

# Education Perspectives

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# Introduction

Who am I?

Education:

*B.S. in Materials Engineering from Drexel University*

*Masters Degree in Materials Science and Engineering from  
The Johns Hopkins University*

Certification in Elementary Special  
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Special Education Teacher

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# Outline of talk

- What is Special Education?
- Early Intervention Services – Infants and Toddlers Program
- Services for Preschool Age Children (age 3-5)
- Special Education Process for School-Aged Children (age 5-21)
- Disability Categories under IDEA (1997)
- Possible Assessment Areas
- The IEP (Individualized Education Plan)
- Difference Between Section 504 and IDEA
- Your Rights
- My Best Advice

# What is Special Education?

- **1970s – National Law Public law 94-142**  
Guaranteed a free and *appropriate* public education for ALL school-aged children ages of 6 – 21 (at no cost to parents)
- **1990 – Public Law 94-142 Renamed and reauthorized as**  
***IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act***
- **1997 – IDEA-97 (reauthorized)**

# What is Special Education?

## Basic Principles of IDEA:

- Zero Reject / FAPE
- Non-discriminatory and multidisciplinary assessment
- IEP - Individualized Education Plan
- LRE - Least Restrictive Environment
- Due Process
- Confidentiality of records
- Advocacy
- Parent participation
  - Parents should receive “Procedural Safeguards”

# Early Intervention and Services for Pre-School age Children

## 1986 – IDEA amended

- Include services for pre-school age students (ages 3-5)
- **Child Find**
  - A state run or local system responsible for seeking out and identifying children (ages 3 - 5) with disabilities or children at risk and referring them for appropriate services.
- With this law came financial incentives for states to have a program for **infants and toddlers** – can qualify under *developmentally delayed* (as defined by each state)
- Infants and toddlers up to age two – services - IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan)

*Infants and Toddlers Programs Are Not Mandated!*

# Early Intervention and Services for Pre-School age Children

## What is early intervention?

### *Infants and Toddlers Program*

Goal is to “reduce or eliminate the effects of disabilities or to prevent the development of other problems so that the need for subsequent special education services is reduced”

*McConnell (1994) (Page 102 of Human Exceptionality)*

# Early Intervention and Services for Pre-School age Children

## **Some Services Offered under the Infants and Toddlers Program Include:**

- Speech and language
- Occupational Therapy (OT)
- Physical Therapy (PT)
- Assistive technology
- Family training, counseling and home visits
- Health services
- Transportation

# Early Intervention and Services for Pre-School age Children

Infants and toddlers qualify under IDEA if

1. There is a developmental delay (cognitive, communication, physical, etc.)

*Or*

2. There is a diagnosis of a physical or mental condition that has a high risk of resulting in developmental delay

# Early Intervention and Services for Pre-School age Children

IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan) is much  
like an IEP (Individual Education Plan)

*major difference here is that it focuses on the entire family  
not just the individual*

Contact your Local Education Agency (School  
System) to get more information

# Early Intervention and Services for Pre-School age Children

## Services for Preschool age children (age 3-5)

**Child Find** – identifies children who are disabled or at risk

Children qualify if ***both*** of the following conditions are true:

1. Developmental delays are evident in one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development (life skills).
2. As a result of the above child needs special education services

If **yes**, an IEP is developed

*IEP = Individual Education Plan*

# Special Education process – for School aged children (age 5-21)

## Steps in the Process

### ***Pre-Referral process***

Ideally, starts with classroom intervention strategies by the teacher modifying assignments, conferencing with the student, change in seat location, etc.

### ***Referral to a “Child Study Team” “Kid Talk team”, or “Pre-Referral Team”***

Team comes up with intervention plan (observations, behavior charts, classroom management, medical referrals, and parent conferences.)

*If this is not successful...*

# Special Education process – for School aged children (age 5-21)

## Steps in the Process (continued)

### **Screening**

Screening (*not formal assessments*) a child for a suspected disability

Done by psychologist, speech and language pathologist, etc.

If screening indicates possible disability – referral to Multidisciplinary Team (includes school staff and parents)

# Special Education process – for School aged children (age 5-21)

## Steps in the Process (continued)

### **Formal Assessments**

Parents **MUST** consent to *initial* formal assessments

Assessments are given in *any* area and *all* areas of concern

If formal assessments are done – (90) days to complete (law may be changing here)

### **Assessments are Reviewed**

Disability, if any, is identified

Decision is made as to whether the student qualifies for special education services.

