



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

of parents of students with disabilities

**Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Division of Exceptional Student Education
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Miami, Florida 33132
305-995-2027
<http://ese.dadeschools.net>**



**FDLRS-South/Parent Services
6521 SW 62nd Avenue
305-274-3501
<http://fdlrs-south.dadeschools.net>**

The Division of Exceptional Student Education

The Division of Exceptional Student Education (ESE) ensures that eligible students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and State rules. The district is required to provide students with disabilities with appropriate programs and/or related services. These services are provided based on the individual needs of the student as documented on their Individual Educational Plan (IEP).

The following pages will provide you with answers to frequently asked questions by parents of children with disabilities. We hope this information will guide you in supporting your child and actively participating in your child's education.

PARENT RESOURCES:

What is Exceptional Student Education for Students with Disabilities?

English: <http://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070089-ese2011.pdf>

Spanish: <http://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070090-ese311279-spanish.pdf>

Haitian Creole: <http://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070091-esecreole.pdf>

A Parent's Introduction to Exceptional Student Education in Florida

English: <http://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070085-eseparent.pdf>

Spanish: <http://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070086-esespan.pdf>

Haitian Creole: <http://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070087-eseparentcreole.pdf>

Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) Parent Involvement Exceptional Education in Florida website: <http://forparents.florida-ese.org/>

This site is designed specifically to assist parents as they navigate the exceptional student education process, from Pre-K through college and/or a career. This helpful site provides valuable information and resources related to ESE services and students with disabilities.

How do I request assistance if I think my child may need special education services?

Parents are entitled to request a comprehensive evaluation of their child when a disability is suspected. The evaluation process will seek to determine the types of interventions that will help your child meet age and grade level standards and utilize those interventions during the evaluation. Record reviews, parent and teacher interviews, observations, and analysis of student assessment data are utilized to develop interventions. *Parents are encouraged to contact their child's school to request a meeting to discuss concerns.*

PARENT RESOURCE:

Evaluations for Special Education Services

<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070088-idp.pdf>

What is Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)?

The MTSS framework model, is a system of service delivery that uses evidence-based instruction and interventions, progress monitoring, and evaluation, for the on-going tracking of individual students in making informed decisions about the student's educational and behavioral needs. This framework provides students who do not respond to instruction with increasingly intensive levels of intervention. Each school in Miami-Dade is dedicated to meeting the requirements of the MTSS Framework Model through the School's RtI (Response to Intervention) Leadership team's oversight of procedures and fidelity of implementation.

PARENT RESOURCE:

Parent Brochure on RtI: <http://www.florida-rti.org/parentResources/index.htm>

How will I be notified about IEP meetings and how do I prepare for them?

The State and IDEA emphasize the importance of parental involvement in developing, reviewing, and revising the IEP. The parent must receive a *Notification of Meeting* even when the student has reached the age of majority. To ensure that parents are given the opportunity to attend the meeting, the LEA must schedule a meeting at a mutually agreed upon time and place. For tips on how to prepare for IEP meetings contact FDLRS-South Parent Services staff at 305-274-3501.

PARENT RESOURCE:

Getting Ready for Your Child's IEP Meeting

English: <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070119-iep-card.pdf>

Spanish: <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070121-iep-span.pdf>

What is a Local Education Agency (LEA)?

The LEA is the IEP team participant who is responsible for making decisions on behalf of the district. He or she ensures that your child's IEP meets compliance with State and federal regulations and is authorized to commit district resources. The signature of the LEA representative on the IEP ensures that the program and services specified on the document will be provided within the timeframes delineated in the IEP. *Check with your child's school to find out who is the designated LEA.*

What are my rights as a parent of a child with a disability?

The Notice of Procedural Safeguards for Parents of Students with Disabilities (Revised May 2014) describes the parent's rights under IDEA. These rights, or procedural safeguards, are intended to ensure that you have the opportunity to be a partner in the educational decisions made regarding your child. Contact your child's school or access the links below to obtain a copy of the procedural safeguards.

