

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Program Operations

A. Program Enrollment Processes and Priorities

The District is mandated to serve infants and toddlers with the eligibilities of solely visual, hearing or severe orthopedic impairment. The service to other eligible infants and toddlers is mandated to the Regional Center.

The District will continue to serve all presently enrolled infants and toddlers until transition at age thirty-six months. Using the California State Department's formula, the District will establish a new low incidence service mandate annually. The District will serve dually eligible children through an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) developed with Regional Center as long as the District's state funded unit capacity of infants and toddlers has not been reached. (Prior to referrals of dually eligible children, Regional Center contacts the Early Childhood Education administrative office for the current status of the District's enrollment in relation to its funded capacity.)

Specific procedures for serving dually eligible infants and toddlers are delineated in the Interagency Agreement with each of the six Regional Centers in the District's area. (Appendix D)

B. Program Services and Options

Specific services that each family will be offered include the following: (1) service coordination, (2) direct services at the home or other natural setting for the child and family, (3) parent support/education, and (4) assistance to families in accessing other appropriate services within each of their communities.

Infant Support Services will be staffed by transdisciplinary teams of professionals from various disciplines who will work with the family and share their expertise both in assessment and ongoing service delivery. Staff will include credentialed teachers for infants and toddlers with visual and hearing impairments as well as appropriate support staff that may include special education assistants, nurses, social workers, audiologists, interpreters, communication specialists, special education teachers, physical and occupational therapists as well as other specialists. The delivery of the transdisciplinary team assessment and ongoing service will follow the guidelines set forth in EC Part 30 Chapter 4.4 §56426.6.

Among the services offered will be identification, evaluation and assessment of infants and toddlers with visual, hearing or severe orthopedic impairment. The service coordinators will work closely with the family in establishing a plan for this process and assuring its timely completion.

C. Service Delivery Procedures and Interagency Agreement

Service delivery procedures include:

1. Identification and Referral

The District works in coordination with Regional Centers, Family Resource Centers and other related agencies to ensure the dissemination of information concerning availability of services and procedures for referrals.

The District's referral procedures for infants/toddlers are:

- a.** If a referral is received for an infant or toddler who is eligible for Part C but does not appear to meet the eligibility for District service, a referral will be made to a Regional Center within two working days.
- b.** When the District receives a referral for an infant or toddler who appears dually eligible and the District has either not reached its 1980-1981 mandate or is under its funded state unit capacity, it will notify the Regional Center of that referral in writing within five days. If the 1980-1981 mandate and the funded capacity will be reached, the dually eligible child is the sole responsibility of the Regional Center and the referral will be made to Regional Center within two working days.
- c.** When a referral for an infant or toddler who appears to be eligible for Part C services through the District is received by a District office or staff member, the referral will be immediately sent to one of the designated service coordinators or intake teachers.

2. Evaluation and Assessment

The service coordinator will meet with the family to plan appropriate evaluation and assessment and subsequently an IFSP to be completed within 45 days of the date of referral for services.

The evaluation will be conducted by appropriate qualified personnel to determine a child's eligibility under Part C. The assessments conducted by the appropriate personnel will help identify the child's unique strengths and needs as well as the resources, priorities and concerns of the family and the supports and services necessary to enhance the family's capacity to meet the developmental needs of their infant or toddler with a disability. Continuing assessments will be delineated through the IFSP.

3. Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP)

The service coordinator will be responsible for conducting an IFSP meeting within 45 days of the receipt of referral for services. The law requires that the parent, other family members or advocates (if the parent desires), service provider (for review IFSPs) and the service coordinator must be part of the IFSP meeting. If assessments have been conducted, it is desirable to have the assessor at the meeting but if that is not possible, the law allows for information to be presented in writing or on the phone.

The content of the IFSP will include:

- a. A summary of the child's strengths and challenges. This will include information on adaptive development, cognitive development, communication development, hearing, physical development, self-help, social-emotional development and vision.
- b. A statement of the family concerns, priorities and preferred resources related to enhancing the development of the child. This will be done with concurrence of the family.
- c. A statement of the major outcomes expected to be achieved for the child and family, and the criteria, procedures and timelines used to determine the degree to which progress toward achieving the outcomes is being made and whether modifications or revisions of the outcomes or services are necessary.
- d. A summary of the early intervention services necessary to meet the outcomes selected and the frequency, intensity and expected duration of the services specified. It should also include information on how and where the services will be provided.
- e. To the extent appropriate, a delineation of the required services provided by other agencies as well as non-required services that the District may assist the family in accessing.
- f. The name of the service coordinator who will be responsible for the implementation of the IFSP and coordination with other agencies and persons.
- g. A plan for transitioning the child from Part C services to preschool special education services (Part B) or other services as appropriate.

