



# PARENTS- PARTNERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

FEBRUARY 2016

## SPECIAL EDUCATION- THE FOUNDATION

Special education, as we know it, began in 1975 with the passage of the *Education for All Handicapped Children Act*. This federal legislation established a right to public education for all children regardless of disability. Over the years the original legislation became what is now known as the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*. You will often see or hear this federal legislation referred to as **IDEA**. The IDEA requires public schools to provide special education for children with \*qualifying disabilities. There are two sections of IDEA: Part B and Part C. Part C of IDEA is for children from birth to age 2. Part B is for children ages 3-21. *Parents-Partners in Special Education* is about special education for Part B of the IDEA. If you need information about Part C of the IDEA (birth to age 2), contact the Department of Rehabilitation Service's Alabama Early Intervention System at 1-800-543-3098. The regulations that tell how Part B of the IDEA is provided in Alabama are found in the [Alabama Administrative Code](#) at Chapter 290-8-9.

Special education is the individualized instruction and related services that are specially designed to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability and is provided at no cost to the parent or guardian. This is called a free appropriate public education (FAPE). The plan for providing a FAPE for a child is indicated in an Individualized Education Program. This program is called an IEP. The IEP is reviewed and revised at least once a year. Part B of the IDEA also provides the child with a disability certain protections called procedural safeguards. Among these safeguards are access to formal dispute resolution, confidentiality of records, parental (guardian or surrogate) notice and consent, and transfer of rights at the age of 19.

## INTRODUCTION

*Parents-Partners in Special Education* is provided to help explain special education services that are available under Part B of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* to students age 3-21 with disabilities. The target audience for this publication is parents and guardians of children with disabilities. We also hope that *Parents-Partners in Special Education* will be helpful to anyone who wants to learn more about special education.

To the greatest extent possible, the information in this publication is presented in parent-friendly language. This publication generally describes special education and is not intended to interpret, modify, or replace any procedural safeguards or requirements of federal or state law.

If you are a parent or guardian of a child who has been referred for or is receiving special education services, you must, at least once a year, be given a copy of the *Special Education Rights* form. This is the document that notifies you of your specific rights within the special education process. A copy of this form is available through your local school system or on our Web site at <http://www.alsde.edu/sec/ses>.

A child's school years are much more successful when there is a partnership effort between the home and school. We hope this publication will help this partnership grow and flourish.

## NOTE.....

**.....not all children with a disability will qualify for special education under Part B of the IDEA. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provide protections against discrimination and equal access for all adults and children with disabilities. These two laws are sometimes confused with IDEA. For questions about Section 504 plans, you will need to talk with someone in the school system about local policies and procedures. If you have a concern about disability-based discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, you can contact the regional Office for Civil Rights at 800-421-3481.**

## SPECIAL EDUCATION- THE IEP TEAM

*A Notice and Invitation to a Meeting/Consent for Agency Participation* is the form used to invite you to an IEP Team meeting. In addition to saying when and where the meeting will be held, the invitation also indicates what specific purpose the meeting is for and who has been invited to the meeting. The invitation has three choices regarding your attendance. While it is hoped that it does not happen, if you choose not to attend or do not respond after the school has made two attempts, the IEP Team may meet without you. Depending on your child's age and individual needs, you may also be asked to give (or decline) consent for representatives from outside agencies who are responsible for paying for or providing transition services to attend the meeting. Your participation is important! If you are not sure what a meeting is about or need to reschedule, call your child's school and ask.

## NOTE.....

.....you may also want to bring a family member, friend, or advocate to an IEP Team meeting. While not required, it is a courtesy to let the school know about any additional people you anticipate coming to the meeting with you.

.....As defined in the federal law, "the term parent means a parent, a guardian, a person acting as a parent of the child, or a surrogate parent. The term does not include the State if the child is a ward of the State." First and foremost is the birth or adoptive parent(s) but a parent under IDEA may also include persons acting in the place of the birth or adoptive parent(s), such as a grandmother or stepparent with whom a child lives, as well as persons who are legally responsible for a child's welfare.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION- THE IEP TEAM

Special education requires teamwork to be successful. The IEP Team is a group of individuals who work together to make decisions about your child's education. Each IEP Team member has an important role in the process. Sometimes one person may serve in two roles during an IEP Team meeting.

