

Irvine Unified School District  
Special Education  
Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA)



**PARENT HANDBOOK**  
**2023-2024**

Special Education Department

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## **Table of Contents**

Table of Contents	1
Board Members, Special Education Administrative Team & Community Advisory Committee Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary	2
IUSD Special Education Staff Directory	3
A Message to Parents	4
Community Advisory Committee	5
SPED Acronyms	6
Special Education Information	8
The Special Education Process	10
Your Child's Education and the Law	14
Terms used in Special Education	17
Frequently Asked Questions	19
Local Community Resources	22

*The Community Advisory Committee for Special Education developed this Parent Handbook in cooperation with the Irvine Unified Special Education office.*

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Erin Ferguson, *Coordinator-Preschool Education*

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Esther Morales, *Chairperson*

Heena Shah, *Vice Chairperson*

Sandra Albers, *Secretary*

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## IUSD Special Education Staff Directory

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## **A Message to Parents**

On behalf of the Irvine Unified School District (IUSD) Special Education Community Advisory Committee and Special Education Department, we welcome you into our district. Parents and educators must work together to fully understand the educational implications of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The IDEA ensures and encourages active involvement of the child's parents or guardians in any and all individual educational program (IEP) meetings.

Navigating the special education process can be overwhelming and you may want support as you navigate the educational system for your child. The Special Education Community Advisory Committee (CAC) is a group composed largely of the parents of children receiving special education services. This manual, prepared mainly by members of the CAC, provides information to help you participate effectively in your child's experience in the Irvine Unified School District. We hope that this handbook will guide you step-by-step through the evaluation, planning and implementation process of your child's special education program. If you have any questions about your child's IEP it is our hope that you will first contact your school site. The Program Specialist assigned to your school can also assist with facilitating a conversation between yourself and the school team.

In order for a child to receive special education services through an IEP, an assessment in the areas of the student's suspected areas of need must be completed. Once the assessment is completed, an IEP team will meet to determine the need for special education services. If the team determines that your child is in need of special education services an IEP will be developed that will provide for a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that uniquely meets your child's needs in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

FAPE can be achieved by providing your child with special education services, per an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The IEP will include accommodations and/or modifications, goals, services and placement that address your child's unique needs. A least restrictive environment means that your child will be provided support and services in a classroom where they will achieve the highest academic and social progress while accessing general education to the greatest extent possible.

Parents of children who qualify for special education services are provided with Procedural Safeguards to ensure that the rights of the students are being protected. Amongst others, these rights include the right to have meaningful participation in the IEP meeting, an independent education evaluation and the right to a Due Process Hearing when there is a disagreement concerning FAPE.

## **Community Advisory Committee**

The purpose of the CAC shall be in an advisory capacity of the Irvine Unified School District Special Education administration and School Board about the Special Education Local Plan, annual priorities, parent education and other related activities in relation to special education students.

The recommendations of the Committee shall be directed to the Administration. The responsibility for action on any recommendations shall rest with the Superintendent and Board of Education. Implementation shall rest with the administrative staff, both at district and school level.

As mandated by California Senate Bill 1870, the CAC is a vital part of each district's special education plan. This multidisciplinary group provides valuable community input about Irvine's plan and its implementation. SB1870 mandates that a majority of the CAC be parents. A majority of those parents are to be parents of children with special needs.

The CAC has several purposes:

1. The CAC collaborates and provides input regarding annual priorities and local decision making with Special Education administration. This input is shared by the Special Education department with other departments and the School Board as appropriate.
2. The CAC reviews and provides input for the Annual Budget and Service Plan on a yearly basis. The CAC also provides input when Irvine SELPA's Local Plan is being revised.
3. The CAC assists with parent education and in recruiting parents who may contribute insight into implementation and effectiveness of the Local Plan.
4. The CAC provides an opportunity for parents of children with exceptional needs and other members of the community to connect with each other and provide support as needed.
5. The CAC supports activities and needs of individuals with exceptional needs and their families.

### **What is a Community Advisory Committee (CAC)?**

The Special Education Community Advisory Committee (CAC) is a collaborative partnership composed of parents of children with special needs, parents of general education students, educators and community agencies working together to support activities on behalf of students with special needs.