4. Provision of Early Intervention Services

- a. These services are individually planned with frequencies to meet the diverse needs of the children and include, but are not limited to those listed in EC Part 30 Chapter 4.4 §564261.1.
- b. Infants and toddlers eligible for Part C services through the District will have access to home and community services within the natural environment delivered by Infant Support Services staff. These services include but are not limited to those listed in EC Part 30 Chapter 4.4 §56426.2. For the child with visual impairment, activities frequently focus on the development of visual efficiency and tactile skills while the emphasis for the child with hearing impairment is often on the development of oral language, attending, listening and sign language skills (as appropriate) and the establishment of an on-going communication system (oral or total) between the parent and infant. For the child with severe orthopedic impairment, the emphasis of service is often assisting the child in accessing his/her environment and the functional manipulation of objects.
- c. The families of infants and toddlers eligible for Part C services through the District will be provided with a wide range of family involvement activities delivered through Infant Support Services staff. These services include but are not limited to those listed in EC Part 30 Chapter 4.4 §56426.4.

5. Provision of Specialized Services to Infants and Toddlers with Low Incidence Disabilities

Children with low incidence disabilities will be provided with specialized services, materials and equipment, consistent with guidelines set forth in EC Part 30 Chapter 2 Article 2 §56136.

6. Service Coordination

Service coordinators serve as a single point of contact for the family and assist them in developing the IFSP, accessing the services identified in the IFSP, facilitating the timely delivery of services, evaluating ongoing progress and seeking other appropriate services as needed. The service coordinators will be knowledgeable of the fourteen early intervention services required by Part C and will assist the family in obtaining those services that are appropriate to meet their needs. Service coordinators will work closely with departments within the District as well as outside agencies to assure that the provisions of the law are met.

Specific service coordination activities that will be offered through the family center include:

- a.** Coordinating evaluations and assessments.
- b.** Facilitating and participating in the development, review and evaluation of Individualized Family Service Plans.
- c.** Assisting families in identifying available service providers.
- d.** Coordinating and monitoring the delivery of available services.
- e.** Informing families of the availability of advocacy services.
- f.** Coordinating with medical and health providers.
- g.** Facilitating the development of a transition plan to preschool services, if appropriate.

7. Transition at Age Three (3)

The IFSP for any child who will be turning three within any given year will include the steps that will be taken to support that child in the transition from infant and toddler services. This may be a transition to Part B special education services if appropriate or to other services that may be available. As the child transitions from the IFSP to the IEP there will be goals written into the IEP that will continue to assure a smooth transition of services.

- a.** With parental consent, there will be the transmission of information regarding children to ensure continuity of services. This will include evaluation and assessment information required in Part C and copies of the IFSPs that have been developed. With parental consent the service coordinator will also work to promote direct communication between service providers to facilitate a smooth and appropriate transition for the child.

8. Local Interagency Dispute Resolution

The plan for local interagency dispute resolution is part of the Interagency Agreement between Los Angeles County Regional Centers and Los Angeles County Local

Education Agencies. In that agreement a local dispute is defined as a disagreement between local education agencies and regional centers as to:

- a. The eligibility of the infant or toddler;
- b. Which agency is responsible for the infant and family evaluation and assessment, service coordination, and the development and implementation of the IFSP; and
- c. Which agency is responsible for the provision/purchase of appropriate early intervention services.

Both parties have agreed to guidelines which include, but are not limited to, the following principles and procedures:

- a. Every attempt should be made to resolve local disputes at the lowest possible administrative level, as addressed in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Interagency Agreement (IA).
- b. When a regional center and a local educational agency have a dispute that cannot be resolved between them, they may request technical assistance from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) or the California Department of Education (CDE).
- c. If resolution cannot be reached within 60 calendar days, the issue will be referred to the DDS and the CDE for a state-level review and resolution.
- d. The state-level review will be conducted jointly by the DDS and the CDE and a decision rendered in 60 calendar days of receipt of the referral.