The IEP Team members **MUST** include the following:

**The parent(s)\***—The parent is an equal partner at the IEP Team meeting and brings important insight about the child's strengths and needs.

**A regular education teacher**— This teacher provides input about the general education classroom and general education curriculum.

**A special education teacher**— This teacher provides input about what your child may need to succeed in the school setting and how instruction may be modified or accommodated based on your child's individual needs.

**An individual who can interpret your child's evaluation results**— Whether the IEP Team meeting is to review eligibility testing or to revise an IEP, someone must be present who has the expertise to explain what test results mean and how the results may impact the decisions being made by the IEP Team.

**A school system representative**— This individual is usually an administrator who can commit resources to ensure that IEP services will be provided. This person is often referred to as the "LEA representative."

The following IEP Team members **MAY** sometimes be required:

**Other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding your child**— Some examples would be a nurse, a physical or behavioral therapist, or a classroom assistant. There are many other people who might be needed to provide special expertise and are invited to participate as a team member by either the parent or the school.

**The student**— When your child turns 16 he/she is expected to be a part of the IEP Team. Prior to age 16, the IEP Team may invite a student to participate whenever the team determines it is appropriate.

**Career/technical, secondary transition services, and early intervention representatives**— Depending on your child's age and individual needs, one or more of these representatives may be invited or required to attend the IEP Team meeting.

## THE PROCESS- CHILD FIND

### What Is Child Find?

Child Find is a statewide effort by the Alabama State Department of Education and the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services to locate, identify, and evaluate children with disabilities from birth to age 21. School systems have an affirmative obligation to locate, identify, and evaluate children who have or may have a disability. School systems use the referral process to fulfill this obligation.

### How Does Child Find Work?

Early Intervention and Special Education Services work closely with community service agencies, parents, and local school systems to locate children with disabilities. For parents or other persons interested in information about referring a child from birth to age 2, the toll-free telephone number is 1-800-543-3098. For parents or other persons interested in information about referring a child ages 3-21, the local school system or Special Education Services Section at the Alabama State Department of Education should be contacted.

### Why Is Child Find Important?

Child Find helps the child, the family, and the provider to plan appropriate services and link families to services for students who may meet special education eligibility requirements.

## THE PROCESS- REFERRAL

A referral for a special education evaluation is begun when it is suspected that a child may have a disability. A parent, teacher, or school employee may request that a referral be started. Sometimes a Problem Solving Team (PST) from the school will use intervention strategies in the general education setting before beginning the referral process. However, PST intervention strategies may be implemented at the same time as the evaluation process. Once a referral has been made an IEP Team meeting will be scheduled. The IEP Team will then review instructional and behavioral concerns; available information about educational history and health; and environmental, cultural, and/or economic concerns. After reviewing and discussing this information, the IEP Team will decide whether (or not) the student is accepted for a special education eligibility evaluation. If the IEP Team decides to accept the child for evaluation, the parent may either give his/her permission for the evaluation or not give his/her permission for the evaluation. If a parent decides not to give permission for the initial evaluation and the school system does not pursue an evaluation through the override procedures of mediation and/or due process, the referral process stops and the child will not be evaluated. Additional information about referrals that may be helpful follows:

- PST interventions in the general education class are not required if a child has severe problems requiring immediate attention.
- PST interventions in the general education class are not required for 3-5 year olds who have not been in kindergarten.
- PST interventions in the general education class are not required for children with articulation, voice, or fluency speech problems.
- PST interventions in the general education class are not required for children with a medical diagnosis of traumatic brain injury.
- PST interventions in the general education class are not required for a child who has been referred by his/her parents.
- A parent may request a referral for a special education evaluation either verbally or in writing.
- The IEP Team must meet to consider the referral when a parent makes a request for a special education evaluation.
- A school system may not limit the number, per year, of referral requests.
- A school system may not limit referrals to specific times of the year.