## SPED Acronyms

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	MM	Mild Moderate
APE	Adaptive Physical Education	NCLB	No Child Left Behind Act
ASL	American Sign Language	NEA	National Education Association
AT	Assistive Technology	OHI	Other Health Impairment
BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan	OI	Orthopedic Impairment
C	Counseling	OT	Occupational Therapist
CBA	Curriculum Based Assessment	PBS	Positive Behavioral Supports
CBI	Community Based Instruction	PIP	Program Improvement Plan
SST	Student Study Team	PLOP	Present Levels Of Performance
DI	Direct Instruction	PS	Preschool
ECE	Early Childhood Education	PWN	Prior Written Notice
EI	Early Intervention	RAD	Reactive Attachment Disorder
ER	Evaluation Report	RS	Related Services
ESL	English As A Second Language	RTI	Response To Interview
ESY	Extended School Year	SEA	State Education Agency
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education	SLI	Specific Learning Disability
FBA	Functional Behavioral Assessment	SLP	Speech Language Pathologist
GE	General Education	SPED	Special Education
IA	Instructional Assistant	SSDI	Social Security Disability Income
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	SSI	Supplemental Security Income
IEE	Independent Educational Evaluation	TSS	Therapeutic Support Staff
IEP	Individualized Education Program	VOC ED	Vocational Education
ITP	Individualized Transition Plan	VR	Vocational Rehabilitation
LEP	Limited English Proficiency	AAC	Alternative Augmentative Communication
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment	ABA	Applied Behavior Analysis
MD	Multiple Disabilities	ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
MH	Mental Health	ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder

ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	OI	Orthopedic Impairment
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder	OT	Occupational Therapist
ASL	American Sign Language	PD	Physical Disability
AT	Assistive Technology	PDD	Pervasive Developmental Disorder
BD	Behavior Disorder	PDD-NOS	Pervasive Developmental Disorder - not otherwise specified
BI	Brain Injury	PTSD	Post- Traumatic Stress Disorder
B/VI	Blind/ Visually Impaired	RAD	Reactive Attachment Disorder
CA	Chronological Age	SAD	Social Anxiety Disorder
CD	Communication Disorder	SB	Spina Bifida
CF	Cystic Fibrosis	SI	Speech Impairment/ Sensory Integration
CP	Cerebral Palsy	SLI	Specific Learning Disability
D	Deaf	SLP	Speech Language Pathologist
DB	Deaf/Blind	SM	Selective Mutism
DD	Developmental Delay	SPED	Special Education
DS	Downs Syndrome	SPD	Sensory Processing Disorder
DX	Diagnosis	TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
ED	Emotional Disturbance	TS	Tourette Syndrome
FASD	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder	TSS	Therapeutic Support Staff
HI	Hearing Impairment	VI	Visual Impairment
HOH	Hard Of Hearing	VR	Vocational Rehabilitation
ID	Intellectual Disability		
LD	Learning Disability		
MD	Multiple Disabilities		
MH	Mental Health		
MM	Mild Moderate		
NT	Neurotypical		
OCD	Obsessive Compulsive Disorder		
ODD	Oppositional Defiance Disorder		



## **Special Education Information**

### **Special Education is defined in the California Education Code as—**

Specifically designed instruction, at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique needs of individuals with exceptional needs whose educational needs cannot be met with modification of the general instructional program; and related services at no cost to the parent, which may be needed to assist such individuals to benefit from specially designed instruction. Special education is an integral part of the total public education system and provides education in a manner that promotes maximum interaction between children with disabilities and typically developing children in a manner which is appropriate to the needs of both.

If a student meets the qualifications for special education as listed in the California Education Code, the school district will implement an appropriately designed instructional program, at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique and differing challenges of a student with exceptional needs whose educational goals cannot be adequately addressed in the general education program. Related services may be required to assist these individuals to benefit from specially designed instruction. If related services are deemed necessary they will be provided at no cost to the parent.

### **Special Education in IUSD**

Special education programs in the Irvine Unified School District Special Education Local Plan Area (Irvine SELPA) are provided for children ages 3 through 22 who qualify according to laws and regulations as outlined in the California Education Code governing Special Education and the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Special education is an integral and dynamic part of the total public education system and provides education in a manner that promotes maximum interaction between all children, including those with IEPs, in a manner that is appropriate to meet the needs of the child. Children with disabilities may need services in addition to or different from those provided in their general school program. Through Special Education, supportive technology, instruction techniques, materials, and equipment will be adapted to meet the individual student.