Nothing in these dispute resolution procedures shall preclude a parent or an agency from initiating due process or complaint procedures.

During the pendency of a dispute, a child must continue to receive the appropriate early intervention services currently being provided. If the dispute involves initial early intervention services, the child must receive all of the early intervention services identified and agreed to in the IFSP.

During pendency of a dispute, the DDS will assign financial responsibility.

Interagency Agreement

See the Interagency Agreements (Appendix D) between the Los Angeles Unified School District and the six Regional Centers (Westside, Eastern Los Angeles, North Los Angeles County, Lanterman, Harbor, and South Central Los Angeles).

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

Child Find

The District is in contact with a variety of outside agencies to implement child find services. Child find informative materials are distributed District-wide and throughout the community. Parents are referred to a single point of contact for assessment, placement and service. "Child Find" information is disseminated through letters, program brochures, presentations and workshops.

Referral and Identification Procedures

1. **For a child not enrolled in a District general education preschool:** If a parent, caregiver or agency representative requests an assessment or special education services for a child age three to five who is not currently enrolled in a District preschool program, there is a single point of contact for the entire District, the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) office.
2. **For a child enrolled in a District elementary school-based preschool program or Early Education Center-staff referral:** If a staff member believes that a child age three to five may have a disability and require special education and related services and wishes to request a special education assessment, they must follow the regular District procedures for *Referring Students for a Special Education Assessment*.
 - a. It is the District's responsibility to inform the parent/guardian that a request for special education assessment has been made and that they will receive a special education assessment plan for their review and approval.
 - b. It is the District's responsibility to ensure that the assessment plan is completed and provided to the parent/guardian within 15 calendar days of receipt of the written request.
3. **For a child enrolled in a District elementary school-based preschool program or Early Education Center-parent referral:** If a parent expresses concerns about their child and or raises the question of whether a special education assessment should be conducted, school staff will meet with the parent to discuss their concerns and review the Developmental Profile and teacher observations and assessments. They will discuss any accommodations or modifications that can be implemented to meet the student's needs. If after the above is completed, the parent wants to request a special education assessment of their child, the administrator/designee will follow procedures outlined for school aged children.

Assessment of 3, 4 and 5 Year-Old Children

1. Responsibility for Assessments

- a. Children not enrolled in an elementary school-based general education program.

All initial assessments of three and four year old children not enrolled in an elementary school-based general education program are the responsibility of the District's ECSE

office. Once a child is receiving special education any reassessments are the responsibility of the school of attendance or program in which the child is enrolled.

- b.** Children enrolled in an elementary school-based general education program and Early Education Centers.

Initial assessments of three and four year old children in a school based general education program are the responsibility of the school-based assessment team. Once a child is receiving special education any reassessments are the responsibility of the school of attendance or program in which the child is enrolled.

2. Preparing for the Assessment

When the Assessment Plan is provided to the parent, the Early Education Center or elementary school designee informs them of all information relevant to the assessment activities for which their written consent is sought.

The parent is provided copies and an explanation of “A Parent’s Guide to Special Education Services (Including Procedural Rights and Safeguards).”

Parents are requested to give their written consent to the Assessment Plan. Upon receipt of the signed Assessment Plan, the sixty calendar-day period for completion of the IEP begins.

3. Assessors

Assessments may be conducted by single discipline assessors, interdisciplinary assessment teams or transdisciplinary assessment teams.

4. Assessment Sites

Children enrolled in preschool programs at elementary schools or Early Education Centers are assessed at their sites by school site personnel. For children not enrolled in programs at elementary schools or Early Education Centers, the ECSE office is responsible for conducting the assessments at locations throughout the community.

Assessments of Head Start are conducted at the child’s program site, if possible.

5. Assessment Procedures

Assessors use a variety of approved assessment instruments for young children including standardized tests and developmental scales. The assessment instruments use a combination of observation and elicited test behaviors. If the child is receiving Part C services and parents believe report results are valid, existing records and reports are reviewed and summarized as a means of alternative assessment. Parents are an integral part of the assessment process.

Once a child enrolls in elementary school for Kindergarten, the District approved process for identifying children as Limited or Fluent English Proficient that includes a Home Language Survey, Parent Interview and Preschool Language Assessment will occur.

Assessors confer and collaborate in the preparation of an assessment report that covers assessed areas.

