation, what the evaluation results are, and what the results mean in terms of instruction. This could be a school psychologist, social worker, speech and language pathologist, occupational or physical therapist, consultant, an administrator, or one of your child's teachers.
- **Your Child** – Deciding when and how your child will participate in the IEP meeting is a decision you and your child can make. If the IEP team will be talking about how to prepare your child for life after high school (called transition planning), your child must be invited to the meeting.

In addition to the people listed above, you and the school can invite other people to the IEP meeting. This may include:

- **Translators or interpreters** – If English is not your first language, or if you communicate by using sign language or in another mode, the school must provide an interpreter, if you ask for one.
- **Transition personnel** – If the IEP meeting will include planning for your child's life after high school, staff from outside agencies may be invited to attend with your **parental** consent.
- **Others with knowledge or special expertise about your child** – Many parents find it helpful to have a support person at the IEP meeting. This may be another parent, a friend, an advocate, or a consultant.



4. May a member of the IEP team be excused from attending an IEP meeting?

Yes, members of the IEP may be excused from attending an IEP meeting in certain circumstances. If a member is excused, you and the school must agree in writing to excuse the member.

5. What happens during the IEP meeting?

At the IEP meeting the team will develop, review, and/or revise the IEP document. You and the other team members will work to create an IEP that is educationally appropriate and that the team can agree on. Before the meeting, the school staff may provide a draft of the IEP for your reference.

During the meeting, the IEP will cover:

- Your child's strengths;
- Your concerns for enhancing your child's education;
- The results of the most recent evaluation of your child; and your child's academic, developmental, and functional needs. This data is included in the Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) which is a critical component of your child's IEP as it guides the development of the rest of the document.

The team will also talk about what is sometimes referred to as "supplemental aids and services", "special considerations," or "accommodations" which will include the following questions:

- Does your child have communication needs?
- Does your child need assistive technology services and devices?
- Does your child's behavior interfere with his or her learning or the learning of others?
- Does your child have a visual impairment and need instruction in or the use of Braille?
- Is your child deaf or hard of hearing and have language and other communication needs?
- Does your child have language needs related to his or her IEP, because of limited English proficiency?
- If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," the team will talk about what your child needs and include this information in the IEP.

6. What are Related Services and how are they determined?

It is the IEP team's responsibility to include any services your child needs which is determined through a review of the evaluation information and may include an evaluation from a provider outside of the school district. Schools have staff who provide related services such as social workers, speech and language pathologists, and occupational or physical therapists. Goals and objectives are written for related services. This includes specifying how a child's progress will be measured.

7. How is my child's placement decided?

Once the IEP team has developed the PLAAFP and has decided what your child needs within the IEP, decisions must be made about where these services will be provided which is your child's placement.

In making placement decisions, the IEP team must make sure that your child has the opportunities to participate to the maximum extent possible to learn with children who do not have disabilities in academic, nonacademic, and extracurricular activities. This part of the law is called Least Restrictive Environment or LRE.

When discussing placement, the group should consider your child's unique and individual needs to determine what the least restrictive placement for your child is. A placement that is least restrictive for one child may not be least restrictive for another.

In making placement decisions, a continuum of placement options may be considered, such as:

- A general education class;
- A special education class or regional or center program;
- At home, in a hospital, or other institution.

A student's placement in the general education classroom should be the first option considered by the IEP team making the placement decision. The following questions should be explored as part of this process.

1. Can your child be educated satisfactorily in the general education classroom?
2. If the IEP team decides that your child's needs can be met in the general education classroom, with supports (Supplemental Aids and Services/Accommodations), then that placement is the least restrictive environment for your child.

8. Where are items that are discussed and denied noted in the IEP?

The IEP will provide Prior Written Notice that will describe the items discussed that will not be provided and/or are under disagreement. The Notice will tell you in detail what the school is proposing or refusing to do, why, and what information it used to reach the decision. This includes:

- Sharing other options the school considered and why they were rejected;
- Describing any other factors that are relevant to what the school is proposing or refusing to do.