Students receiving Special Education and related services will be educated with general education students to the maximum extent appropriate. They will be integrated as much as possible in school activities and general classroom activities as determined by the Individual Education Program (IEP). Services will be provided in an appropriate setting as close to their home school as possible. One of the requirements of special education is that students are educated in the Least Restrictive Environment. The LRE simply means that a student should be placed in a program that can meet the individual student's needs and in the general education setting to the greatest extent possible. Assignment to special classes, special schools, or other removal of the individual from the general education environment shall occur only when the nature and severity of the disability is such that education in general education classes, with or without the use of supplementary aides and/or services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

### **Infant Services and Preschool Program**

Assessment and coordination of needed services are available for infants, birth to 3 years of age, with low incidence disabilities (blind, deaf, severe orthopedic disability). The Preschool (3-5 years old) program is designed to enhance the growth and development of children with disabilities from 3 to 5 years of age. Each child's program is based on an extensive comprehensive diagnostic assessment that profiles the child's strengths and needs.

### **Special Education Support Personnel**

IUSD employs a wide range of trained specialists to assist with the implementation of the special education supports and services.

- ❖ Program Specialists provide district wide coordination of all programs and administrative support to local sites.
- ❖ School Psychologists assist in the identification of intellectual, social, and emotional needs of students.
- ❖ Speech and Language Specialists assist in the identification of receptive and expressive language and speech needs.
- ❖ School Nurses assist in the understanding of health and developmental needs.
- ❖ Education Specialists provide a wide range of instruction and implement the special education program at our local school sites.
- ❖ Adapted Physical Education Teachers provide gross motor development and movement.
- ❖ Vision Specialists provide specialized instructional support for students with vision impairments.
- ❖ Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialists provide specialized instructional support for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- ❖ Occupational Therapists provide fine motor and sensory integration development.
- ❖ Physical Therapists provide gross motor development.
- ❖ Assistive Technology Specialists provide district wide coordination and implementation of approved augmentative and assistive technology equipment.
- ❖ Behavior Interventionists assist students with skills related to behavior goals.
- ❖ Educationally related mental health specialists provide counseling and support concerning the mental health needs of our students.

### **Placement**

Special education services can be provided in a variety of placements, including the following:

1. General Education
2. Special Education Classes
3. Orange County Office of Education Classes
4. Non-Public School Services (NPS)
5. Non-Public Residential Facilities with On-Site School
6. Home/Hospital Instruction

### **Irvine Adult Transition Program**

The district provides an Adult Transition Program which emphasizes community based instruction and job training experience for students who have completed their high school experience, not received a diploma and have an IEP that identifies the need for instruction in independent living skills.

## **The Special Education Process**

### **The Referral Process**

If your child does not have an IEP and you suspect that they have a disability, please contact your child's teacher and/or the school psychologist to discuss your concerns. As a result of this discussion, your child may be referred to a Student Study Team (SST) for additional review. The SST is a team representing both general education and special education staff who review student progress and suggest interventions and strategies to assist students within the general education program. It is highly recommended that the SST review a student's progress prior to developing an assessment plan for suspected disabilities, although it is not a prerequisite to your child being assessed. If your child is under 3 years of age, please contact the Regional Center of Orange County for an intake interview. If your child is 3 years old, contact your local school.

When a referral for a special education assessment is recommended, you will meet with one or more members of the special education team at your local school to develop an assessment plan. You must receive a written notice from your school asking for your written, informed consent before any assessment begins. A copy of the parent's rights will be included with the assessment plan. The assessment must be completed and an IEP meeting conducted within 60 calendar days of the date of receipt of your written consent for assessment.

### **The Assessment Procedure**

The purpose of the assessment is to determine whether or not a child requires an IEP to access their education. The assessment should result in identification of the child's present skill levels, identify any learning needs and make any recommendations for qualification of special education. The assessment team will use a variety of measures to determine qualification for special education including formal assessments, interviews, observations and record review. The team may also request your permission to communicate with any private service providers. If independent psychological or educational assessment data exists, you may provide it to the assessment team for consideration at the IEP. The IEP will consider the outside assessments and may include information from the private assessment in the IEP, if the IEP team agrees that is necessary.