**Parents must approve child's placement in special education.**

# Special Education process – for School aged children (age 5-21)

- Parents have the right to say “**no**”  
*however, school could call for due process or mediation.*
- If “**yes**”, the IEP team has 30 days to write the IEP  
(Usually written by a special education teacher)
- *Initial* IEP must be signed by parent
- Annual Review must occur (from the date the IEP was approved) to review progress and change goals
- Student’s eligibility for special education must be re-evaluated every three years (may occur more often if parents request it)

# What are the disability categories under IDEA (1997)

- Autistic
- Partially Sighted or Blind
- Hard of Hearing or Deaf
- Emotionally Disturbed
- Learning Disabled
- Mentally Disabled
- Orthopedic Impairment (physical disability)
- Other Health Impairment (OHI) (e.g. asthma, ADHD, diabetes)
- Speech Impairment
- Multiply Disabled

# What are the disability categories under IDEA (1997)

- In any and all suspected areas
  - Language
  - Psychological
  - Occupational
  - Physical
  - Educational
  - Perceptual

# IEP – Individual Education Plan

- Present levels of educational performance
- How the student's disability affects the student's involvement and performance in school
- Annual Goals
  - Includes how these annual goals will be measured*
- Short term Objectives (that lead to goals)
- Progress reports
- Who is responsible for helping the student achieve these goals

# IEP – Individual Education Plan

- Special Education and Related services (counseling, speech, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy)
- Supplementary Aids and Services
- Least Restrictive Environment
  - Where will the student receive his education?
  - Should be in general education class as much as possible
  - If not, why not?
- Participation in Statewide assessments
  - If not, why not?
  - How will he/she be assessed?

# IEP – Individual Education Plan

- Start Date of Services
- Frequency
- Location (in or out of regular class)
- Duration (end date or how many weeks)
- Transition Services for students age 14 +

# IEP – Individual Education Plan

## The IEP Meeting – who attends?

Parents

General Education Teacher

Special Education Teacher

Administrator

Related Service Personnel (if appropriate)

# Difference between section 504 and IDEA

## ***Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act (1973)***

- Concerned with Program Accessibility
- Enforced by the Office for Civil Rights U.S Dept. of Education
- It prevents discrimination of any individual in any program that receives federal funding
- Equal Opportunity  
e.g. Accommodations, not services

*Levels the playing field*

# Difference between section 504 and IDEA

## IDEA

- **Special Education *SERVICES***
- PL 94-142 – The Education of all Handicapped Children's Act (1970s)
- Renamed in 1990 – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- Revised in 1997, 2004 (IDEIA?)

# Let's Review Your Rights!

- Every child has a right to **FAPE**
  - Free and **A**ppropriate **P**ublic **E**ducation
  - No Cost to You
- Parents must be notified and provide consent for educational testing/formal evaluation.
- Parents have the right to request testing/formal evaluation at any time
  - Do so in writing
  - School must complete evaluation within a specific number of days
    - **Note: Law may be changing here**

# Let's Review Your Rights!

- Parents have the right to an outside/private evaluation if you disagree with your school's evaluation.
- Students who qualify for services must have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that is reviewed annually.
  - Parents have the right to (and should) participate in the development of this IEP
  - Right to appropriate written notice of IEP meetings, evaluation meetings, etc.
  - Students with IEPs must have re-evaluation every three years (parents may request one sooner if they think it is necessary).

# Let's Review Your Rights!

- You have the right to review all of your child's records.
- Keep in mind

***No single test should determine the educational disability or placement of your child.***

- Due Process / Mediation
  - A hearing to resolve differences

# My Advice

***EARLY INTERVENTION!***

***EARLY INTERVENTION!***

***EARLY INTERVENTION!***

# My Advice

- Go seek help as soon as you suspect **ANYTHING!**
- There are services provided – free of charge
- Call your local school system
- Be open-minded
- Be balanced
  - *think positively, but don't be in denial*
- Trust your instincts

# Special Education Advice

- Be an advocate for your child

You are your child's best advocate!

Be involved, Ask questions, Attend meetings

- Be reasonable
  - Don't hand over a "laundry list of goals" that you want your child to reach
  - Don't ask for a "laundry list" of accommodations
  - Keep it realistic and manageable
  - ***BUT***, do keep the bar high for your child

# Special Education Advice

- Ask for important things (referral for testing) *in writing*
- You usually have more influence than you think!
- Sometimes, you may have more influence than the special education teacher