9. What might I do if I don't agree?

If the team cannot agree on a particular item after discussion, consider making a note and coming back to it prior to the end of the meeting. Consider what are your negotiables and non-negotiables and what a compromise might be. Sometimes, the following words can help the team resolve an issue.

- "How can we reach an agreement on this issue to best support (child's name)?"
- "Could we try this for 6 weeks and see how it works?"
- "We can all agree that this is not an easy issue. But, we need to find a solution that will work for (child's name) that we can all support."

10. What if I still don't agree with the IEP?

If you have worked with the school team and still cannot come to agreement on the IEP, there are several options to consider:

- The data from the evaluation is important and is used to determine eligibility and develop the IEP. If you do not agree with the results of the school district's individualized evaluation of your child, you have the right to request and obtain an **Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)** from an evaluator that does not work for the school district and is paid for at public expense. To request an IEE, you would need to write a letter to the IEE team case coordinator or school administrator stating why you disagree with the school district's assessment and are requesting an IEE. The district has seven calendar days to respond to a request for an IEE. You have a right to one IEE at public expense each time the school conducts an evaluation of your child.
- If this is your child's first IEP, you can **refuse to give permission** for the school to implement the IEP. In this case, your child will not receive the programs and/or services outlined in the IEP.
- You can **file a written state complaint** with the Michigan Department of Education. When you file a state complaint, you must describe what part of the MARSE rules and/or IDEA you believe the school has violated. You must provide all relevant details in writing and provide copies of any related documents. The state will investigate your complaint, request additional documents if needed, and give a written decision to both you and the district.
- You may request a due process hearing by **filing a due process complaint** that must contain specific information which is sent to the Michigan Department of Education. Within 15 days, your school system must convene a resolution meeting between you and relevant members of the IEP team. The purpose of the meeting is for you to discuss your due process complaint with the school district which provides the potential opportunity to resolve the dispute. This resolution meeting can be waived if you and the district agree to use mediation instead.
 - The due process hearing is a formal, legal procedure, much like a court proceeding, which provides the opportunity for both you and the school to present your views to an impartial hearing officer. After all the evidence is presented and witnesses have spoken, the hearing officer decides the case and tells you and the district how the matter is to be settled. The decision is also provided in writing.
- Finally, if this is not your child's first IEP, you can **revoke consent** through a Revocation of Consent document which will discontinue the provision of special education and related services to your child. Once you revoke consent, the school system will no longer provide special education services to your child. If you choose to go this route, it is important to ask questions about how your child's education will be affected.

11. What is the difference between an IEP and a Section 504 Plan?

IEP plans under IDEA cover students who qualify for Special Education and require specially designed instruction and/or related services. Section 504 covers a student who is identified with a disability and requires accommodations to access the general education environment. Both ensure that students with disabilities have access to a free and appropriate public education.

INFANTS, TODDLERS & PRESCHOOLERS

Ages Birth to 3

Services for Infants and Toddlers:

Early On is Michigan's system for helping infants and toddlers, ages birth to 3, and their families who have developmental delays or are at risk for delays due to certain health conditions. It's designed to help families find the social, health, and educational services that will promote the development of their infants and toddlers with special needs.

Kent ISD **Early On** emphasizes early identification and early referral to enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities, to minimize their potential for delay, and to recognize the significant brain development that occurs during a child's first three years of life.

You know your child best, so you and your Kent ISD **Early On** provider will be working closely together on each home visit to figure out learning opportunities in your daily activities. Our focus is to support you in helping your child learn and participate in the things you do and the places you go. You will be provided guidance and support on how to use everyday activities to promote learning so that your child is receiving the best quality intervention.

After a young child (birth through 2) is found eligible for early intervention services, a team, including the parents and professionals will meet to develop the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

The IFSP (ages birth to 3) includes:

- Information on your child's current level of development
- Where and what kind of services will be provided
- Early intervention services are provided in what is considered the student's natural environment. Natural environment is defined as the place where your child would normally be during the day such as the home, a daycare center, or a preschool.
- The IFSP will also include information about your family's concerns and priorities for promoting your child's development.