Once the assessment has been completed, test results and findings will be included in the multidisciplinary assessment and reviewed at the IEP meeting. When possible, the assessment team will provide you with a copy of the assessment prior to the IEP meeting to provide you time to review the assessment. The report will state the basis for making a determination of eligibility for special education. If you have questions about the assessment that need to be clarified in advance of the IEP meeting, you may contact the person who conducted the assessment, e.g.- psychologist, speech and language specialist, and or the adapted physical education specialist.

## **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

Once the assessment is completed, within 60 days of your consent to assess, the IEP team will meet to review the assessment and make a determination as to whether or not your child qualifies for special education. If your child qualifies for an IEP, the team determines your child's present levels of performance and determines needed goals, accommodations/modifications, services and placement.

## **IEP Team Participation**

To ensure meaningful participation in the IEP process, it is highly recommended that parents prepare for the IEP meeting. We offer the following suggestions:

1. Make a list identifying strengths and needs of your child.
2. Obtain and review appropriate student records from the district.
3. Obtain and review appropriate records from outside agencies.
4. Keep an organized home file of educational, medical, and other pertinent records.
5. Be sure you have a thorough understanding of the assessment results.
6. Be prepared to review possible program alternatives if placement is in question.
7. Be prepared to discuss methods and materials that have been effective with your child, as well as those that have not.
8. If possible, make arrangements through the school district to observe a prospective program placement at a school site.
9. If you don't understand something being discussed at the meeting, ask questions.

The IEP process is prescribed in Ed Code and indicates that the IEP meeting should review your child's present levels of performance (strengths and needs), goals, accommodations/modifications, services and placement.

## **Present Levels of Performance (PLOP)**

This section should contain statements of your child's areas of strengths and needs in academics, communication, social emotional, communication, gross and fine motor, daily living skills and health. The PLOP provides a broad overview of the student's strengths and areas of need based on assessments, teacher and parent feedback and class work samples.

## **Annual Goals**

Annual goals are developed based on your child's needs, identified in the PLOPs and generally include a percentage of proficiency that the team believes the child can achieve in the year.

Example: Mary will correctly label and match four basic colors: red, blue, green, and yellow with 90% accuracy in 4 of 5 trials.

### **Accommodations/Modifications, Services and Placement**

This section of the IEP indicates necessary accommodations and/or modifications, the types of services and the placement in which those services can best be provided to allow your child to make progress on their goals. Services may include specialized academic instruction and related services (i.e. speech, occupational therapy, counseling, etc.). Parents may visit the placement being recommended by the IEP team, upon request of the parent or any other IEP team member.

The IEP must also discuss extended school year services (ESY). The IEP team will consider the need for ESY based on your child's ability to recoup skills during extended breaks as compared to their peers.

### **Individual Transition Plan (ITP)**

The purpose of the ITP is to identify services needed for the student's successful integration into adult life with sufficient time allowed to develop the services if they do not exist and to identify the agencies that will be funding or providing the identified services.

At the IEP prior to your child's 16th birthday, the IEP team, including your child, will develop an Individual Transition Plan. The ITP will identify post-secondary goals and activities to assist your child with meeting goals they have for their post-secondary career.

### **Signature Page**

At the conclusion of the meeting, you will be asked to sign the IEP. The proposed IEP will be implemented only when you sign the IEP. Should you disagree with the IEP (all or part), you may sign the IEP as a participant and note your disagreement in the appropriate location on the IEP form. In the interest of providing services to your child as soon as possible, it is good practice to identify those elements on the IEP that you can agree with, from those with which you disagree.

You may request that an IEP meeting be held to address any concerns and/or resolve any disagreements. If you are unable to come to an agreement with the IEP team, you may request an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) meeting or file for Due Process Hearing.

### **The IEP in Action**

Participating in the development of your child's IEP should be viewed as the first step of your involvement in your child's education program. When you provide consent to the IEP, it will be provided to all of your child's service providers so that they are aware of the accommodations/modifications, goals and services that have been agreed upon. To stay informed regarding your child's educational progress, you should maintain regular contact with your child's teacher and other professionals involved in his or her program. Remember, the IEP is only a piece of paper until it is translated into meaningful ongoing instructional activities.

### **Student Progress Reports**

Once a child is receiving special education services, goal progress reports are provided during the school year on the same frequency as the school provides progress reports for general education students.

