

ANNUAL PUBLIC NOTICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES AND PROGRAMS, SERVICES FOR GIFTED STUDENTS (CHAPTER 16), AND SERVICES FOR PROTECTED HANDICAPPED STUDENTS (REVISED AUGUST 31, 2009)

NOTICE TO PARENTS

According to state and federal special education regulations, annual public notice to parents of children who reside within a school district is required regarding child find responsibilities. School Districts (SDs) Intermediate Units (IUs) and Charter Schools (CSs) are required to conduct child find activities for children who may be eligible for services via Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. For additional information related to Section 504/Chapter 15 services, the parent may refer to Section 504, Chapter 15, and the Basic Education Circular entitled, "Implementation of Chapter 15". Also, school districts are required to conduct child find activities for children who may be eligible for gifted services via 22 Pa Code Chapter 16. For additional information regarding gifted services, the parent may refer to 22 Pa Code Chapter 16. If a student is both gifted and eligible for Special Education, the procedures in IDEA and Chapter 14 shall take precedence.

This notice shall inform parents throughout the school district, intermediate unit, and charter school of the child identification activities and of the procedures followed to ensure confidentiality of information pertaining to students with disabilities or eligible young children. In addition to this public notice, each school district, intermediate unit, charter school shall publish written information in the handbook and on the website. Children ages three through twenty one can be eligible for special education programs and services. If parents believe that the child may be eligible for special education, the parent should contact the appropriate staff member identified at the end of this public notice.

Children age three through the age of admission to first grade are also eligible if they have developmental delays and, as a result, need Special Education and related services. Developmental delay is defined as a child who is less than the age of beginners and at least 3 years of age and is considered to have a developmental delay when one of the following exists: (i) The child's score, on a developmental assessment device, on an assessment instrument which yields a score in months, indicates that the child is delayed by 25% of the child's chronological age in one or more developmental areas. (ii) The child is delayed in one or more of the developmental areas, as document by test performance of 1.5 standard deviation below the mean on standardized tests. Developmental areas include cognitive, communicative, physical, social/emotional and self-help.

***For additional information you may contact Early Childhood Services at the Berks County Intermediate Unit 1111 Commons Boulevard, P.O. Box 16050, Reading, PA 19612-6050, phone 610.987.2248.

EVALUATION PROCESS

Each school district, intermediate unit, and charter school has a procedures in place by which parents can request an evaluation. For information about procedures applicable to your child, contact the school, which your child attends. Telephone numbers and addresses can be found at the end of this notice. Parents of preschool age children, age three through five, may request an evaluation in writing by addressing a letter to you may contact Early Childhood Services at the Berks County Intermediate Unit, 1111 Commons Boulevard, P.O. Box 16050, Reading, PA 19612-6050, phone 610.987.2248

CONSENT

School entities cannot proceed with an evaluation, or with the initial provision of special education and related services, without the written consent of the parents. For additional information related to consent, please refer the Procedural Safeguards Notice which can be found at the PaTTAN website: www.PaTTAN.net. Once written parental consent is obtained, the district will proceed with the evaluation process. If the parent disagrees with the evaluation, the parent can request an independent education evaluation at public expense.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Once the evaluation process is completed, a team of qualified professionals and parents determine whether the child is eligible. If the child is eligible, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team meets, develops the program, and determines the educational placement. School district staff, intermediate unit staff, or charter school staff will issue a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP)/prior written notice. Your written consent is required before initial services can be provided. The parent has the right to revoke consent after initial placement.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

The SDs, IUs and CSs maintain records concerning all children enrolled in the school, including students with disabilities. All records are maintained in the strictest confidentiality. Your consent, or consent of an eligible child who has reached the age of majority under State law, must be obtained before personally identifiable information is released, except as permitted under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The age of majority in Pennsylvania is 21. Each participating agency must protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information at collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction stages. One official at each participating agency must assume responsibility for ensuring the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information. Each participating agency must maintain, for public inspection, a current listing of the names and positions of those employees within the agency who have access to personally identifiable information.

For additional information related to student records, the parent can refer to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

This notice is only a summary of the Special Education services, evaluation and screening activities, and rights and protections pertaining to children with disabilities, children thought to be disabled, and their parents. For more information or to request evaluation or screening of a public or private school child, contact the responsible school entity listed below. For preschool age children, information, screenings and evaluations requested, may be obtained by contacting the intermediate unit.

The school entity or charter school will not discriminate in employment, educational programs, or activities based on race, color, national origin, age, sex, handicap, creed, marital status or because a person is a disabled veteran of the Vietnam era. No preschool, elementary or secondary school pupil enrolled in a school district, intermediate unit, or charter school program shall be denied equal opportunity to participate in age and program appropriate instruction or activities due to race, color, handicap, creed, national origin, marital status or financial hardship.