Services for Preschool Age Children

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services include special instruction and related services provided to young children, ages three through five, who qualify under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA, Part B, Section 619). Each of Kent ISD's 20 local school districts offer ECSE programs and services to ensure the provision of a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to all eligible children at no cost to their families, and in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). LRE means that young children with disabilities should receive services in typical community-based early childhood settings and programs whenever possible, and only go to more restrictive or specialized settings when individual needs require it.

PARENT TIPS:

- Read more about your child's learning and thinking differences, watch videos or attend workshops. It can help you be familiar with your child's specific challenges. Explore your child's strengths, too, so you can work with the teachers and service providers to find ways that best support how he/she learns.
- Don't be afraid to ask for clarification, request further evaluations, or express your disagreement with the team's recommendations regarding services. Ask how your child's needs can be met in typical preschool environments or in community with non-disabled peers.
- Parents shouldn't feel pressured by teachers or providers to make a decision. Keep in mind that you're an equal member of the decision-making team. So, while it's important to be receptive to the staff's thoughts, you don't have to agree to something you think goes against what's best for your child.



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Ages 3 to 26

The IEP includes:

- Your child's present academic, social, and functional abilities which provides data for the development of measurable annual goals and short-term objectives
- Progress on previous IEP goals and objectives and how your child's progress toward the new goals will be measured and how parents will be informed of that progress
- Identified supplementary aids and services, which support:
 - Your child 's involvement and/or progress in the general curriculum, and
 - Other educational needs related to his/her disability
- A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and Positive Behavior Support Plan (PBSP) and/or assistive technology can be requested by the parent or recommended by a member of the IEP team. A data collection process would be utilized to support the FBA/PBSP process and/or would be used to determine your child's need for assistive technology devices and services.
- Accommodations your child would need to participate in the state and/or district-wide assessments. Note – If the IEP Team determines that the statewide assessment is not appropriate for your child, an alternate assessment may be explored.
- Transition services beginning between the ages of 14-16. Transition services include other aspects of adult life and may involve other agencies that are involved with your child.
- Programs and/or services with the projected starting date as well as the duration, frequency, and location of where programs and services will be delivered.
 - Program and classroom decisions are individualized and determined through the IEP process. These decisions are made based on the student's overall academic and functional performance and social/emotional functioning, and in looking at the student's educational benefit in the least restrictive environment. Placement decisions are outlined below from least restrictive to most restrictive:
 - General education
 - Resource room programming
 - Self-contained programming
 - Regional programming
 - Center-based programming



PARENT TIPS:

- Take your child on a tour of the building prior to school starting. Consider calling, emailing or meeting with your child's teacher prior to school starting or at the beginning of the school year if there are extenuating circumstances that can help with the education/transition process.
- Attend all orientation, curriculum nights and other events at your child's school to better understand what opportunities are available to them.
- Consider meeting with your child's caseload provider/teacher and/or social worker to update your child's Positive Behavior Support Plan if needed
- You will receive a progress report which outlines your child's progress related to IEP goals and objectives as often as the district provides report cards or as identified by the IEP team. Feel free to contact your caseload provider should you have any questions related to your child's progression at school.

TRANSITION PLANNING

Ages 16-26

- **Transition Plan** - By the age of 16, the Transition Plan portion of the IEP will be completed in order to include activities and goals that will support your child's transition vision. The core focus of transition planning is to address needs in the areas of:
 - Independent Living
 - Community Access
 - Education and Training
 - Employment
- **Course of Study** - Your student's Course of Study will be discussed at each Transition IEP. A diploma or Certificate of Completion (COC) are options listed within the Transition Plan of the IEP. A diploma requires your child to complete the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) and your local school district requirements (see Michigan Department of Education and local district website for graduation requirements). A COC is suggested when your child cannot fulfill the requirements outlined in the MMC. A COC is not an academic credential and there are no state course or grade requirements necessary to earn a certificate of completion. A COC is developed through the IEP process and is designed to meet your student's individualized academic and/or adaptive needs.
- **10th grade** - Students interested in attending Kent Transition Center (KTC) or Kent Career Technical Center (KCTC) are considered if applicable to your child's post-secondary vision. Students are required to complete a KTC Vocational Assessment. Additionally, after the assessment is completed, KTC will make recommendations regarding placement. Both vocational programs will fulfill a minimum of 2 class periods of your student's academic day.
- **12th grade** - A Summary of Performance (SOP) is completed when your child's eligibility for special education terminates due to graduation with a regular diploma or when your student completes his/her Certificate of Completion.
- **Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)** - Students are introduced to Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) typically in 12th grade (or may be determined necessary at earlier grades or ages) to explore competitive employment opportunities if appropriate. There are local attorneys and agencies that can provide resources and assistance with guardianship. Your district or Kent ISD can assist with providing options for this purpose.
- **17 Years of Age** - Students receive information regarding their educational rights. When turning 18 and reaching the age of majority, rights pertaining to your child's education transfer to him/her.
- **18 Years of Age (Age of Majority)** - Unless guardianship has been established, when your child turns 18 years of age, he/she will be responsible for his/her educational decision making. A Student's Rights Handbook will be provided to them for this purpose.



