

Clawson Public Schools
PARENT HANDBOOK

For parents of a child with a disability



Dear Parents:

We invite you to become acquainted with the programs, people, and organizations available to help you and your child. This handbook was developed for parents of students with disabilities. It serves as one source of information about state and federal laws that have been written to protect the rights of special education students. It is designed as a reference that explains the steps taken to plan and provide your child's special education program. It also explains and defines the terms used during the process.

Your child's Individualized Educational Program (IEP) is critical to his/her educational development and success. Every person who participates in the creation of your child's program plays an important role at the IEP meeting. We recognize that you may sometimes feel overwhelmed or confused by the process of developing the IEP and Special Education services. This guide has been developed to help answer some of your questions. Our goal is to give you the information that you need to become a well-prepared, comfortable participant at your child's IEP meetings. We hope that you find this guide a helpful tool and encourage you to contact us if you have any further questions or concerns.

Clawson Public Schools has Parent Organizations in each building. You are invited to attend and participate in the many activities. In addition, Oakland Schools has a Parent Advisory Committee consisting of parents from the ISD's local education agencies and public school academies. Each representative is a parent of a special needs child and as a group; the PAC is representative of a cross section of the impairment areas.

Copies of the handbook are available electronically on the Clawson website. If you have questions, you may contact Student Services at 248/655-4416.

Sincerely,

Dyanne Hildebrant,
Special Education Director
Clawson Public Schools

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What is an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

An "Individualized Education Program" means a written plan for a student with a disability that spells out the special education and related services the student will receive. The IEP is developed at a meeting that is scheduled at a mutually agreeable time. The written document is a record of the IEP Team meeting. The IEP is reviewed and revised at least once a year.

What is included in the IEP?

The requirements include:

A statement of the student's Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

- A statement of measurable annual goals and short-term objectives that address:
 - o How to help the student be involved in and make progress in the general curriculum (or appropriate activities, for preschool children)
 - o How the student's progress toward the annual goals will be measured, and
 - o How the parents will be regularly informed of that progress
- A statement of how Special Education programs/services and supplementary aids will be provided to the student, and any accommodation, modifications or other supports for the school personnel
- The projected starting date for services as well as the duration, anticipated frequency, and location of where programs and services will be delivered
- An explanation of the student's Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- A statement of any accommodations the student will need to take the state - and/or district-wide assessment tests. If the IEP Team determines that the test is not appropriate for the student, a different assessment will be used.
- A statement of transition services no later than the first IEP that is to be in effect when a student is 16. This may be considered in an IEP at age 13.

Minor changes to a current IEP are made through an addendum. Minor changes include, but are not limited to:

1. Adding, modifying, or deleting instructional goals and objectives
2. Modifying the amount of time in the current program
3. Adding, modifying or deleting related services or provisions related to supplementing aids/services/ assessment, or transportation.

WHAT IS LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE)?

LRE looks at the setting in which the student receives an education. The law presumes that students with disabilities are most appropriately educated with their non disabled peers in the general education setting. Attending special classes or separate schools, or removing students with disabilities from the regular classroom occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability prevents the student from achieving satisfactorily even when supplementary aids and services are used.

Team determines that the student needs those services to receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE). The school district's responsibilities related to transportation include furnishing any specialized services documented on a student's IEP (such as a lift bus or safety harness) and following appropriate safety, medical, and traffic rules and procedures.

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION OF MY SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD?

It is important for parents/guardians to read transportation policies and procedures provided by their district or transportation office and to discuss those policies with your son/daughter, when possible. Besides reinforcing safety rules, it is the responsibility of parents to assist their child to the bus if he/she cannot travel independently between the residence and the bus due to physical problems, immature development, or inaccessibility of the residence. Teamwork, communication, and cooperation between parents and schools are important in achieving safe transportation of students.

WHAT IF I HAVE A CONCERN ABOUT MY CHILD'S SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES?

For most students and families, standard Home-School Communication Methods such as progress reports, daily logs, e-mail, phone calls, IEP meetings and conferences provide ample and effective opportunity to address concerns that may arise. In some instances, however, other strategies may be necessary. You may choose to contact your teachers or ancillary staff in writing or by email if you believe your child needs different or additional services and supports. A parent can, at any time, request an IEP Meeting using a dated letter or email. In this instance, send an additional copy of your request to someone else on your IEP Team or in your district. Explain in detail the purpose for convening the IEPT meeting. There is no requirement to wait for the scheduled annual review. If you still have a concern or need to bring additional attention to your concern, contacting the Special Education Supervisor or Director for your district or the school principal by phone, email, or dated written correspondence can be effective. You may also choose to contact Oakland Schools (the Intermediate School District for Oakland County) for guidance or assistance. This can be done through the website (<http://www.oakland.k12.mi.us>), by phone (248.209.2314), by email or in writing. Services from Oakland Schools are free and can be very helpful.

For those occasions when a more prescribed means of addressing a concern might be needed, there are several options for families. You may choose to request a facilitated IEP Team meeting using a dated request form, email or a phone call. The trained facilitators are neutral and this service is free to families. A second option is to request the use of a local resolution process through a dated letter or email. Resolution processes are also free to families. A third option would be to request mediation using a dated request form, email or phone call. This process is free and a signed mediation agreement is enforceable in court.

RESOLUTION SESSION

The purpose of a resolution session is for parents to discuss their concerns with district staff so that the parties have an opportunity to resolve the dispute. The district shall convene a meeting with the parents and the relevant member(s) of the IEP Team who have specific knowledge of the facts identified in the complaint. The meeting shall: (1) occur within 15 calendar days of receiving notice of the parent's complaint; (2) include a representative of the agency who has decision-making authority on behalf of the agency; (3) not include an attorney of the district unless the parent is accompanied by an attorney; (4) be a meeting where the parents of the child discuss their complaint.

Administration Building 626 Phillips Ave. Clawson, Michigan 48017. For all other inquiries related to discrimination, contact Linda Gould at 248/655-4411.

SPECIAL EDUCATION DISABILITY AREAS

Each district must provide or contract for appropriate Special Education programs and/or services for students identified as having:

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

Additional Information

Appendix A – Procedural Safeguards (MDE)

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/May09-ProceduralSafeguardsNotice_278611_7.pdf

(for Procedural Safeguards in Arabic, Spanish or American Sign Language (ASL) go to www.michigan.gov/mde and look under Special Education)

Appendix B – Early On Oakland Community Guide

<http://www.oakland.k12.mi.us/LinkClick.aspx?link=Earlychildhood%2fResource+Guide+2011.pdf&tabid=286&mid=2937>

Appendix C – Transition: A Guide to the Process

<http://www.oakland.k12.mi.us/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=icGcxhgntQ%3d&tabid=241>

Appendix D – Oakland County Guide to Community Resources

<http://www.oakland.k12.mi.us/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=0u1ATeSOVQI%3d&tabid=1786>