Contract agencies who may assess children are certified by the state and use approved assessment instruments.

Prior to transitioning a child with a disability from a preschool program to kindergarten, an appropriate reassessment of the individual shall be conducted to determine if the individual is still in need of special education and services.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Initial IEP meetings for children not enrolled in preschool programs at elementary schools and Early Education Centers are coordinated by the District's ECSE office. Initial IEP meetings for children enrolled in preschool programs at elementary schools and Early Education Centers are coordinated by the school of attendance. Annual reviews are the responsibility of the school of attendance or program in which the student is enrolled. IEPs for preschool students follow the regular District procedures and guidelines.

Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten

An IEP meeting must be held before a student, currently receiving special education and services, transitions to kindergarten. At the meeting the IEP team must consider whether the child is still in need of special education and services.

To prepare for the IEP meeting the following should be implemented:

1. Classroom staff reviews the current classroom assessments, portfolios and anecdotal records and completes the Classroom Team Assessment Report (CTAR).
2. School based team comprised of the site administrator/designee, special and general education teacher, psychologist and related services providers meets and reviews the CTAR to make a recommendation for the IEP team as to whether the student continues to need special education and services.
3. Parents complete the Preschool Health Questionnaire. School nurse reviews the questionnaire, completes additional assessment if needed and documents health report.
4. Based on the recommendations, the team determines if additional assessments of the student are needed. If the team determines that additional assessments are needed, an assessment plan must be developed and provided to the parent.

Note: If the team recommends that the student may no longer be eligible for special education, an assessment plan must be developed. District procedures for developing a Special Education Assessment Plan will be followed.

5. All staff responsible for the student's IEP goals must determine the student's present levels of performance, at a minimum, in all six preschool curricular domains. Suggested goals for the coming year should be developed for discussion at the IEP meeting. Goals should be based on Kindergarten standards for Math, Reading, and Writing. Goals for functional skill areas (e.g. communication, social) should also be developed.
6. If the IEP team determines that the student will exit from special education, it completes the present levels of performance and documents the student's learning style. This information is to be provided to the student's kindergarten teacher.

Program and Service Options

The IEP team determines the specific services that are appropriate for each preschool child eligible for special education. The options include:

A. *Infant/Preschool Transition Services*

The purpose of these services is to facilitate the transition from Infant to Preschool Services. Non-classroom based Transition Service Facilitators work with families from the time of referral through the assessment, Individualized Education Program (IEP), and placement process. For children leaving early intervention services, this process begins at the Transition Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting when the child is 2 years 6 months of age. The Transition Service Facilitators act as a bridge, linking the IDEA Part C (Infant) systems with the Part B (Preschool) systems, while also providing support and information to each individual family. The services offered to both Part C enrolled children and new referrals include family conferences, preschool program visits, resources on the assessment and IEP process, and ongoing updates during the transition period.

B. *Preschool Phonological Groups*

Small groups of eligible children and their families meet together once a week for instruction that focuses on speech needs in the area of articulation. Instruction is delivered by a speech/language pathologist, special education teacher, and a special education trainee/assistant and stresses a family/professional partnership. Facilitation of goals and objectives is achieved through cooperation between parents and professionals. Professionals demonstrate and model instructional strategies that parents use throughout the week in the child's natural environment.

C. *Intensive Language Education Afterschool Program (ILEAP)*

Small groups of eligible children and their families meet together once a week as determined by the IEP for instruction that focuses on language development needs. Instruction is delivered by a speech/language pathologist, special education teacher, and a special education trainee/assistant and stresses a family/professional partnership. Facilitation of goals and objectives is achieved through collaboration between parents and professionals. Professionals

demonstrate and model instructional strategies that parents use throughout the week in the child's natural environment.

D. Related Services

The full range of related services is available to eligible preschool children.

E. Pre-Kindergarten Itinerant Teacher (PKIT) Services at District and Community Sites

This program provides services in District preschool classes, Early Education Centers, community preschools, and student homes. Itinerant early childhood special education teachers provide a variety of services that may include:

1. Working collaboratively with a student's classroom staff to help meet the needs of eligible children with disabilities.
2. Supporting and monitoring progress toward goal achievement in all settings.
3. Working collaboratively with staff and families to support student's transition into a Kindergarten program.
4. Providing temporary Home Instruction when a child is not medically cleared to attend school.
5. Ensuring student's IEPs are completed in accordance with legal and district regulations.