PARENT TIPS:

- Take your child on a tour of his or her school building prior to school starting. Consider calling, emailing, or meeting with your child's teachers or the teacher consultant prior to the school year if there are extenuating circumstances that can assist with the education and/or transition process.
- Attend all orientation, curriculum nights, and other events at your child's school to understand what opportunities are available to them.
- Have in-depth discussions regarding your child's post-secondary vision during the IEP process. These discussions will help the special education staff in answering questions and supporting the student's journey into college, employment, or a post-secondary program.
- Attend an open house and complete a program visit prior to enrolling at KTC/KCTC if your child is eligible and interested in attending one of their programs. Consult with the special education staff at the high school for more information.
- In planning for your child's course of study, you might want to explore the feasibility/appropriateness of a Personal Curriculum.
- Consider a level of guardianship for students with more moderate to severe impairments to ensure continued involvement in the educational decision making process and, if appropriate, to investigate alternative housing options and potential Medicaid benefits.
- You will receive an IEP progress report 2-4 times per year which outlines your child's progress related to his/her IEP goals and objectives. Feel free to contact your caseload provider should you have questions related to your child's progression at school.



POST-SECONDARY TRANSITION

Ages 18 to 26

- **Post-Secondary Transition Programming** – Students who do not receive an endorsed high school diploma or who have not met their transition goals through completion of a Certificate of Completion may be eligible for special education programs and/or services through 26 years of age or until transition goals are achieved.
- **Summary of Performance (SOP)** - The purpose of the SOP is to give students a document for prospective employers that describe the student's academic achievement and functional performance at the time of obtaining a COC or reaching the age of 26. It also includes accommodations and modifications that helped the student be successful in the classroom and/or community environment. A Summary of Performance (SOP) is completed when your child's eligibility for special education terminates upon:
 - Receiving a diploma
 - Completion of defined Certificate of Completion (COC)
 - When aging out of special education programs and/or services at 26 years of age.
- **Network 180** – Network 180 is Kent County's community mental health service agency. Numerous supports including case management, community living supports, mental health services, housing assistance, supports coordination, and supported employment are provided to individuals living within Kent County. For those individuals who qualify for supports through Network 180, services can be accessed by being Medicaid eligible.



PARENT TIPS:

- Students and families should connect with community agencies prior to reaching age 26 to ensure agencies like Network 180 can assist with transitioning support services from school to community. This may include the requirement to apply for SSI and/or Medicaid.
- Consider connecting with agencies like Disability Advocates of Kent County (DAKC) to assist in applying for SSI and/or Medicaid to ensure your young adult can access supports through Network 180 prior to special education programs and/or services ending.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ACCOMMODATIONS

Changes in how a student accesses information and demonstrates learning. Accommodations do not substantially change the instructional level, content, or performance criteria. The changes are made in order to provide a student with equal access to learning and an equal opportunity to show what he or she knows and can do.

ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION

A diversified program of developmental activities, games, sports, and rhythms suited to the interests, capabilities, and needs of children with disabilities who may not successfully engage in a regular physical education program.

AGE OF MAJORITY/TRANSFER OF RIGHTS

When a student with a disability reaches the age of 18, all rights afforded to a parent transfer to the student. The parent and student must be informed of the transfer of rights at least one year prior to the student's 18th birthday.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

Federal law requiring accommodations for people with disabilities in the community and workplace.