## THE PROCESS- EVALUATION

### INITIAL EVALUATION

The purpose of an initial evaluation is to determine if a child meets the eligibility requirements to receive special education services. After the IEP Team has accepted a referral for a special education evaluation, the parent is provided notice about the proposed evaluation and asked to give his/her consent for the evaluation to begin. The notice of the evaluation indicates the reasons why the evaluation is proposed, what information was used to make the decision to evaluate, and the assessment areas that may be included in the evaluation. If the parent does not give permission for the evaluation to begin and the school system does not pursue an evaluation through the override procedures of mediation and/or due process, the referral process stops. Also, if after two documented attempts to obtain permission, the parent does not indicate if he/she does or does not give permission, the referral process stops. An evaluation must consist of more than one assessment, come from a variety of sources, and be given by qualified personnel. Once parental permission for the evaluation has been received, the school system has 60 calendar days to conduct the evaluation. Following completion of the evaluation, the school system has 30 calendar days to convene a meeting to report the results of the evaluation to the parent and determine if the student meets eligibility criteria.

### REEVALUATION

A child who has been previously determined to be eligible for special education services must be reevaluated every three years to determine if he or she continues to meet eligibility criteria for special education services. An IEP Team meeting is held to determine if any additional data are needed to determine the child's eligibility status. If additional data are needed, the parent is provided notice about the proposed evaluation and asked to give his/her permission to conduct the evaluation. If the parent does not respond to this notice, the school system may, after two documented attempts, proceed with the reevaluation. If a parent indicates that he/she does not give permission for the reevaluation to proceed, the IEP Team may meet to reconsider the need for additional data or the school system may pursue the reevaluation by using the consent override procedures of mediation and/or due process to fulfill its legal obligation to complete a reevaluation every three years. The IEP Team may also request additional data from a reevaluation to determine if changes need to be made to the child's Individualized Education Program.

### INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL EVALUATIONS

If a parent disagrees with an individual evaluation he/she has the right to an independent educational evaluation (IEE) at no cost. However, the school system may request a due process hearing to show that the school system's evaluation is appropriate and no additional evaluation is required. A parent may also acquire an independent educational evaluation at his/her own expense and ask that this evaluation, as long as it meets criteria, be considered by the IEP Team.

## THE PROCESS- ELIGIBILITY

Either the IEP Team or an Eligibility Committee that includes the parent meets to review and discuss the results of the evaluation. At this meeting a determination is made about whether (or not) the student meets eligibility criteria for special education services in one or more of the thirteen defined \*disability areas. If the child is not determined eligible for special education services, he or she is referred to the school-based Problem Solving Team which will explore other intervention options outside of special education. If the child is determined eligible for special education services, the parent decides whether (or not) to give permission for special education services to be provided to the child. If the parent does not give permission for special education services to begin, the process stops. If the parent does not respond to the request for permission to evaluate, the school system must document at least two attempts to obtain parental permission. Once parental permission for the provision of special education services has been received, the school system has 30 calendar days to convene an IEP Team meeting to develop an Individualized Education Program for the child.

### \*DISABILITY AREAS

Children may be eligible for special education and related services in one or more of the following areas of disability:

Autism (AUT)	Intellectual Disability (ID)	Orthopedic Impairment (OI)
Deaf/Blindness (DB)	Multiple Disabilities (MD)	Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
Developmental Delay (DD)	Other Health Impairment (OHI)	Visual Impairment (VI)
Emotional Disability (ED)	Speech or Language Impairment (SLI)	
Hearing Impairment (HI)	Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)	

## THE PROCESS- THE IEP

At the center of special education is the Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP indicates the specially designed instruction that is appropriate for your child and the additional supports required to provide the specially designed instruction. Your child must have an IEP before any special education services can be provided. Unless the IEP Team specifies otherwise, the IEP must be in place for at least the length of the regular school term and school day. The IEP must be reviewed annually and cannot have a duration of more than 365 days. You should be given a copy of your child's IEP. The school is responsible for informing personnel about their responsibilities in providing the special education services indicated in the IEP. Below are brief descriptions of the required parts of an IEP.

