

PARENT HANDBOOK
on
Special Education Services
for Preschoolers
Questions and Answers



Prepared by the Chautauqua County Department of Health
Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities
January 2003

**I have concerns that my preschool child is not developing properly.
What are the steps I should take?**

Call or visit the School District where you live. The Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) Chairperson in your district will guide you through the process.

The School District will ask you to sign a referral to the CPSE and give permission for your child to be evaluated.

At this time you will also be given a list of evaluators so you may choose the evaluator you wish to test your child.

After the evaluations are done, the results will be explained to you by the evaluator. A CPSE meeting will then be scheduled to discuss the evaluations and decide what services your child should receive, if any.

You will be sent written invitations to all CPSE meetings and advised of your rights at every step of the process.

This is a voluntary program and no services will be provided without your permission. You may withdraw from the program at any time.

What is the CPSE Committee?

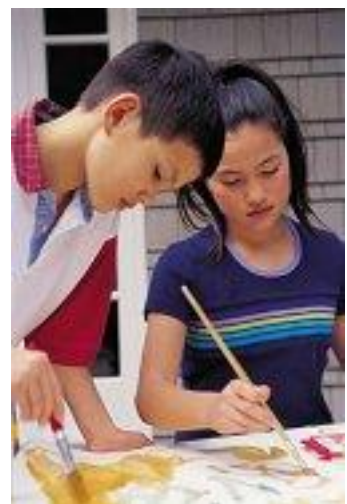
CPSE stands for the Committee on Preschool Special Education. This group will meet to decide whether your child is eligible to receive special education services, what services or program will meet your child's needs and where the services will be provided. Only children ages 2 ½ to 5 years old can be served by this program.

What kind of help can my child receive?

Your child may be eligible for one or more of the following services:

Speech Therapy

To help in understanding and using language



Physical Therapy

To help strengthen large muscles for running, walking and climbing

Occupational Therapy

To help in using small muscles for activities like block building, drawing, eating and getting dressed

Counseling

To help children who have emotional problems

Vision Services and Services for Hearing Impaired Children

To help children with seriously impaired vision or hearing adapt to their environment

An Integrated Special Class (SC/IS)

Classroom containing preschool children with and without disabilities to help children with multiple needs

A Special Class containing only children with disabilities

To help children who have severe delays in more than one area.

What is the cost for these services?

There is no cost to the parents. The program is funded by Chautauqua County and New York State.

**Who is eligible for these services?**

Children ages 2 ½ to 5 years old with developmental delays may be eligible for services. Your child must have a significant delay in one or more of the following areas to qualify for special education services. In

addition, this delay must affect your child's ability to participate in appropriate activities:

Cognitive Skills: How your child uses information to solve problems.

Communication Skills: How your child understands and uses language and how clearly he or she can be understood.

Adaptive Skills: Vision, hearing and physical health

Social-Emotional Skills: How your child responds to other people and expresses feelings.

Physical Skills: How your child uses large muscles in activities like running, walking, climbing; and small muscles in skills like block building, and scribbling.

A child with a mild delay may not qualify for this program. The New York State Education Department has established guidelines which must be met for a child to qualify for services.

What are these guidelines?

An evaluation must show that your child is delayed according to one of the following measures:

A 12 month (or greater) delay in one or more of the areas previously mentioned, or

A 33% (or greater) delay in one area or a 25% delay in two areas, or



A score of 2.0 standard deviations (or greater) below the mean in one functional area, or a score of 1.5 standard deviations below the mean in two areas

How is my child tested to determine if there is a delay?

The parent chooses an agency to evaluate the child. The agency you choose will interview you, observe your child and conduct a psychological test. Other tests, such as a speech evaluation, will be done if there appears to be a delay in a particular area. Your child will also require a physical if one has not been done within the past year.

Who can provide evaluations in Chautauqua County?

Your school district will give you a list of approved evaluation sites.

After the evaluations are completed what is the next step?

The School district where you live will hold a CPSE meeting to discuss the evaluations and decide if your child is eligible to receive services.

Who will attend the CPSE meeting?

As the parent or guardian you will be invited to all CPSE meetings which are held to discuss your child's future. We strongly encourage you to be an active participant in the decision making process.



In addition, the following people will be invited to the meeting:

- The CPSE Chairperson who is employed by your School District

- A parent of a young child with a disability who lives in your district who will act as a parent advocate
- One of the evaluators who tested your child. If the evaluator cannot attend, a person from your district who understands the evaluation procedures used and the evaluation results
- A representative from the Chautauqua County Health Department
- Your child's teacher if your child is already in a preschool class
- Your Service Coordinator if your child has been in the Early Intervention Program
- You may also bring other people to the meeting for support.

If my child is eligible, where will the services be provided?

Services can be provided almost anywhere. State and Federal Laws state that, whenever possible, children with disabilities should be able to receive help in places where there are children who do not have disabilities.

Some of the possible locations where your child may receive services are:

- Your home
- A babysitter's home or other day care setting
- A nursery school or pre-kindergarten program; Head Start;
- A clinic or a hospital
- A special education program or classroom

Who decides where my child will receive services?

The CPSE Committee will decide what *type* of special education services are most appropriate for your child and *where* these services will be provided.

If your child requires only a single service then the service will be provided at a location where your child would ordinarily be during the day – your home, a day care setting, or a nursery school.

If your child has needs in more than one area, the services may be provided by therapists and special education teachers in a variety of locations.

Only children with severe, multiple disabilities will receive services in special education classrooms. Special education programs may be either half-day or full-day programs.

If your child attends a special education program, bus transportation will be provided by the County. Or, if you prefer, you may drive your child to and from the program and be paid for mileage.

What if I don't agree with what the committee decides?

Since this is a voluntary program you do not have to accept the committee's recommendation. You may withdraw your child from the program altogether. Or, if you feel your child needs more services than the committee recommends (or different services) there is a process in place to question the committee's recommendation.



The CPSE Chairperson in your district is there to answer any questions you may have and provide you with information about the special education services available in Chautauqua County for preschoolers.

CPSE Chairperson for Falconer Central School District is:

Mrs. Julie Possai
Director of Special Education and Student Support Services
CPSE Chairperson
716-267-3255 ext. 5127