F. Head Start Integrated Program at Head Start Sites

The Head Start Integrated program provides Child Find, Assessments, Individual Education Programs (IEP), Placement and Service Provision, Transition of Special Education children into and out of Head Start, Training and Technical Assistance; Resource/Information Sharing, MOU Maintenance and Conflict Resolution. Special education services are provided to eligible children by licensed and/or credentialed personnel according to the terms of the IEP.

G. Preschool Collaborative Classrooms (PCC) at District Pre-Kindergarten Sites

1. PCC with Expanded Transitional Kindergarten (ETK)

This is a team teaching program in Expanded Transitional Kindergarten (ETK) classrooms at general education elementary schools. The staff includes one ETK teacher and teacher assistant and an early childhood special education teacher and trainee/assistant. This is a full day program serving 24 children enrolled in ETK. Eight of the 24 students have moderate to severe needs and are eligible for special education.

The content of the children's program is based on the preschool curriculum and stresses the facilitation of goals and objectives through developmentally appropriate concrete experiences and play. The classroom receives support from the speech and language

specialist, adapted physical education teacher, school psychologist and nurse assigned to that school.

2. PCC with California State Preschool Program (CSPP)

This is a team-teaching program in California State Preschool Program (CSPP) classrooms at general education elementary schools. The staff includes one CSPP teacher and assistant, and an early childhood special education teacher and assistant. Monday through Friday the staff teams to serve morning and afternoon groups of children for 3 hours. These classrooms serve 48 children enrolled in CSPP and 10 children with moderate to severe needs eligible for special education. Each of the morning and afternoon groups are comprised of 19 children from CSPP and 5 children eligible for special education. The special education children are required to meet the California State Preschool Program requirements.

The content of the children's program is based on the preschool curriculum and stresses the facilitation of goals and objectives through developmentally appropriate concrete experiences and play. The classroom receives support from the speech and language specialist, adapted physical education teacher, school psychologist and nurse assigned to that school.

H. Preschool Collaborative Classes (PCC) at Early Education Center Sites

This program is designed for preschool children enrolled in Early Education Center programs and children with moderate to severe needs eligible for special education. The staff includes Early Education Center personnel, an early childhood special education teacher and special education assistant. Monday through Friday morning the staff serves the preschoolers enrolled in Early Education Center programs and 10 children eligible for special education. They are fully integrated into the morning program at the Center for 4.5 hours each day. The special education children may meet the regular Early Education Center eligibility requirements but it is not required.

The content of the program is based on the District adopted preschool curriculum and stresses the facilitation of goals and objectives through developmentally appropriate concrete experiences and play. The centers receive other special education support when it is required to help meet the particular needs of the enrolled children.

I. Preschool for All Learners (PAL) Special Day Programs

The PAL Special Day Program serves 10 special education eligible children under kindergarten age with moderate to severe needs. The staff includes an early childhood special education teacher and two special education trainees/assistants. The class meets Monday through Friday for 4.5 hours daily.

The content of the program is based on the District adopted preschool curriculum and stresses the facilitation of goals and objectives through developmentally appropriate

concrete experiences and play. The program includes opportunities for interaction with typical preschool and kindergarten peers served in programs on the same school campus. Speech/Language and Adapted Physical Education services are embedded through the daily classroom routines and instruction.

J. Preschool Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) and Visually Impaired (VI) Special Day Programs

The DHH and VI Preschool Categorical classes are provided to eligible students on general education campuses. The staff includes a special education DHH or VI credentialed teacher and a special education trainee/assistant. Students attend Monday through Friday for 4.5 hours daily.

K. Preschool Comprehensive Program (PSC) Special Day Program

The PSC is a full day Special Day Program serving 8 special education eligible children under kindergarten age with severe needs. The staff includes an early childhood special education teacher and special education trainee/assistant, a speech/language pathology assistant (SLP-A), and a non-public agency behaviorist.

The content of the program is based on the District adopted preschool curriculum and stresses the facilitation of goals and objectives targeting “learning to learn” skills such as joint attention, imitation, and turn taking.

L. Nonpublic School or Nonpublic Agency

When determined appropriate by an IEP team, the District will provide for preschool service through a State-certified Nonpublic School or Nonpublic Agency.