## THE PROCESS- THE IEP

### Student Profile

The student profile is where the IEP Team paints a word picture of the child. The information in the student's profile will directly link to other elements of the IEP. The profile includes information about the child's strengths, preferences, and interests. The parent's concerns for enhancing the education of his/her child are included along with other relevant information. A description of relevant evaluation results, which is written in meaningful and clear terms, is provided so that the IEP Team shares an understanding of the evaluations. Finally, information about the academic, developmental, and functional needs of the child are included to help the IEP Team understand how the child's disability affects participation in the general education curriculum or with age-appropriate peers. Sometimes a teacher may send home a parent questionnaire prior to the IEP Team meeting to get input from the parents about the information required in the student profile. While use of and completion of these types of questionnaires are entirely voluntary, doing such can be a very good way for the school and family to open communication about the educational needs of the child.

## THE PROCESS- THE IEP

### Measurable Annual Goals

The annual goal is a statement describing the academic or functional skill and specially designed instruction that will enable the child to achieve within the duration of the IEP. The annual goal must identify the academic or functional content area that is targeted. The annual goal should be directly linked to needs identified in the child's profile or special instructional factors. The annual goal must contain a statement about the child's present level of academic achievement and functional performance. The annual goal must be objectively measurable and contain a specific criteria that will demonstrate mastery.

The annual goal will indicate how mastery will be evaluated. Any annual goal may include additional benchmarks that indicate intermediate steps towards annual goal achievement but benchmarks are only required for a child who is working on alternate achievement standards, also known as the Alabama Extended Standards.

### Transition

Measurable postsecondary goals and transition services must be addressed in the child's IEP no later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 16. This section of the IEP indicates the transition assessments that will be used to determine postsecondary transition goals and states the long-term goal for the areas of Postsecondary Education/Training; Employment/Occupation/Career; and Community/Independent Living. Transition service(s), activity(s), and the persons involved are indicated for each of the long-term goals. This section also indicates what pathway has been selected for the child to obtain the Alabama High School Diploma and what program credits are required to complete the selected pathway.

## THE PROCESS- THE IEP

### Transportation

This section of the IEP identifies how the student will be transported to and from school and if transportation is needed as a related service. If transportation is needed as a related service, this section also indicates the specific supports, services, or equipment that are needed to provide transportation.

### Nonacademic and Extracurricular Activities

This section of the IEP indicates the extent to which the child will have an opportunity to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities with his/her nondisabled peers. If supports are required for participation, they are described here. If the student does not have the opportunity to participate in these activities, an explanation must be provided.

### Method/Frequency for Reporting Progress of Attaining Goals to Parents

This section of the IEP indicates how often and by what means the school will report to you about his/her progress on IEP annual goals.

## THE PROCESS- THE IEP

### Special Education and Related Services

This section indicates the special education services, related services, and supplementary aids and services that your child requires to make progress toward attaining his/her annual goal(s), participate in school activities, and be educated with his/her peers. It also indicates the program modifications and supports for school personnel that are required to provide special education services for the child. This section will list the frequency, time, duration, and location of these services.

### State Testing

Alabama requires that all students in specific grades participate in standardized testing. If your child requires accommodations to participate in this testing or requires an alternate test, this section of the IEP will indicate what those specific testing conditions will be. For more information on what standardized tests are currently required and the allowable accommodations for these tests, you should contact the test coordinator at your child's school, school system, or contact the Student Assessment Section at the ALSDE.

### Extended School Year (ESY) Services

The IEP Team must consider the need for ESY services. ESY services are different than summer enrichment or summer remediation programs. In Alabama, ESY services are provided based on a demonstration that the child has significantly regressed, during a break in services, on one or more critical skills. A discussion of ESY services should identify the skills the IEP Team considers critical and how skill regression will be measured following a service break (e.g., summer, holiday).