PARENT RESOURCE:

Notice of Procedural Safeguards for Parents of Students with Disabilities

English: <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070135-procedural.pdf>

Creole: <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070137-creoleps.pdf>

Spanish: <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070136-safeguards-span.pdf>

Russian: <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070138-russian-reso.pdf>

German: <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070139-safeguards-germ.pdf>

Vietnamese: <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070140-proceduralsafeguards-vietnamese.pdf>

French: <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070143-procedural-french.pdf>

Portuguese: <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070144-procedural-portuguese.pdf>

Tagalog: <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070145-procedural-tagalog.pdf>

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How will I know what progress my child is making towards his/her IEP goals?

Your child's school must communicate with you on a quarterly basis regarding his/her progress on each of the goals that were developed at the last IEP meeting. The information that is communicated to you should reflect one of the following for each of the goals: **mastery** of the goal, **adequate progress** made, **some progress** made, or **insufficient progress** made. *Contact your child's school to discuss concerns and to schedule an IEP meeting to review progress, if necessary.*

What can I do if I disagree with decisions made at an IEP meeting?

Parents and schools have a “built-in” partnership, with the child as the primary focus. This partnership will grow when parents and school staff work together. Disagreements may happen, but when they are solved collaboratively it strengthens the parent/school relationship. Parents can also refer to the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards for Parents of Students with Disabilities* for formal ways to resolve disagreements.

What is a Section 504 Plan?

A Section 504 plan describes the accommodations that the school will provide to support your child’s education. Your child may be entitled to Section 504 accommodations if he/she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one (1) or more major life activities. Parents, teachers, and other staff members will meet to discuss all relevant information about your child to determine eligibility for Section 504. For more information on Section 504, feel free to contact Dr. Sue Buslinger-Clifford, at 305-995-2735 or sclifford@dadeschools.net

PARENT RESOURCE:

A Parent and Teacher Guide to Section 504

<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070055-504bro.pdf>

Who can I contact if my child is being bullied?

Allegations of bullying/harassment are taken seriously by Miami-Dade County Public Schools. When concerned about bullying or harassment behaviors, contact your child’s teacher immediately. You can verbally report your concerns and/or fill out the Bullying and Harassment Reporting Form, which can be found at the following link:

<http://forms.dadeschools.net/webpdf/7229.pdf>. If the situation is not resolved successfully, you may ask your child’s counselor to intervene. If the problem should continue to persist, notify the school’s principal. You may also contact the Bullying/Harassment Hotline, staffed by the Division of Student Services staff at the District office. They can be reached at 305-995-CARE (2273). The Hotline is staffed from 7:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Information may be provided anonymously. All messages will be returned promptly. Additional information regarding bullying and harassment can be found at the following link:

<http://studentservices.dadeschools.net/bullying/>

Where can I go to get early intervention services for my infant or toddler?

For screening and evaluation of infants and toddlers suspected of having a developmental delay or disability, at no cost to the family:

Birth-3 years of age

Early Steps Program

- **North Office (North of Flagler)**
Miami Center for Child Development
1601 NW 12th Avenue, 2nd Floor
Miami, Florida 33136
305-243-5600
- **South Office (South of Flagler)**
Nicklaus Children's Palmetto Bay Outpatient Center
17615 SW 97th Avenue (Franjo Road)
Palmetto Bay, Florida 33157
786-268-2611

3 – 5 years of age

Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System-South

<http://fdlrs-south.dadeschools.net>

- **Main Office @ JRE Lee Educational Center)**
6521 SW 62nd Avenue
South Miami, Florida 33143
305-274-3501

What services are available for students who speak a language other than English?

The Bilingual English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Exceptional Student Education Program was created in an effort to meet the requirements of the State Board of Education vs. LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) et. al., Consent Decree and the needs of the multicultural/multilingual population of students in exceptional student education in Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

The current policies and procedures assure the appropriate identification and placement of English Language Learner (ELL) students in exceptional student education. The Division of Exceptional Student Education monitors schools to ensure the appropriate identification, placement and instruction of students in special education who speak a language other than English at home. The monitoring includes conducting Language Proficiency/Dominance Screening (LPDS) to determine if academic/behavioral difficulties are due to learning English.