ASSESSMENT TESTING

Used for initial and/or re-evaluation and may include mental, social, psychological, physical, speech, occupational, vocational, or educational. Testing is completed by school district personnel to gather information about a student.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Any item, piece of equipment, or product that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. Assistive technology needs are determined by the IEP goals and objectives and IEP team.

ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

Persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that is more frequent and severe than is typically observed in individuals at a comparable level of development, and that interferes with developmentally appropriate social/academic functioning.

AUTISM

A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction that adversely affects an individual's educational performance.

CASELOAD PROVIDER

The person on the IEP that is in charge of implementing the IEP.

CHILD STUDY TEAM (CST)/STUDENT ASSISTANCE TEAM (SAT)

A multi-disciplinary team in schools that meets to support the needs of students with academic, social, and behavioral concerns. The focus of the team is to provide support to classroom teachers to implement accommodations/modifications so that students can be successful in general education.

CONTINUUM OF SERVICE

The range of supports and services that must be provided by a school district that allows students with disabilities to be provided a free, appropriate public education.

DUE PROCESS

A procedure guaranteed by federal law for resolving disputes regarding special education services.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION (ECSE)

Special education and related services provided to children from birth to age seven.

EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR SERVICES (ESY)

Special education and related services provided to a qualified student with disabilities beyond the normal school year, in accordance with the student's Individualized Education Plan, and at no cost to the parent. The need for Extended Services is determined by the student's IEP Team in considering a student's regression/relapse after an extended break from school, nature and severity of disability, and critical stages of development.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

A federal law which gives parents, and the student over 18 years of age, access to, and control over all education and school records.

FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION (FAPE)

Special education and related services are provided to students with disabilities by the Local Education Agency (LEA) and Public School Academies (PSA) at public expense and under public supervision and direction at no cost to the student's parents.

FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT (FBA)

A process of attempting to understand the purpose, motivation, and correlation of a problem behavior. The result of the process is the development of an appropriate Positive Behavior Support Plan (PBSP).

INDEPENDENT EDUCATION EVALUATION (IEE)

Education evaluations of a student by an evaluator who does not regularly work for the school district. Parents who are not satisfied with the school district's evaluation can request an IEE at public expense.

INDIVIDUAL WITH DISABILITIES IN EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)

The federal law that requires school districts to provide students with disabilities with a free appropriate public education at public expense. The act provides procedural safeguards and due process rights, as well as specific mandates regarding a free appropriate public education.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

The written plan that details the special education and related services that must be provided to each student who receives special education services. It must be reviewed and revised every year.

INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SERVICE PLAN (IFSP)

A written plan for providing early intervention services (ages birth through 2) to an eligible individual and to the individual's family.

INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT (ISD)

Kent ISD provides technical assistance and support to local school districts and public school academies within the county.

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

A federal mandate that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities be educated with children who are not disabled.

LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA)

The school district that is directly responsible for providing special education services in a geographical area.

MANIFESTATION DETERMINATION REVIEW (MDR)

The MDR is a meeting which must take place within 10 days of a behavior infraction that would cause a student to be removed from their current placement in a public school for more than 10 school days.

MODIFICATION

Changes in what a student is expected to learn. The changes are made to provide a student with opportunities to participate meaningfully and productively along with other students in the classroom and school learning experiences.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY EVALUATION TEAM (MET)

An evaluation or recommendation of a student having a disability by a group of individuals from various appropriate professional disciplines, such as educators, psychologists, and physicians.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY (OT)

A related service that focuses on the development of a student's fine motor skills and/or the identification of adapted ways of accomplishing activities of daily living.

OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS (OCR)

An agency with the U.S. Department of Education that enforces Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Title II of the ADA. The OCR investigates allegations of discrimination based upon disability.

PARENT ADVISORS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION (PASE)

Consists of parents of individuals with disabilities with at least one parent from each local education agency and one public school academy. The committee may provide advisory input on any matters the committee deems appropriate to the improvement of special education services within the intermediate school district.