## THE PROCESS- THE IEP

### Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

The LRE indicates the amount of time the child will receive educational services with his/her nondisabled peers. A child with a disability should only be removed from the regular education environment if the nature and severity of his/her disability is such that meaningful educational benefit cannot be satisfactorily achieved in the regular education environment. In these cases, the IEP Team must consider a variety of options to educate the child, to the greatest extent possible, with his/her nondisabled peers. If the child does not receive all of his/her special education services with nondisabled peers, the IEP Team must provide an explanation for this decision.

### Signatures

At the conclusion of the IEP Team meeting all members in attendance are asked to sign the IEP indicating they participated in the IEP development. If you decline to sign, a notation of your attendance will be made. You may request that another IEP Team meeting be held, within 30 days, for the IEP Team to review any concerns or additional input you may have at that time.

## PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS- RECORDS

You must be permitted to inspect and review all special education records for your child. Your request to inspect and review the records should be fulfilled without unnecessary delay and should not take more than 45 days. You may make reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of the records. The school system is permitted to charge a fee for copying the records as long as this fee does not prevent you from inspecting and reviewing the records. The *Family Education Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA) is the law that provides for the protection of your child's educational records. This law describes when your permission is required before copies of your child's educational records or personal information can be provided to someone else. FERPA also indicates the process to be taken if you want to amend your child's educational record. When special education records and personal information are no longer needed, notification must be made prior to the destruction of those records. In Alabama the rules governing the destruction of governmental records, including educational records, are found in the Functional Analysis & Records Disposition Authority, 2014.

## PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

Procedural safeguards describe the rights afforded to parents, students, and schools under Part B of the IDEA. In Alabama the document stating these procedural safeguards is called *Special Education Rights*. The school system is required to provide you a copy of these procedural safeguards once a year. A copy of the *Special Education Rights* should also be provided at the initial referral or when a parent requests an evaluation, when there is a disciplinary action resulting in a change of your child's placement, the first time a state complaint is filed, and the first time a due process hearing is requested. You may also request, at any time, that you be provided an additional copy of the *Special Education Rights*. While the next few slides summarize these procedural safeguards in parent-friendly language, it is important to remember that these summarizations are not intended to interpret, modify, or replace the specific rights granted under federal or state law.

## PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS- DISCIPLINE & PRIVATE SCHOOLS

### DISCIPLINE

If a child who is receiving special education services violates the school system's code of conduct, that child has specific protections before he/she is removed from the current educational placement. These specific protections also apply to a child if the school system had knowledge that the child was a child with a disability prior to the code of conduct violation. If, because of a code of conduct violation(s), a child has been removed from the educational setting for more than 10 school days, an IEP Team meeting must be held to determine if the code of conduct violation(s) were a manifestation of the child's disability. In other words, was the child's misconduct a symptom or in some way the result of his/her disability. If a parent is in disagreement with the IEP Team's determination, he/she may appeal the determination by filing a due process hearing request. Certain special circumstances apply if the code of conduct violation involves weapons, illegal drugs, or inflicting serious bodily injury.

### PRIVATE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Under Child Find obligations, a child in a private school setting may be referred for a special education evaluation to determine eligibility. A school system is **not** required to pay for the cost of special education and related services for a child at a private school as long as the school system has offered to make the appropriate special education and related services available, at no cost, in a public education setting.

## PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS- CONSENT & TRANSFER OF RIGHTS

### CONSENT

Before conducting an initial evaluation or the initial provision of special education and related services, or obtaining additional data as part of a reevaluation, the school system must obtain your informed written consent. The school system must also take reasonable steps to obtain your consent before it reevaluates your child.