### **Annual IEP Meeting**

It is required that the IEP Team review the IEP at least once a year. In addition to the annual review, you or any member of the IEP team may request an addendum IEP at any time to consider changes in the IEP.

At the annual IEP meeting, your child's progress, present levels of performance, goals, services and placement are reviewed and any necessary changes are made to continue to allow your child to make progress. Based on any recommended changes, a new IEP is developed.

### **Triennial Review**

Every three years, the IEP will conduct a reassessment of your child in order to determine whether your child continues to have a disability that is adversely affecting their ability to access the general education curriculum. If the IEP team agrees that there is no suspicion of a new disability and that further assessment is not needed for the IEP team to develop a new IEP, the assessment may be waived with agreement of all IEP team members.

### **Exiting Special Education Services**

After the completion of an assessment, it may be determined, by the IEP team, that your child no longer qualifies for special education services. While your child may no longer qualify for special education services through an IEP, they may qualify for accommodations and support through a 504 or SST. The need for these supports can be discussed at the conclusion of the IEP meeting.

If you disagree with the assessment you may request an independent education evaluation at district expense. The District will consider your request and either grant it or file a due process request to defend the assessment. Additionally, you may indicate your disagreement to discontinue services on the IEP and the services will continue to be provided until agreement is reached or until a resolution is reached through a Due Process Filing.

## **Your Child's Education and the Law**

At both the federal and state levels of government, legislation exists that declares that all children with disabilities have a right to a "free, appropriate public education." Each individual with exceptional needs should have available an educational program which ensures him or her of the right to an appropriate educational opportunity to meet his or her unique needs.

### **Federal Law**

Written with extensive input and support from parents, special and general educators, and professionals from related fields, Public Law 94-142 was passed by the Congress in November 1975. This federal statute is known as The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. It was later amended and became The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Public Law-101-476 I.D.E.A.

### **State Law**

The California Constitution provides that education is a fundamental right. The California Master Plan for Special Education, as amended by Senate Bill 1870 in July 1980, guarantees this right to children with disabilities.

Together, these federal and state laws affecting the education of children with disabilities establish four major rights for all children with disabilities.

These are—

- A free education appropriate to their needs.
- Appropriate placement in the least restrictive environment possible to promote maximum interaction with the general school population.
- Supportive services as required to assist a child with disabilities to benefit from special education. Need is determined by the I.E.P. Team. (California Education Code 56363, California Code of Regulations 3051(2).
- A non-discriminatory and valid assessment of their strengths and weaknesses.

To implement these four rights, the law provides two protections.

These are—

- A written individualized education program (I.E.P.) to be developed for every child with disabilities each year.
- Due process procedures established for parents and students to ensure that the child's and parent's rights have been met. The school district may also use the due process procedures to support the appropriateness of the child's educational program. Parents have the right to a mediation, or a due process hearing with the Special Education Hearing Office.
- These procedures are time consuming, costly, and can result in a delay in necessary services, therefore, they are only used after every other avenue has been exhausted within the school district.

## **Other Rights Guaranteed by Law**

### **Related to Referral-**

- Privacy and confidentiality of all personal records.
- Written notice of your rights in mode of communication used by the parent, unless it is clearly not feasible.
- Parental consent before a formal assessment is conducted.
- Proceedings and notices presented to the parent in understandable language.
- Review of all official records, files, and data directly related to your child, including all material that is incorporated into each student's cumulative record folder.
- Copies of your child's records within five days of request. A public agency may charge no more than the actual cost of reproduction. If you cannot afford the cost, you shall be provided copies at district expense.

### **Related to Assessment**

- Within fifteen days of the district's receipt of a written request for assessment, the district will provide in writing either an assessment plan or a Prior Written Notice explaining why the assessment is being denied. A copy of the notice of parent's rights must be included with this proposed assessment plan.
- Testing for purposes of evaluation and placement that is free of racial or cultural discrimination.
- After the school district has completed its evaluation, if you disagree with the school district's evaluation of your child, you may have the right to an independent educational evaluation at school district expense. However, the school district may request a hearing before a hearing officer to dispute your request for reimbursement. The hearing officer will then decide whether reimbursement is appropriate. The independent educational evaluation must comply with all of the requirements that apply to school district evaluations.

