

PARENTAL RIGHTS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

The rights parents have with regards to identification and inclusion in special education are much more extensive than what is discussed in this handout. Talk to district representatives (director of special education, principal, etc.) about what services your child may be eligible. Schools should provide you with a handbook that explains your rights in detail. Don't hesitate to ask questions-the jargon used is difficult for many people to understand. School personnel are willing to go over your rights with you in detail if you ask.

What are Special Education Services?

- ◆ Special education services vary depending on the district your child is in, and what your child needs to be successful in school. However, in general, special education services may be offered to your child in any of the following ways, depending on his or her disability and the modifications that are needed to be successful:

- ◆ Your child may go to a resource room for a portion of the day. A resource room is a room with fewer children and a teacher who has been trained specifically for working to improve learning problems. Usually the child will go to resource only for the subjects that he has been identified as having a learning disability in (see below how children are identified).

- ◆ A special education teacher may come into your child's regular classroom and provide extra help in the areas he or she has difficulty in.

- ◆ Your child may need only occasional monitoring to make sure he/she is keeping up in class.

- ◆ Your child may see a speech-language pathologist if speech or language difficulties are present.

- ◆ Your child may see a counselor to help with emotional or behavioral concerns.

- ◆ Your child may see an occupational or physical therapist if he or she has difficulties with fine/gross motor skills, coordination, or similar types of motor difficulties.

- ◆ Your child may be placed in a special classroom tailored for the needs of children with learning or behavior difficulties for the whole day if it is very difficult for him or her to be successful in the regular education classroom.

- ◆ It's important to note that your child may exhibit difficulties in any of these areas without receiving services through the school. The school is only required to provide services if the child has a disability that significantly affects his/her ability to perform in school.

PIRC Pages

General Steps for Identifying Special Education Service Needs

- ◆ **Identification.** Usually the teacher or parent identifies that the child is having some difficulty in class.
- ◆ **Intervention.** The teacher, usually with the help of a school "team", will try some interventions to see if the problem improves. You may hear this called the "Pre-Referral" process.
- ◆ **Referral.** If the interventions haven't helped enough, the teacher will refer the child for an evaluation by a special education specialist (psychologist, diagnostician, occupational therapist, speech therapist, etc.).
- ◆ **Testing.** Your child will be tested to see if he or she qualifies for special education services.
- ◆ **Meeting to discuss results.** You and key staff members will talk about services that should or should not be offered to help your child. This is called an IEP meeting.
- ◆ **Placement..** Depending on the results of testing and the IEP meeting, your child may receive additional or different services.

You can request that your child be tested if you feel that he or she needs extra support to be able to be successful in school. The team will meet and decide if testing would be appropriate.