#### **Consent means that:**

- You have been fully informed about the activity for which consent is sought, in your native language, or via another way of communicating necessary for you to understand.
- You understand and agree in writing to the activity for which consent is sought, and the consent describes that activity and lists the records (if any) that will be released and who the records will be released to.
- You understand that granting consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time. If you revoke consent, that revocation is not retroactive (that is, the revocation of consent does not negate an action that has occurred after the consent was given and before the consent was revoked).

### TRANSFER OF RIGHTS

Under FERPA, when a student reaches the age of 18 rights regarding educational records and privacy transfer from the parent to the student. Under Alabama law, when a student with a disability reaches the age of 19 all other educational rights transfer to that student. The exception to this is if a court has certified that the student is unable to provide informed consent. At age 19 the school system must notify both the parent and the student of this transfer of rights.

## PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS- DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The IDEA provides three options for formal dispute resolution. The options are **mediation**, a **written state complaint**, and a **due process hearing**. Each option has advantages and disadvantages. Each option has specific requirements that are necessary prior to initiation. Below is a brief description of each of these formal dispute resolution options. You may also telephone one of the dispute resolution contacts at the ALSDE/SES who will be glad to mail you additional information or help you find answers to your questions. Information about formal dispute resolution is also available on the ALSDE Web site. The Web address is: <http://www.alsde.edu/sec/ses>. Select the *Dispute Resolutions* tab on the right. Sample forms and additional information are found under the *Parent Resources* tab.

### MEDIATION

Mediation is available as a method to resolve problems or disagreements about a child's special education program. It is a separate procedure from either filing a written state complaint or requesting an impartial due process hearing. When an impartial due process hearing has been requested, mediation may also provide opportunities to reach agreement. An agreement reached through mediation may end the need for a hearing. Either a parent or school official may request mediation. For mediation to take place, both local school officials and the parent have to agree to participate in mediation.

### WRITTEN STATE COMPLAINT

A signed, written complaint may be sent to the State Superintendent of Education, Attention: Special Education Services. When a formal complaint is filed, the Alabama State Department of Education investigates the violations of the IDEA requirements that have been alleged. A specialist will be assigned as complaint contact for each complaint filed.

### DUE PROCESS HEARING

An impartial due process hearing is a legal procedure available when a parent or the school system disagrees with any matter relating to the proposal or refusal to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a child, or the provision of FAPE to a child. An independent hearing officer assigned by the State Superintendent of Education will conduct the hearing. Both parties in the hearing are usually represented by legal counsel to present their cases, though this is not required by the regulations. A written decision is given by the hearing officer after the impartial due process hearing. If dissatisfied, either party may appeal the decision in civil court.

## PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS- PRIOR WRITTEN NOTICE

The school system must provide you with prior written notice within a reasonable amount of time before it proposes or refuses to act in regards to your child's special education and related services.

#### **What Prior Written Notice is Required for:**

- Initial evaluations and reevaluations.
- Identification for special education eligibility in a disability area.
- Placement in the least restrictive environment.
- Provision of a free appropriate public education indicated in the IEP.
- Other reasons; for example, revocation of consent, transfer of rights at the age of majority.

#### **Why Prior Written Notice is Required:**

- To ensure that you understand the special education and related services that a school system has proposed or refused to provide to a student.
- To provide comprehensive documentation of the proposed and/or refused actions.
- To make sure the school system and you are "on the same page" about a child's educational program.
- To provide the parents with an opportunity to voice any concerns or suggestions.
- To provide sufficient information to ensure that the parent understands the rationale behind a school system's decision making regarding a particular proposed or refused action.
- To ensure that the necessary informed parental consent is obtained.
- To assist the parent in determining the basis for any disagreement(s) with the proposed and/or refused actions addressed in the prior written notice and whether to seek resolution of any dispute through local dispute resolution procedures, a state complaint, mediation, or a due process hearing.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### LAWS & REGULATIONS

*Alabama Exceptional Child Education Act* (1971, No. 106)(Act 106); Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* (34CFR Part 104); *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) (34 CFR Part 300); *Alabama Administrative Code*, Chapter 290-8-9; *Family Education Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA) (34CFR Part 99); and Education Department's General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) Uniform Grant Guidance (2CFR Part 200).

### ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESOURCES

The following publications can be found in the Special Education Services (SES) Section of the Alabama State Department of Education's (ALSDE) Web site. The Web address is [www.alsde.edu/sec/ses](http://www.alsde.edu/sec/ses):

**Alabama Administrative Code (AAC) Chapter 290-8-9**- This document contains the state regulations implementing the special education requirements found in Part B of the IDEA and the state regulations implementing the gifted education requirements found in the *Alabama Exceptional Child Act*.

**Mastering The Maze, The Special Education Process 2015**- This document provides detailed descriptions and specific instructions about how to properly complete Special Education Processes.

**Regional In-service Centers Map**- This interactive map provides links to contact information for the ALSDE Education Specialists who serve in each of the state's eleven regions. The map also links to contact information for the Special Education Coordinator in each school system and the Performance Profile Reports and Corrective Action Plans for each school system.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AAC</b> Alabama Administrative Code	<b>ADA</b> Americans with Disabilities Act
<b>APE</b> Adapted Physical Education	<b>AT</b> Assistive Technology
<b>BIP</b> Behavioral Intervention Plan	<b>CFR</b> Code of Federal Regulations
<b>DPH</b> Due Process Hearing	<b>DPHO</b> Due Process Hearing Officer
<b>ESY</b> Extended School Year	<b>FAPE</b> Free Appropriate Public Education
<b>FBA</b> Functional Behavior Assessment	<b>IEP</b> Individualized Education Program
<b>IEE</b> Independent Educational Evaluation	<b>IFSP</b> Individual Family Service Plan
<b>LEA</b> Local Education Agency	<b>LRE</b> Least Restrictive Environment
<b>OCR</b> Office for Civil Rights	<b>OT</b> Occupational Therapy
<b>PT</b> Physical Therapist	<b>SEA</b> State Education Agency
<b>SLP</b> Speech Language Pathologist	
<b>FERPA</b> Family Education Rights and Privacy Act	
<b>IDEA</b> Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	
<b>SEAP</b> State Special Education Advisory Panel	
<b>TDD/TTY</b> Telecommunications Device for the Deaf	
<b>PLAAPF</b> Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance	

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### OTHER RESOURCES

The following organizations have resources and services that may also be of assistance to parents who have questions about special education. These organizations are **not** affiliated with the ALSDE or local education agencies.

**Alabama Parent Education Center  
(APEC)**  
10520 US Highway 231  
Wetumpka, AL 36092  
(866) 532-7660  
[www.alabamaparentcenter.com](http://www.alabamaparentcenter.com)

**Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program  
(ADAP)**  
P.O. Box 870395  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0395  
(800) 826-1675  
[www.adap.net](http://www.adap.net)

### OTHER STATE AGENCIES THAT MAY BE OF HELP

**Division of Rehabilitation Services**  
602 S. Lawrence Street  
Montgomery, Alabama 36104  
Phone: (334) 293-7500  
Toll-free number: (800) 441-7607

**Alabama Council on Developmental  
Disabilities**  
Post Office Box 301410  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-1410  
Phone: (334) 242-3973  
Toll-Free: (800) 232-2158

**Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind**  
Post Office Box 698  
Talladega, Alabama 35161  
Phone: (256) 761-3203

**Department of Mental Health**  
Post Office Box 301410  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-1410  
Phone: (334) 242-3454  
Toll-Free: (800) 367-0955

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION...

The Alabama State Department of Education, Special Education Services, and other state agencies are committed to the provision of appropriate programs and services for children with disabilities. For additional information, parents or guardians should contact their child's teacher, principal, special education coordinator, superintendent, or:

**Alabama State Department of Education**  
P.O. Box 302101  
**Special Education Services**  
50 North Ripley Street  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2101  
Telephone: (334) 242-8114  
FAX: (334) 242-9192  
EMAIL: [speced@alsde.edu](mailto:speced@alsde.edu)  
TDD: (334) 353-1031  
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