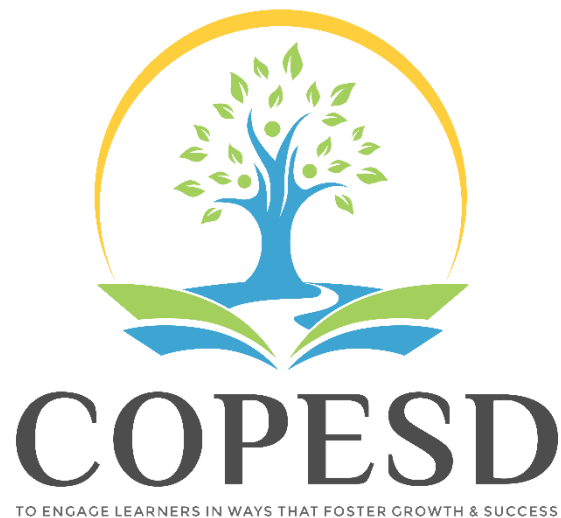


SPECIAL SCHOOL SERVICES

A PARENT HANDBOOK



Cheboygan-Otsego-Presque Isle
Educational Service District
6065 Learning Lane
Indian River, MI 49749

231-238-9394

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*When you help
a child
today,
you write
the history
of tomorrow.*

Cheboygan-Otsego-Presque Isle Educational Service District
6065 Learning Lane
Indian River, MI 49749

Dear Parent(s):

This handbook is to provide general information of interest to all parents. It is to be used as a guide to what you can expect in the process of special education for you and your child.

As a parent of a child with special needs stated, "Parenting is a difficult and rewarding experience." Most parents want to give their children the very best. When a child's needs are extraordinary, requiring special physical, mental and emotional support, parents often give until they reach the breaking point.

"Learning to admit your child needs help is difficult. Learning to ask for help is very important. Learning to accept the help when it comes is necessary."

We, the members of the Cheboygan-Otsego-Presque Isle Educational Service District Parent Advisory Committee for Special Education, are all parents of children with special needs. We share your concerns, and hope this handbook will be helpful to you and your child.

Sincerely,

COP Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

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**NOTICE
STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE**

The Cheboygan-Otsego-Presque Isle Educational Service District is in compliance with all state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, age, sex, marital status or handicap.

LET'S WORK TOGETHER

This booklet will explain all special education services offered through your local school in cooperation with Cheboygan-Otsego-Presque Isle Educational Service District.

The federal and state laws of our government require that we tell you about the range of special education services available to all children and about the rights and privileges which the laws guarantee to parents and schools. This booklet is meant to explain these to you. It has to cover all disabilities, from a relatively minor speech or language problem to severe multiple disabilities. Evaluation results may indicate that your child eligible as a student with a disability.

It is our hope that our school personnel can work in partnership with you as parents to provide a more appropriate education for your child.

WHY THIS BOOKLET?

This booklet explains the evaluation process which these schools will follow. This includes the assessment plan, the evaluation and associated meetings. We hope this will be a beneficial experience for everyone involved. When the school and parents work cooperatively, positive outcomes are often the result.

Occasionally, however, school staff and parents may not agree. There are certain procedures that must be followed. This booklet will help you understand those procedures. We will be happy to try to help you. We recommend that you read this handbook.

REMEMBER: Everyone has your child's best interest at heart and wants to provide the best educational program possible for your child. This information in this booklet will help you develop a better understanding of special education.

ASSESSMENT PLAN/PARENT CONSENT REVIEW OF EXISTING EVALUATION DATA (REED)

You are being asked to participate in planning the assessment to determine if your child is eligible for special education services. If this is the first time your child is being evaluated, we must have your consent before we can begin.

The results of the assessment will be reviewed at a multidisciplinary evaluation team meeting. We will contact you to set up the meeting.

If you do not want the assessment done, you may refuse to give your permission. If you give written permission for assessment but during the evaluation period decide you no longer would like the evaluation to be completed, you may request in writing that the process be stopped. If school personnel feel the need to proceed with the evaluation in order to provide your child an appropriate education, they may ask for a due-process hearing. An outside hearing officer will listen to you and to the school before deciding if testing is needed.

EVALUATION (TESTING)

Children must be tested using their native language. If your child speaks a language other than English, please inform the other team members. Any formal tests used must be non-discriminatory to the child because of race, background or learning problems. These tests must measure the skills they say they measure.

During formal eligibility testing, children must be tested individually. Also, we must test all areas in which there might be a suspected disability. We must collect information from several different sources; formal, standardized testing may be one. If specialized testing instruments will be used, only personnel trained to administer them will do so. A decision about your child's possible disability will be based on several different information sources.

The child's eligibility will be reviewed at least once every three years. This can be done sooner if you feel there is a need to further examine eligibility.

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN MICHIGAN IEPT

The Michigan Special Education Act is P.A. 451 (1976). It provides for special education services for children with disabilities. These include all persons birth through age 26 who meet specific eligibility requirements.