Who do I contact if I think my child needs counseling services?

There are counseling professionals available at each school to assist students and parents/guardians with issues regarding academic, personal/social and behavioral concerns. These counseling professionals include: School Guidance Counselors, School Social Workers, TRUST Specialists, School Psychologists, and school health aides/health screeners. If you are interested in counseling services, please contact one of the identified counseling professionals at your child's school.

If you require further information on these services, please call the Division of Psychological Services at 305-995-1735 or visit our website at <http://psy.dadeschools.net>.

Who do I contact about schooling if my child is confined to the home or hospital?

Homebound/Hospitalized Instructional Program (HHIP) is available for students who are confined to the home or hospital. Medical authorization signed by a licensed physician is required for participation in this most restrictive program. Based upon the IEP, instruction is provided either in the student's home, hospital location, or through tele-class (class conducted via telephone and/or computer) options. Parents and students must sign an agreement which specifies *their* responsibilities during enrollment in this program. Referral to the HHIP can be made by the student's doctor, hospital personnel, teacher, counselor, or parent. Eligibility requirements include medical certification that the student is expected to be absent from school a minimum of fifteen (15) consecutive days. For more information contact the Homebound/Hospitalized Instructional Program at 305-514-5100 or visit their website at <http://brucieball.vpweb.com/Homebound.html>

What is the Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA)?

The FAA is the statewide assessment designed for students with disabilities whose participation in the general statewide assessment is not appropriate, even with accommodations. The FAA measures student academic performance on the Access Points at three levels: participatory, supported, and independent. Only students with significant cognitive disabilities who meet exemption criteria are eligible to participate in this alternate assessment. The IEP team is responsible for determining whether students with disabilities are eligible to participate in alternate assessment based on the set criteria. ***Parents are encouraged to review their child's IEP to determine which statewide assessment will be administered to their child.***

What is a Transition IEP (TIEP) meeting?

The purpose of transition planning is to provide your child with the services and supports he/she needs to make a successful move into adult life. The IEP team identifies the services that will help your child make this transition.

The team includes you, your child, and teachers. When developing the IEP that will be in effect when your child turns 16, the team may also include representatives of agencies that are likely to provide or pay for services. Agencies can only be invited with your consent or the consent of your son or daughter who has reached the age of majority.

PARENT RESOURCES:

Transition website: <http://transition.dadeschools.net/>

Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities-A Guide for Families:

English: <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070170-transitionguide.rtf>

Spanish: <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070171-transspan.pdf>

What kind of high school diploma will my child receive?

The diploma option is determined through the IEP process. A statement of whether your child is pursuing a course of study leading toward a standard diploma or standard diploma via access points must first be made during your child's 8th grade year or during the school year your child turns 14, whichever comes first. It must be readdressed at all subsequent IEP meetings.

The State of Florida offers the following diploma options for students with disabilities:

Standard Diploma: The standard diploma is earned by most students who graduate from Florida high schools. Students must meet the graduation requirements set by the State of Florida and the local school districts.

Standard Diploma via Access Points: This diploma is available for students with disabilities who have been identified as eligible for special education services, have a current IEP, and are accessing the State Standards via Access Points. This diploma is a viable option for students with disabilities who are not able to meet the requirements for a standard diploma.


What kinds of waivers are available for my child?


Students with disabilities who are working toward a standard high school diploma are expected to participate in statewide, standardized assessments. However, legislation provides for a waiver of statewide, standardized assessment graduation requirements for students with disabilities whose abilities cannot be accurately measured by the assessments. Pursuant to s. 1008.22(3)(c)2., F.S., "A student with a disability, as defined in s. 1007.02(2), for whom the individual education plan (IEP) team determines


that the statewide, standardized assessments under this section cannot accurately measure the student's abilities, taking into consideration all allowable accommodations, shall have assessment results waived for the purpose of receiving a course grade and a standard high school diploma. Such waiver shall be designated on the student's transcript."