### **Related to the IEP**

- Reasonable notification of the scheduled IEP meeting.
- Includes one or both parents or a representative of the parents in the IEP Team.
- Scheduling of the IEP meeting during a mutually agreed upon time within the working day. (If the parent cannot attend, the school district must make a conscientious effort to include parental input).
- Written notice of any proposed change in your child's placement.
- Participation in the annual review of the IEP
- Review of the IEP, by written request, at any time.

### **Related to Public Meetings**

- Parents are permitted to participate in public hearings related to special education. (Including but not limited to School Board meetings, and C.A.C. meetings)



## **Appeal Rights**

If you disagree with the decision of the IEP Team, you have the right to a Due Process Hearing and Mediation administered by the Office of Administrative Hearings. The school district also has the right to request a Mediation or Hearing. You and the school district have certain rights during hearing procedures.

These rights are—

- To obtain a hearing within a specific time after the written request is received
- To be represented by an advocate or an attorney
- To present evidence, question, cross-examine, and require the attendance of witnesses
- To obtain a word-for-word record of the proceedings at the hearing
- To obtain a written report of the findings of the hearing and the decisions reached
- Civil action

## **Steps to Take if a Problem Arises**

If a problem arises with your child's IEP you may consider the following steps:

1. Personally Review your child's IEP
2. Discuss the problem with your child's classroom teacher (general education or special education) and/or service providers who are aware of your child's needs. (school psychologist, nurse, counselor, speech, language and/or hearing specialists, adapted physical education teacher).
3. Talk to the School Psychologist and/or Principal.
4. Write a letter to your child's case manager requesting a meeting to review the Individualized Education Program.
5. Talk to the District Program Specialist responsible for the program. (Call 949-936-5230)
6. Talk to the District Director of Special Education. (Call 949-936-5230)
7. Talk to your CAC representative or a Parent Mentor.
8. Initiate, in writing, a complaint to the State Department of Education, Sacramento, if the matter is a violation of your child's existing IEP.
9. Initiate, in writing, a request for a due process hearing or mediation to the Special Education Hearing Office, Sacramento.
10. Initiate a complaint, in writing, to the Office of Civil Rights, San Francisco, if you think that your child's civil rights have been violated.

## Terms used in Special Education

**California Master Plan for Special Education** — Document adopted January 11, 1974 by the California State Board of Education that includes philosophies, goals and guidelines for planning more comprehensive services for all individuals identified as having exceptional needs.

**Case Manager/Carrier** — Teacher or specialist responsible for ensuring that the I.E.P. is implemented.

**Child Advocates** — Parents, teachers, and professionals trained to provide practical information and support to parents whose children are participating in special education programs.

**Community Advisory Committee (CAC)** — A Committee of parents, including parents and guardians of individuals with exceptional needs, and representatives from schools and community agencies, established to advise the Special Education Local Plan Area regarding the development and review of programs under the local comprehensive plan.

**Due Process** — Procedures to ensure the protection of the rights and responsibilities of the parent/guardian are implemented. A process in which an administrative law judge hears a case regarding FAPE and makes a determination as to whether or not it was offered and implemented.

**Inclusion** — Children with disabilities included in a general education classroom for all or part of the school day.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP)** — A written individualized plan defining the program for each special education student that includes instructional goals and objectives based on the educational needs specified by the I.E.P. Team.

**Non Public Agencies** — Agencies certified by the CDE that the school district contracts with to provide services.

**Least Restrictive Environment (L.R.E.)** — Placement of an individual with exceptional needs in any program that promotes maximum interaction with general education students in a manner beneficial to the individual pupil and pupils in the general classroom.

**Local Plan for Special Education** — The model for the delivery of programs and services that schools will provide to meet the educational needs of eligible individuals with exceptional needs living within the geographic boundaries covered by the Plan. It is submitted by a SELPA to the State Department of Education.

**Public Law 101-476 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act- IDEA)** — Legislation that amended and changed title of PL-94-142

**Public Law 94-142 (Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975)** — Initial Federal legislation governing the education of all handicapped. PL-94-142 mandates that all public schools of the U.S. are to provide a free, appropriate public education and related services to all handicapped children." PL stands for the Public Law; 94 means it was passed by the 94th Congress, and 142 is the number of the law.

