



Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

Related Services for Preschool Students

Preschool students with developmental delays or disabilities may be eligible to receive **related services** such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or counseling. These related services are provided to eligible preschool children free of charge through the NYC Department of Education's special education program. Your child's special education services, including any related services, will be listed on a document called an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The Department of Education is responsible for arranging therapists to provide all of the related services on your child's IEP by the start date listed on the IEP.

This fact sheet outlines the process that the Department of Education uses to assign related services providers to preschool children who are *not* in center-based special education preschool programs. If your child's IEP recommends a preschool special class or a preschool special class in an integrated setting, they will receive related services through their special education program, so the process described here does not apply.

Process for Assigning Related Services Providers

The Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) will assign related services provider(s) to work with your child each school year. For children who have 10-month IEPs, the school year begins in September. For children with 12-month IEPs, the school year begins in July. Parents do not have the right to choose the providers. Just as a school-age child is assigned to a new teacher each year, a preschool child could be assigned to a new provider each year (although in some cases, the child may be assigned to the same provider who worked with him or her before).

Most preschool students will receive related services through an agency that has a contract with the CPSE. Each agency works with many different therapists who provide services such as speech, occupational, and physical therapy. The CPSE will use the following procedure:

1. If your child is in 3-K or Pre-K at a public school, providers working at the school will provide services if possible. If not, then the CPSE will use the process below.
2. The CPSE will send your child's case to the primary agency in the borough where you live and give the agency five days to assign a related services provider to your child.
3. If the primary agency does not have a provider available, the CPSE will send your child's case to a "second tier" agency, which will have up to five days to assign a provider.
4. If the second tier agency does not have a provider, the CPSE will send your child's case to a "third tier" agency, which will have up to five days to assign a provider.
5. If none of the three tiers of contracted agencies can assign a provider by the deadline, the CPSE will select and sign a contract with an independent provider.

The CPSE is responsible for finding service providers, whether they work for contracted agencies or independent providers, to work with your child.

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- The Department of Education must provide all related services on the IEP, starting on time at the start of the school year. If your child starts receiving related services during the school year, services must begin by the start date listed on your child's IEP.
- Services must take place in the least restrictive environment appropriate for your child. For most children, the least restrictive environment will be the child's 3-K or Pre-K program, child care center, or home. Sometimes, the IEP team determines that it is appropriate for a child to receive services in a different location, such as a related services agency. The appropriate location should be discussed at your child's IEP meeting and written on your child's IEP.
- The CPSE must arrange transportation for preschool students who receive related services at a location other than their home, 3-K, Pre-K, preschool, or child care center. If you take your child to the provider's office, the CPSE will reimburse you for the amount you spend on MetroCards or taxi/car service. You should complete the reimbursement form, available in multiple languages, at schools.nyc.gov/learning/special-education/supports-and-services/related-services and give it to your CPSE administrator. If you cannot afford to wait for reimbursement, you should ask your CPSE administrator to give you MetroCards or arrange taxi/car service for you. If you are unable to take your child to the agency, the CPSE must arrange transportation for your child.
- Your child has the right to receive make-up services for any weeks that they miss because the CPSE did not arrange for the services to start on time.

How to Resolve Problems with Related Services

You can take the following steps if you are having a problem with your preschool child's related services, such as services not starting on time, services not being provided at the appropriate location, services not being provided in the language listed on the IEP, or transportation not being provided to services at an agency:

1. Contact the CPSE office that serves your child. For a list of CPSE offices, please visit schools.nyc.gov/learning/special-education/help/committees-on-special-education.
2. If the CPSE does not resolve the problem, e-mail relatedservices@schools.nyc.gov, an e-mail address set up by the Department of Education (DOE) to address problems with related services. You should include your child's name, date of birth, NYC ID #, a description of the problem, and any steps you have taken to try to address the problem. Please feel free to copy Advocates for Children at preschool@afcny.org so we are aware of your concern. You can also call the DOE's Special Education Hotline at (718) 935-2007. If the DOE does not resolve the problem, you may want to call or e-mail the DOE again.
3. You have the right to file for mediation or an impartial hearing.

For more information, please see Advocates for Children's [Guide to Preschool Special Education Services](#) or the DOE's [Family Guide to Preschool Special Education Services](#) at schools.nyc.gov/learning/special-education/preschool-to-age-21/moving-to-preschool. You can also call our Helpline to discuss your child's individual situation.

Advocates for Children of New York, Inc.

151 West 30th Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10001
Jill Chaifetz Education Helpline: 1-866-427-6033 (toll free)
Monday through Thursday, 10am to 4pm

This fact sheet does not constitute legal advice. This fact sheet attempts to summarize existing policies or laws without stating the opinion of AFC. If you have a legal problem, please contact an attorney or advocate.

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