What additional programs, supports, and services are available?


Additional supports and services are also available to students with disabilities through a multitude of programs. Listed below are additional support services:

 **John McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities**
The John McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program was established to provide the option to attend a public school other than the one to which assigned, or to provide a scholarship to a private school of choice. For more additional information, contact Ms. Mary Paz, at 305-995-2707 or mpaz@dadeschools.net. Visit the John McKay Scholarship website for more information: <http://ese.dadeschools.net/mckay/>

 **Florida Inclusion Network (FIN)**
FIN provides learning opportunities, consultation, information and support to educators, families, and community members resulting in the inclusion of all students. Visit the FIN website for more information:
<http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/>

 **Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities**
SEDNET Region 11 is a regional interagency networking project, which has been established to improve the range and quality of programs for students identified with, or at risk of, emotional/behavioral disabilities (E/BD) in Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties.

Ms. Alina Cutié Rodriguez
Project Manager
305-598-2436
Rodriguez003@dadeschools.net
<http://sednet.dadeschools.net/>


 **Autism Community Resource Center**
The Autism Community Resource Center in cooperation with the Autism Society of Miami provides family, teacher, and community trainings related to Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Staff is also available to assist parents with referrals and materials related to the needs of the student with ASD and/or the family. For more information, contact the Autism Support Team at 305-275-9801 or stay

connected by downloading our free “APP”. Receive information on current events, directory, education and wellness resources, and webinars. Go to iTunes Store or Google Play, search for MDPS Autism Support. When downloading, make sure to click Continue or Allow for Push Notifications in order to receive your messages.

 **Pre-Kindergarten Program for Children with Disabilities**

The Pre-Kindergarten Program for Children with Disabilities serves children, ages 3 to 5 years old, with disabilities and their families in 206 classrooms in 105 schools around the district. The Pre-Kindergarten Program for Children with Disabilities offers a variety of educational activities during the school day. The program school day runs from 8:20 a.m. to 1:50 p.m. for the full day programs or 8:20 a.m. to 10:50 a.m. or 11:20 a.m. to 1:50 p.m. for the half-day programs, Monday through Friday. For more information about our program, daily routine, and program delivery models, please visit our website or call the Pre-Kindergarten Program for Children with Disabilities.

5555 SW 93 Avenue
Phone: 305-271-5701
<http://prekese.dadeschools.net/index.html>

 **Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System-South Parent Services**

Our Parent Services team is available to help parents develop effective partnerships with schools and service providers and provide technical assistance and workshops to parents of children with disabilities.

Main Office @ JRE Lee Educational Center
6521 SW 62nd Avenue
South Miami, Florida 33143
305-274-3501
<http://fdlrs-south.dadeschools.net>
FDLRS-South



 **Florida Department of Education Annual ESE Parent Survey**

Each year the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) requests your participation in a survey designed to provide the state with information on how well schools are supporting parental involvement in their child’s education. Under IDEA, each state is required to annually collect this information from parents of children receiving special education services and report to the federal government. This information only comes from parents; therefore, we encourage parents of students with disabilities to participate and provide their feedback. The survey period is February –May of each year. If you would like more

information about this survey, please contact Delsey Yancoskie, FDLRS-South at 305-274-3501 or dyancoskie@dadeschools.net

 **Volunteer Surrogate Parents Needed**

M-DCPS is looking for individuals to volunteer to serve as educational decision makers for students with disabilities who are wards of the state or unaccompanied minors who have no one to protect their rights during the special education decision making process. For more information contact Dr. Terrence Vaccaro, Surrogate Parent Program Coordinator, at 305-514-5100.

 **Parent Resources Information Sheet**

The Parent Resources information sheet provides parents with information on organizations in the community that offer support to parents of students with disabilities. Your child's school can provide you with a copy or you can access the link below to obtain a copy.

