Advocates for Children of New York
Protecting every child's right to learn

Start of School Questions & Answers for Families of Students with Disabilities

Where is my child going to school?

► *MY CHILD IS A PRESCHOOLER WITH AN IEP…*

…and their IEP only recommends Related Services

If your child's IEP recommends only Related Services and/or a Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT), you need to find a program for your child yourself. All 3-K (for children born in 2023) and Pre-K (for children born in 2022) programs should accept students with IEPs. If you did not apply already, you can search for programs with open seats on www.myschools.nyc. Contact programs directly or contact the New York City Public Schools (NYCPS; formerly Department of Education) Office of Student Enrollment (OSE) by phone at (718) 935-2009 or by email at esenrollment@schools.nyc.gov.

…and their IEP recommends a special program

When your preschool child's IEP recommends a special program, like a special class or a special class in an integrated setting (SCIS), the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) should find a program for you. Contact the CPSE where you live for help with this.

Please note that the CPSE process takes time and happens year-round. If you believe your child needs preschool special education services, but your child is still in the process of getting an IEP, you should still enroll your child now in 3-K or Pre-K.

► *MY CHILD IS IN K-12TH GRADE AND HAS AN IEP FOR A DISTRICT 1-32 SCHOOL…*

…and is new to NYC

Many districts have zoned elementary and middle schools. If your child hasn't been assigned to a school through the admissions process, they may be able to attend their zoned school. To find your zoned school, go to schoolsearch.schools.nyc or call 311.

Even if your zoned school is full, the school should let your child attend until NYCPS offers another school. If the school turns you away without giving you another option, contact the Family Support Coordinator at your District Superintendent's Office; and/or NYCPS's Office of Student Enrollment by phone at (718) 935-2009 or by email: ESEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov for elementary school admissions; MSEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov for middle school admissions; or HSEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov for high school admissions.

If you do not have a zoned school or would like to explore other options, contact your Family Welcome Center. If you want your child to attend their zoned school but they were assigned to a different school, contact the Office of Student Enrollment to discuss a possible transfer (by phone at (718) 935-2009 or by email at one of the addresses listed above).

…and already went through the application process

Students who filled out an application (for Kindergarten, Middle, or High School) should have received a "match" for a school in the spring. If you want a different school, check the waitlists on myschools.nyc. Middle and High school waitlists expire on September 18th. Kindergarten waitlists expire on September 25th.

► *MY CHILD HAS AN IEP THAT RECOMMENDS A D75 PROGRAM*

If your child needs a District 75 ("D75") program and you don't have a placement, email D75Placement@schools.nyc.gov or call (718) 935-2009 and ask for D75 Placement assistance within your borough. For more information about D75, visit bit.ly/specialedD75 or call (212) 802-1500.

► *MY CHILD WAS NOT IN A NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOL LAST YEAR AND HAS AN IEP FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE*

If you've just moved to NYC and your child had an IEP from outside NYC, NYCPS should create a comparable services plan (CSP) based on your child's IEP and have an IEP meeting as soon as possible to create a NYC-based IEP. It's helpful to give NYCPS a copy of your child's last IEP and any recent evaluations.

If your child is in preschool, contact the CPSE. If they are in K-12, contact your zoned school or the Family Welcome Center for where you live.

WHEN YOU ENROLL YOUR CHILD…

Provide proof of immunization, proof of NYC residence, and the IEP (if new to NYC). If you are enrolling in the NYC school system for the first time, bring proof of age. For the list of documents that the school will accept, visit www.schools.nyc.gov/NewStudents or call (718) 935-2009. Even without proof of immunization or age, your child should still be enrolled while the school helps get these documents. **You do NOT need to show proof of immigration status or citizenship.**

What if my child has a special/self-contained class on their IEP but the school says that they can't provide it?

First, be sure you're familiar with the special education classroom options in NYC Public Schools. For information about settings in District 1-32 schools, see bit.ly/specialedD132. Find more information about options in District 75 on the NYCPS website.

Your child has a right to attend a school that has the program on their IEP on the first day of school. If the school you were offered says they don't have the program on your child's IEP, talk to the staff to confirm they cannot implement your child's IEP. You should *not* agree to changes to the IEP unless you think your child's IEP requires changes and it makes sense for your child. If the school will not implement your child's IEP, write immediately to SpecialEducation@schools.nyc.gov. NYCPS's Office of Special Education should work with the school to create the program or offer your child a different school. If you'd prefer to transfer to a more welcoming school at this point, it's best to reach out directly to NYCPS's Office of Special Education (SpecialEducation@schools.nyc.gov) and the Office of Student Enrollment (ESEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov for elementary school admissions; MSEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov for middle school admissions; or HSEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov for high school admissions).

