

Linwood Public Schools

Parent Information Guide To Special Services



This is a short description of the special education process and the educational services that are provided by Linwood Public Schools. Your rights are spelled out in the Parental Rights in Special Education (PRISE) that will be given to you at the Planning Meeting. You will be asked to sign that you have received them. On request, you will receive a copy of the State Rules and Regulations (N.J.A.C. 6A:14) that govern special education. This parent information guide was designed to help you understand what to expect along the way. In addition, these resources can be found on the CST website.

Referral and Evaluation

Your child has been referred to the Child Study Team for an evaluation to determine if he/she has a disability and is in need of special education and related services. Special education programs and related services are open to eligible students ages 3-21. Within 20 days of that request, a case manager will contact you and arrange a date for a Planning Meeting. The case manager is a member of the child study team which includes a learning disability teacher-consultant, a school social worker, a school psychologist and at times a speech-language specialist. At this

meeting you and your case manager will determine the nature of the presenting problems and decide which evaluations are necessary to determine eligibility for services and services may be needed. The evaluation may include a psychological assessment to determine your child's abilities and emotional well-being; an educational assessment to determine the level of academic achievement; and a social assessment of family factors. The evaluation may also include other consultants, such as an occupational or physical therapist; speech-language specialist; or medical doctor (pediatrician, neurologist or psychiatrist). A vision and hearing screening will be conducted as well. With your written permission, the assessments will be conducted and completed within 90 days.

Multidisciplinary Report

The Multidisciplinary Report is a composite report of all the child study team assessments that were conducted. Outside evaluators submit their own reports separately. The Multidisciplinary Report includes the reason for referral, prior interventions, and health screenings. It also includes reports on all the evaluations that were conducted as well as functional assessments such as structured observations, interviews, informal measures, report card grades, general education tests, surveys, and rating scales. An educational assessment of academic performance examines achievement in reading, math and perceptual skills. A psychological assessment examines intelligence, motivation, attention and emotional status. A social assessment asks about parental concerns, home setting, familial relationships, peer relationships, school activities and non-structured activities. A speech-language evaluation examines articulation, listening, speaking and fluency and language development. The Multidisciplinary Report concludes with an analysis of instructional implications of the findings and an executive summary of all evaluations. After the evaluation is completed, you will receive a copy of the Multidisciplinary Report and an invitation to an Eligibility Meeting at least 10 days prior to that meeting. If your child is eligible and with your permission, the meeting can go on to develop an individualized education program (IEP). However, you may take 15 days to consider the eligibility decision before that IEP meeting if you wish.

Eligibility Criteria

The IEP team, of which you are a member, meets to review the Multidisciplinary Report and to determine if your child is eligible for special education and related services. The criteria for eligibility includes: auditory impairment; autism; cognitively impaired (mild, moderate or severe); communication impaired (speech or language impaired); emotionally disturbed; multiply disabled; orthopedically impaired; other health impaired (may include attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder as well as other medical conditions that impact learning); preschool disabled; social maladjustment; or specific learning disability (must have a discrepancy between ability and achievement). Each category is described in the State Regulations for special education. Some conditions may result in a disability that is substantial and may require accommodation, but does not require special education (mobility issues, health conditions). Such accommodations are intended to prevent discrimination based on those conditions and are covered by the federal civil rights law known as Section 504. A Section 504 plan is prepared and implemented in those cases.

Individualized Education Program

If your child is eligible for special education and related services, the IEP meeting typically follows that same day, although you may take 15 days to consider the eligibility decision. The IEP meeting determines what goals and objectives should be included in your child's special educational program. The IEP process, format and contents are specified by federal and state law, as are the participants (parents, teachers, case manager and others as needed). The case manager may prepare a draft of the IEP for your review, but you should be prepared to contribute to its contents as a full partner of the IEP Team.

Special Education Programs

The Linwood Public Schools offer a comprehensive array of services to students in need of special education and related services. Academic instruction is provided to special education students enrolled in district schools through supplementary aids and services within the regular education programs as well as resource programs and special class programs. In some cases, placement in out-of-district public or private programs is provided when such programming cannot be provided within the school district. Related services such as speech, counseling, adaptive physical education, occupational therapy, and physical therapy are also available.

Supplementary Aids and Services

Students who receive supplementary aids and services are enrolled in general education classes and instructed by general education teachers. Supplementary aids and services may include modifications in the general education curriculum and various instructional strategies. Sometimes a classroom aide is provided to assist students in staying on task and implementing those modifications. This type of program is the least restrictive special education program.

Resource Program

There are two kinds of resource programs, In-class and Pull-out, both taught by certified teachers of the disabled. They afford special education students the opportunity to receive instruction in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, health, perceptual skills, work study/organizational skills, and social skill development within the general education program or in a small group. In-class resource programs may be provided from one period to all day. Students may go to pull-out resource programs from one to four periods (elementary school); for one to six periods (middle and high school) each day. The number of subjects for which the student needs help determines the number of periods of resource needed. In elementary school, typically 1-2 periods of language arts and math are provided through a resource teacher. Resource programs allow students enrolled in resource programs the opportunity to interact with general education students for much of the instructional day.

Special Education Classes

Some teachers of the disabled teach special classes, usually with an instructional aide depending on the class size and students' needs. Students may attend special classes up to the whole school day or for as many periods as they need. In-district classes include preschool and multiple disabilities. Mainstreaming in general education classes is provided in addition to the special education class. Out-of-district classes for more severe learning difficulties may be found in other public or private schools for the disabled.

Speech - Language Services

Speech and language services are provided to students in need of assistance with articulation, fluency, voice, and/or language development skills. These services are provided individually or in small groups of up to five students. Students receive speech-language instruction from one to several sessions per week.

Related Services

Counseling Programs

Counseling is provided either by a school psychologist or school social worker. The purpose of counseling is to develop social skills and insight regarding emotional well-being in school settings. Another goal is to help students understand the impact on their behavior of their emotions and motivations. School Guidance Counselors may also provide these services.

Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapy (OT) services are provided to students in need of assistance with sensory integration including touch, balance, visual, and auditory coordination which impact academic performance. Students are seen individually or in small groups for OT.

Physical Therapy

Physical Therapy is provided to students in need of assistance with large muscle motor activities for improved mobility function as well as prevention and correction of conditions that interfere with educational performance.

Assistive Technology

Computer software and other devices may be needed to make education more accessible for students with disabilities.

Other Related Services are provided as needed according to the student's IEPs.

Extended School Year (ESY)

Some students with disabilities receive an extended school year program if they show evidence of regression (forgetting skills or knowledge) over vacations and slow recoupment (getting back up to speed) when coming back to school.

If you have any questions about these services, please call your case manager or the Director of Special Programs for more information at:

(609) 926-6709