The disabilities, as per Michigan Revised rules for Special Education are as follows:

- Cognitive Impairment
- Emotional Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Visual Impairment
- Physical Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Speech and Language Impairment
- Early Childhood Developmental Delay
- Specific Learning Disability
- Severe Multiple Impairment
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Deaf-Blindness

Each is briefly explained below. A more complete definition may be found in the Michigan Special Education Rules and their amendments.

Cognitive Impairment – C.I.

R340.1705

Children with this designation are considered to have a significant developmental delay. Self-care, social skills, cognition and communication are the areas of impact.

Emotional Impairment – E.I.

R340.1706

Children with this designation have social and/or emotional problems that interfere with their learning, academics and participation in the school environment.

Hearing Impairment – H.I.

R340.1707

Children with this designation have a hearing loss that interferes with learning, communication and sometimes social development.

Visual Impairment – V.I.

R340.1708

Children with this designation have various degrees of low vision that interfere with learning. They often experience difficulties moving about their environment. Instruction might include orientation and mobility training, supports as listed in the I.E.P. and teachers/consultants based on student needs.

Physical Impairment – P.I.

R340.1709

Children with this designation have severe orthopedic impairments that interfere with learning, daily living activities and typical access to their school environment.

Other Health Impairment – O.H.I.

R340.1709a

Children with this designation have chronic or acute health problems that influence strength, vitality or alertness that impact a student’s educational performance, daily living activities and typical access to their school environment.

Speech and Language Impairment - S.L.I.

R340.1710

Children with this designation have difficulties with speech, language, learning or social adjustment.

Early Childhood Development Delay – E.C.D.D.

R340.1711

Children with this designation are ages birth through 7 years who function at approximately half of their expected level in one or more areas of development.

Specific Learning Disability – S.L.D.

R340.1713

Children with this designation have difficulty learning at a normal rate, in a normal way or under normal circumstances.

Severely Multiple Impairment - S.X.I.

R340.1714

Children with this designation have some level of cognitive impairment and a combination of cognitive and physical or sensory disabilities.

Autism Spectrum Disorder – A.S.D.

R340.1715

Children with this designation range from mild to severe. All children with ASD demonstrate difficulties with social interaction, verbal and non-verbal communication and repetitive behavior. They may also have unusual responses to sensory experiences. Each child with this spectrum disorder will appear different in ability.

Traumatic Brain Injury – T.B.I.

R340.1716

Children with this designation have an acquired brain injury which causes educational difficulties and impacts daily living activities and typical access to their school environment.

Deaf-Blindness

R340.1717

Children with this designation have difficulties with both vision and hearing. This combination causes developmental and/or educational problems.

LEGAL BASIS

The federal government Special Education Law is the Individuals with Disabilities Act - Public Law Regulations: 34CFR Part 300 (IDEA '04). This requires a free appropriate public education for children with disabilities. In Michigan, eligible children may be served from birth through age 26. The schools work within the parameters of both state and federal laws.

THE MEETINGS

MET MEETING

When an assessment is complete, you'll be asked to participate in a Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to review the data collected and to determine whether it supports eligibility. The next step is to have an IEPT.

IEPT

The letters IEPT stand for Individualized Educational Program Team. The team includes an administrator, at least one MET team member and teachers responsible for core academic subjects. You will be invited and can also bring someone with you if you'd like.

This team will decide if your child is a child with a disability. The team, with you as a member, will decide with what services, placement or combination of placements your child's needs can best be met. Each child eligible as a child with a disability will receive special education services.

IEP

The letters IEP stand for Individualized Educational Program. In this document there will be a Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) Statement. Specific goals and objectives will be developed for your child based on current information in the PLAAFP statement.

HOW OFTEN IS AN IEP WRITTEN?

An IEP must be developed at least once a year. You may ask for a new IEP before the year is over by contacting your child's school.

DO YOU HAVE TO DECIDE EVERYTHING AT THE MEETING?

No. You may take the team recommendations home with you. You have 10 days to decide if you agree that the IEP should be implemented as written. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your child's principal.

HOW OFTEN IS AN IEPT MEETING CALLED?

It may be called any time anyone feels that the current placement is not meeting your child's needs. It must be called (1) before a placement is made or changed, (2) if a major change of services is being made, (3) when a child changes program level or building. If none of these changes are planned, we still must have an IEPT meeting yearly. Whenever a team member feels a possible change in your child's program should be discussed, an IEP will be called. Only the initial IEP requires a parent signature.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AT THESE MEETINGS?

1. Get ready for the meeting by writing down things that would help school personnel further understand your child, such as how he/she behaves at home.
2. If you do not understand something being said in the meeting, ask for an explanation.
3. Parents are encouraged to participate in the development of goals and objectives.
4. Don't decide right away what program you feel is best for your child. Hear all the choices first. Keep an open mind regarding eligibility and placement options.
5. You will be asked to sign the report either at the meeting or within 10 days.
6. You will receive a copy of the report. Keep this as your record of the actions taken.

HOW ARE THE DECISIONS MADE AT THE MEETING?

A plan, based on your child's current needs, is designed by the team. Sometimes a meeting may be adjourned if more facts are needed.

THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