If your child has a self-contained special class on their IEP (not general education or Integrated Co-Teaching, or "ICT"), and you don't get an offer for a school that can provide that, you may qualify for a voucher called a "P1" letter (or a "Nickerson"). A P1 is a voucher for one year of tuition in a state-approved private school for students with disabilities that can provide the program on your child's IEP. You must find the school yourself from the list of state approved schools and your child has to be accepted. P1s expire, so check the date! If you think your child qualifies for a P1, reach out to AFC's Helpline at (866) 427-6033 or send us a message online.

What specialized programs does NYCPS offer?

NYCPS has specialized programs that serve some students with autism or intellectual disabilities, students who need additional reading supports, students who benefit from intensive social, emotional, and behavioral supports, and students who need bilingual special education services. Find more information on these specialized programs on the NYCPS's website.

If your child has already been evaluated for one of the specialized programs, but doesn't yet have an offer to one, or you are interested in learning more about the options, contact NYCPS's specialized programs team by emailing specializedprograms@schools.nyc.gov. If your child hasn't yet been evaluated, but you'd like them to be, speak to the IEP team at your school.

My child has been accepted at a charter school. When the school found out my child has an IEP, they said we had to give up the IEP program or my child couldn't attend. What should I do?

Charter schools must serve students with IEPs and should work with NYCPS to make sure students get the supports they need. Call the Office of School Design and Charter Partnerships at (212) 374-5419 or file a complaint online.

My child is supposed to receive related services, or Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS). Who do I contact if that's not happening?

Your child has a right to get all the services on their IEP. You can find out who your child's related service and SETSS providers are on your child's NYCSA account (schoolsaccount.nyc) or ask the school. Make sure the schedule for services works for your child. If you need help or your child is not receiving their services, you can email RelatedServices@schools.nyc.gov.

If your child is in K-12th grade in a public school and is not receiving all their related services or SETSS, NYCPS should give you a Related Services Authorization (RSA) or a "P3" for SETSS. With that, you can go to an independent (not NYCPS) provider for related services or SETSS at a rate agreed to by NYCPS. You'll receive the voucher from NYCPS and then look for a provider yourself. You can ask NYCPS for help, and they should provide you with a list of approved providers. Any provider who is licensed in NYS and will go through the screening and payment process can take a NYCPS voucher.

We suggest you keep a list of who you called, whether you were able to reach them and what they said. Then, if you can't find someone to take the NYCPS's voucher or you find someone who will take it at a higher rate, contact NYCPS's Special Education Hotline or email

KEY CONTACT INFORMATION call 311 or...

Family Welcome Centers (FWCs)

These NYCPS offices are meant to help families with enrollment and admissions issues. Find a FWC near you: schools.nyc.gov/enrollment/enrollment-help/family-welcome-centers

District Offices

Each school district has support teams to help families resolve issues. schools.nyc.gov/about-us/leadership/district-leadership

Office of Pupil Transportation

To report a complaint about your child's busing, call 311 or (718) 392-8855 or visit schools.nyc.gov/school-life/transportation/contact-information for more information

Committees on Special Education & Preschool Special Education

http://bit.ly/DOECSEs

NYCPS Special Education Hotlines & emails

CALL (718) 935-2007 or EMAIL
SpecialEducation@schools.nyc.gov
(for school-aged students)
KindergartenIEPProcess@schools.nyc.gov
(for students with disabilities entering kindergarten)
RelatedServices@schools.nyc.gov
(for questions about your child's related services)

AFC's Jill Chaifetz Education Helpline

If you try everything suggested here but your child is still not in school or not receiving special education services, please call our Helpline at (866) 427-6033, Monday–Thursday, 10am–4pm.

RelatedServices@schools.nyc.gov to ask for more help. For more information, watch AFC's Related Services webinar.

If your preschool child is not getting the related services listed on their preschool IEP, contact your Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) administrator. If the CPSE can't help find a provider, call the NYCPS's Special Education Hotline (718) 935-2007 or email RelatedServices@schools.nyc.gov.

My child requires Assistive Technology and it isn't in place yet. What do I do?