**Senate Bill 1870** — State Legislation to change and/or modify existing Education Code Sections dealing with the Master Plan for Special Education in order to implement the Master Plan state-wide and to bring the state into conformance with federal legislation (Public Law 94-142)

**Special Education** — Programs and services designed to meet the educational requirement of individuals with exceptional needs. Special Education means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique needs of a child with special needs.  
Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) - All school districts organized with a single or multi-district comprehensive plan. Irvine Unified School District is a single district SELPA.

**Title 5 Regulations** — The administrative regulations that amplify the Education Code sections dealing with special education.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**1. If I am not happy with my child's present progress in school, who do I contact first?**

First contact your child's teacher. If you are not able to resolve the issue, then speak to the school psychologist and/or principal. You can also contact the program specialist assigned to your child's school.

**2. What is an I.E.P.?**

An I.E.P. is an Individualized Education Program specially designed to meet your child's Special Education needs. It will include the present level of educational performances, accommodations and/or modifications, annual goals, services and placement needed to achieve the goals. An I.E.P. is reviewed at least annually, an IEP meeting can be called at any time per the request of any IEP team member, including the Parent to make necessary changes/updates.

**3. What is a 504 plan?**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal law that requires public schools to provide necessary accommodations to students with qualifying disabilities in order to ensure equal access to the educational environment. A medical diagnosis, alone, is insufficient to qualify a student as disabled under Section 504. Instead, a Section 504 team meeting must be convened and your student must be evaluated, in order to determine whether a student, in fact, has a qualifying disability under Section 504 and would be eligible for a 504 plan. If a school team finds that a student's disability negatively affects their performance in school, and they meet eligibility criteria, an IEP may be more appropriate to ensure that a student has access to the supports and services that they require in order to make educational progress.

**4. How do I know if my child needs an IEP and special education services?**

If your child has demonstrated a learning difference, physical limitation and delayed academic progress that prevents him/her from functioning effectively in a general school program without special assistance, due to a disability, then your child may be eligible for a Special Education Program. If you believe your child has a disability that may be preventing them from making progress in the general education environment and general education interventions have not been effective, please contact your school's school psychologist.

**5. If I have a child with a medical diagnosis, at what age do I notify the District that my child will need special services?**

Immediately email [Specialed@iusd.org](mailto:Specialed@iusd.org). Provide your students first and last name, DOB and ask for an initial assessment. (this must be done in writing)

Email the school Psychologist at your current school and ask for an initial assessment. (the request must be in writing)

**6. If I want my child assessed for specific issues that I am concerned about, where do I seek help first?**

If not in SPED - Email the school Psychologist at your current school and ask for an initial assessment. (the request must be in writing)

If your child is not yet attending school email [Specialed@iusd.org](mailto:Specialed@iusd.org). Provide your students first and last name, DOB, home address and concerns.

**7. If I am not happy with my child's Special Education placement, what can I do?**

Email your case manager and program specialist to request an IEP meeting to discuss your concerns. If you need further support forward that email to the Principal.

**8. Who determines my child's Special Education needs?**

The IEP Team comes to an agreement on how they can best support the student in all areas. You will participate with the district staff in determining your child's needs.

- The IEP team includes the following members: Parent, General Education teacher, Special Education teacher, Student (when appropriate), Administrator/Principal, School Psychologist, Assessors (when an assessment has been completed), Other services providers- as appropriate, Parents (may also invite outside participants who can assist with the development of the IEP)

**9. Who can attend my child's IEP meeting?**

Along with the above mentioned IEP team members, parents have the right to invite any other parties to support the student (i.e. Regional Center service coordinator, family members, outside therapists, church leaders and coaches)

**10. How long will my child receive special education services?**

Once it is determined that your child needs an IEP, services will be reviewed annually and will continue until an assessment is completed that determines the student is no longer eligible for special education services. The IEP Team will meet annually to review the most current services and determine eligibility (at least every three years).

**11. Under what circumstances will my child receive special transportation?**

The District will provide free transportation if the student is placed at a school different from their resident school and determined needed by the IEP Team.

**12. Will my child participate in general school programs?**

The rationale behind California's Least Restrictive Environment (L.R.E.) policy is to support the ideals of inclusive education. Including the child with special needs in the general education program, as appropriate, is fundamental to each child's program. The IEP team will consider your child's needs and agree on an amount of time that they participate in the general education setting.

**13. Will my child need to meet general high school graduation standards?**

Prior to a student's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday, usually around the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, the IEP team will discuss whether your child will pursue a high school diploma or a certificate of completion. The decision is reviewed annually and can change. Special education students who fulfill the district's graduation requirements will earn a high school diploma.