PHYSICAL THERAPY (PT)

A related service that focuses on the development of a student's gross motor skills within the school setting.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PLAN (PBSP)

A PBSP is a written improvement plan created for a student with behavioral needs and is based on the outcome of the Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA). The PBSP specifies the actions to improve or replace the behavior and is an individualized plan for success with more intensive supports and oversight. The process of creating a PBSP is led by the IEP team and includes the parents, teachers, support staff, and the student.

REVIEW OF EXISTING EDUCATIONAL DATA (REED)

Provides a plan for an initial or re-evaluation and may include evaluations and information provided by the parents of the child, current classroom-based, local, or state assessments, and classroom-based observations, and observations by teachers and related service providers.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

A trained professional who assists in the identification of needs regarding behavioral, social, emotional, educational, and vocational functioning of individuals.

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER

A trained professional who supports the educational program of individuals by assisting in identification and assessment of the individual's educational needs, including social, emotional, behavioral, and adaptive needs; the school social worker also provides intervention services.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Specifically designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of an eligible individual, including the specially designed instruction conducted in schools, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings.

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST

A trained professional who analyzes speech and language comprehension and production to determine communication competencies and provides intervention strategies and services related to speech and language development, as well as disorders of language, voice, articulation, and fluency.

TRANSITION GOALS

Determined by the IEP Team and are based on the student and family vision, preferences, and interests.

TRANSITION SERVICES

A coordinated set of activities that promote movement from school to post-school education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and community participation.

RESOURCES

The ARC Kent County – The Arc Kent County provides individualized assistance to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families to ensure they are obtaining appropriate services in the area of special education, housing, employment, family support, case management and recreation.

(616) 459-3339, (800) 552-4821 | www.arckent.org

Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired – Serves adults and youth, with Low Vision Clinic and Rehabilitation Services in 13 West Michigan counties.

(616) 458-1187 or (800) 466-8084 | www.abvimichigan.org

Autism Support of Kent County (ASK) – ASK works to make life better and more productive for individuals with autism and their families through awareness, support, knowledge and connection.

(616) 752-8577 | www.autismsupportofkentcounty.org

Autism Society of Michigan – The mission of the Autism Society of Michigan (ASM) is to assure full participation and self-determination in every aspect of life for each individual. We will realize this vision by opening avenues of self-advocacy and advocating on behalf of others in a way that values equity, respect, dignity and diversity in all communities. The mission of the Autism Society of Michigan (ASM) is to assure full participation and self-determination in every aspect of life for each individual.

(517) 882-2800 | www.autism-mi.org

Children and Adults with AD/HD (CHADD) – Believe in improving lives for people affected with ADHD through understanding, education and advocacy.

(616) 874-5662 | www.chadd.org

Children's Special Health Care Services – is a program within the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. It is for children and some adults with special health care needs and their families and provides information on medical care, health education and supports.

(616) 632-7066 | www.michigan.gov/cshcs

Disability Advocates of Kent County – The mission of Disability Advocates of Kent County is to work alongside people with disabilities as they seek to lead self-directed lives and to advocate for accessible and welcoming communities. Disability Advocates of Kent County has put together a very informative and thorough packet to support you and give you some basics that might be helpful in securing guardianship, SSI, Medicaid, food benefits, housing which is located on their website.

(616) 949-1100 | www.dakc.us

Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan – The Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan strives to create communities that embrace Down syndrome, empower individuals, and promote opportunities for meaningful lives.

(616) 956-3488 | www.dsawm.org

Early On of Kent County

(616) 365-2310 | <http://kentisd.org/early-childhood/early-on>

Michigan Alliance for Families – Provides information, support and education, to families who have children or young adults (birth to 26) who receive or are eligible to receive) special education services.

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

Michigan Department of Education – Provides information and resources for families, including support for complaint investigations and due process hearing requests.

https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-6598_88185---,00.html

Michigan Department of Education – Family Matters Fact

Sheets – Explains special education laws and practices. The documents are easy to read and give links to more in-depth resources. Family Matters fact sheets are intended to enhance public understanding of Michigan's special education system and are not a substitute for official laws and regulations.

https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-6598_88187_81739--,-00.html



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