Assistive Technology (AT) is any device or support for using that device that helps a student with a disability learn. It is the responsibility of NYCPS to provide the AT device and supports on a student's IEP at no cost. If AT is already on your student's IEP, but not being provided, reach out to the Office of Special Education at SpecialEducation@schools.nyc.gov.

If you believe that your child could benefit from AT, ask for an AT evaluation at your school or your CPSE or CSE. Find more information about AT on NYCPS's website.

My child has medical needs and requires nursing supports for school. What should I do to make sure they're safe?

If your child needs nursing services, have their doctor fill out and return all NYCPS medical forms before the start of each school year or anytime there's a change in your student's medical needs at school or on the bus to and from school. Your child's doctor should fill out the Medical Accommodations Request Form (MARF) form for transportation and school medical needs. Once services are approved, it's very important that the IEP be changed to reflect those needs and services.

If your child requires a 1:1 nurse at school or on the bus, the doctor should state that on every form, *even when the form does not ask for this information*. We also recommend that your child's doctor submit a separate letter detailing your child's medical and nursing needs.

Other forms that need to be submitted every year or if something changes include:

- ☐ **HIPAA form** *(parent must sign and return every year)*
- ☐ **Medication Administration Forms (MAF):**
  - Allergies/Anaphylaxis MAF
  - Asthma MAF
  - Seizure MAF
  - Diabetes MAF
  - General MAF *(all other medications)*
- ☐ **Request for Medically Prescribed Treatment** *(non-medication)*
- ☐ **Request for Health Services/Section 504 Accommodations Parent Form**

My child uses a wheelchair but the classroom isn't accessible. Who should I contact for help?

Call the school's principal or parent coordinator to discuss. If that doesn't help, reach out to NYCPS's Special Education Hotline (718) 935-2007, or write to accessibility@schools.nyc.gov. You can find a list of accessible sites on NYCPS's website, with Building Accessibility Profiles (BAPs), which have a lot of detail about the accessibility of a school building.

My child is supposed to get specialized (curb to school) transportation, but it's still not in place or we have concerns about the busing services. What should I do?

The transportation section of your child's IEP should include whatever your child needs, such as a small bus, special equipment, air conditioning, limited time travel, etc. If the IEP doesn't include what your child needs, ask for an IEP amendment and send whatever documentation you have of your child's needs.

You can see what the current transportation recommendations are on your child's NYCSA account. *Depending on your child's medical condition, NYCPS may require extra forms to be filled out by your child's doctor before the meeting (typically on a Medical Accommodations Request form, or "MARF").*

At least a week before school, your child's bus company and route number should be available on your child's NYC Schools Account (NYCSA). If you don't have a NYCSA account, reach out to your child's school or a Family Welcome Center to register for one or visit schoolsaccount.nyc.

If there is no information on NYCSA about transportation the week before school starts, call your school and ask to speak with the Transportation Coordinator, who should reach out to their OPT Transportation Liaison for further support. The bus company should call you a few days before school to tell you when your child will be picked up. If your child has limited travel time on their IEP, but the route doesn't provide that, call your child's school; they are supposed to work with OPT to make sure everything gets put into place.

If there is a bus route listed, but you haven't heard from the bus company yet, call the bus company and ask about the pick-up time and confirm that they can meet your child's transportation needs. Their number should be listed on your child's NYCSA account. Bus company contact information is also available on the NYCPS website for School-Age Students and Pre-K and Early Intervention Students.

If there is an issue with the bus, you can call your child's school and ask them to file a complaint and give you a complaint number, or you can call OPT yourself at (718) 392-8855 and ask for a complaint number. It's important to call each day there is a problem and keep track of the complaint numbers. For more information about how to address issues with transportation, see AFC's Resolving Transportation Issues tip sheet.

Preschool students attending a special class or a special class in an integrated setting have a right to specialized transportation. If you do not have a route or experience challenges contacting the bus company, email EarlyChildhoodBusing@schools.nyc.gov.

When I tried to get help for my child who is entering preschool or kindergarten, the school told me the programs are optional.

Although you don't have to send your child to preschool or kindergarten, you have the right to send your child to a 3-K, pre-K, or kindergarten program based on the year they were born. NYCPS must provide an appropriate class and all the services on your child's IEP. Your child has a right to receive special education services even if they are not enrolled in a public school.

FOR MORE INFORMATION…

We urge families to look at NYCPS's website for:

Specific information on enrollment and students with disabilities

Enrollment information for all students

Information about special education supports and services in New York City

AFC's guides for parents are available at advocatesforchildren.org/find-resources.

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