Students whose curriculum focuses on functional and social skills may graduate with a Certificate of Completion. Special education classes are available where they teach student independence, daily living, communication, and vocational skills.

**14. When does adult transition planning take place?**

The IEP team will meet to discuss a transition plan for your child at the IEP before their 16th Birthday.

**15. What if my family speaks a foreign language?**

The District will provide an interpreter for all assessments and at all IEP Team meetings unless it is clearly not feasible. They will also translate all documentation related to the IEP upon request.

## Local Community Resources

Irvine Unified School District <a href="https://iusd.org/">https://iusd.org/</a>	Office of Special Education <a href="https://iusd.org/departments/special-education">https://iusd.org/departments/special-education</a>
Community Advisory Committee <a href="https://iusd.org/about/departments/education-services/special-education/special-education-community-advisory">https://iusd.org/about/departments/education-services/special-education/special-education-community-advisory</a>	Family Resource Center <a href="https://iusd.org/about/departments/education-services/student-support-services/mental-health-and-wellness/irvine">https://iusd.org/about/departments/education-services/student-support-services/mental-health-and-wellness/irvine</a>
City of Irvine <a href="https://www.cityofirvine.org/">https://www.cityofirvine.org/</a>	Regional Center of Orange County <a href="https://www.rcocdd.com">https://www.rcocdd.com</a>
Disability Resources Guide <a href="https://www.cityofirvine.org/disability-services/resource-referral-guide">https://www.cityofirvine.org/disability-services/resource-referral-guide</a>	TRIPS - transportation <a href="https://www.cityofirvine.org/senior-services/trips-riders-guide">https://www.cityofirvine.org/senior-services/trips-riders-guide</a>
Irvine Residents with Disabilities Advisory Board (IRDAB) <a href="https://www.cityofirvine.org/disability-services/irvine-residents-disabilities-advisory-board">https://www.cityofirvine.org/disability-services/irvine-residents-disabilities-advisory-board</a>	Irvine Valley College Disability Student Programs & Services (DSPS) <a href="http://students.ivc.edu/dsps/Pages/default.aspx">http://students.ivc.edu/dsps/Pages/default.aspx</a>
SSA - Disability Benefits <a href="https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/ssi/">https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/ssi/</a>	SSA - In Home Support Services <a href="https://www.ssa.ocgov.com/elder/ihss">https://www.ssa.ocgov.com/elder/ihss</a>
CalOptima - Member Benefits <a href="https://www.caloptima.org/en/ForMembers/Member-Cal/Benefits.aspx">https://www.caloptima.org/en/ForMembers/Member-Cal/Benefits.aspx</a>	Disability Services <a href="https://secure.yourirvine.org/CA/city-of-irvine/catalog">https://secure.yourirvine.org/CA/city-of-irvine/catalog</a>
California Department of Rehabilitation <a href="https://www.dor.ca.gov/">https://www.dor.ca.gov/</a>	State Council on Developmental Disabilities <a href="https://scdd.ca.gov/orangecounty/">https://scdd.ca.gov/orangecounty/</a>
CHOC - Pediatric Mental Health Services <a href="https://www.choc.org/programs-services/mental-health/">https://www.choc.org/programs-services/mental-health/</a>	OCTA Access <a href="https://www.octa.net/Bus/OC-ACCESS-Service/Eligibility/">https://www.octa.net/Bus/OC-ACCESS-Service/Eligibility/</a>
Help Me Grow OC <a href="https://www.helpmegrowoc.org/">https://www.helpmegrowoc.org/</a>	211OC <a href="https://www.211oc.org/">https://www.211oc.org/</a>
Family Resource Centers – FaCT <a href="https://www.factoc.org/">https://www.factoc.org/</a>	National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) <a href="https://www.namioc.org">https://www.namioc.org</a>
Dayle McIntosh Center (DMC) <a href="https://daylemc.org/">https://daylemc.org/</a>	Braille Institute <a href="https://brailleinstitute.org/anaheim">https://brailleinstitute.org/anaheim</a>
Special Olympics SoCal <a href="https://www.sosc.org/">https://www.sosc.org/</a>	OC Head Start <a href="http://www.ochsinc.org/">http://www.ochsinc.org/</a>