<http://forms.dadeschools.net/webpdf/6334.pdf>

 **Community Resource Guide**

FDLRS-South maintains a guide that lists local, state, and national resources for and about children with disabilities and their families.

<http://fdlrs-south.dadeschools.net/gen/FDLRS%20CRGuide%20-%20Final2015.pdf>

 **Special Education E-News**

If you are interested in receiving information on upcoming parent workshops, events, and other activities related to special education, please email your name and email address to dyancoskie@dadeschools.net to be added to our distribution list or click here: [Subscribe to Constant Contact Email Blasts](#)

 **Special Ed Connection**

The Florida Department of Education is proud to provide access to Special Ed Connection to parents of students with disabilities. Special Ed Connection is a web-based resource that parents can use to gain an understanding of what special education is and how it works, as your child enters, and progresses through and exits the world of special education requirements. Special Ed Connection explains specific procedures and provides real-world application strategies so parents can learn the complexities surrounding special education supports and services.

To find out more and about gaining access to this exciting resource, contact Cecilia Nieto at FDLRS-South at 305-274-3501 or email: cmgnieto@dadeschools.net

 **Where can I go to get additional information about the special education supports and services available in schools in my neighborhood?**

Exceptional Student Education and Student Support Center- North

MacArthur North
13835 NW 97th Avenue
Hialeah, Florida 33018
305-827-3025

Exceptional Student Education and Student Support Center- Central

Westview Middle School Educational Center
1901 NW 127th Street
Miami, Florida 33167
786-413-3001

Exceptional Student Education and Student Support Center- South

JRE Lee Educational Center
6521 SW 62nd Avenue
South Miami, Florida 33143
786-268-4757

Exceptional Student Education and Student Support Center- South Satellite

Center for International Education
900 NE 23rd Avenue
Homestead, Florida 33030
305-242-8432

Glossary

Below is a list of terms and acronyms that are commonly used in speaking and writing when referring to programs, supports, and services received by students with disabilities. Knowledge of these terminologies will assist parents in navigating through the world of exceptional student education.

Access Points: Academic expectations written specifically for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Access points reflect the essence of core intent of the standards that apply to all students in the same grade, but at reduce levels of complexity.

Accommodations: a different way of doing something that takes into account a student's disability; changes in how a student is taught or tested. Accommodations do not change the requirements of a course or the standards the student must meet.

Age of Majority: The age when a person becomes a legal adult. In Florida, this is 18 years of age, unless the student has been declared incompetent under state law or has a guardian advocate who has been appointed to make education decisions.

Age-Appropriate: Materials, activities, and experiences that are useful and suitable for persons of a particular age.

Assistive Technology (AT): Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability.

Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP): A plan of positive behavioral interventions in the IEP of a child whose behaviors interfere with his/her learning or that of others.

Dismissal: A decision to end ESE services because the student no longer has a disability or no longer needs those services. The IEP team reviews evaluations and other information about the student before making this decision.

Extended School Year (ESY) Services: Special education and related services that are provided to students with disabilities beyond the regular 180-day school year.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): The term used in the federal law (IDEA) to describe the right of a student with a disability to special services that will meet their individual learning needs, at no cost to their parents.

Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA): An assessment used for a student with a disability when a standard state- or district-wide assessment is not appropriate for that student.

Function Assessment of Behavior (FAB): The FAB process is a collaborative multidisciplinary process which is used to analyze the motivation of “misbehavior” as well as developing strategies to teach positive behaviors and reinforce these appropriate behaviors.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): An important United States law regarding the education of students with disabilities.

Individual Educational Plan (IEP): A written plan that describes the individual learning needs of a student with disabilities and the ESE services, supports, aids, and accommodations and modification that will be provided to that student as appropriate.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): The school setting (placement) that allows a child with a disability to be educated to the greatest extent possible with children who do not have disabilities.

Manifestation Determination Review: A meeting at which a team decides if a student’s misbehavior is a result of their disability.

Matrix of Services: A funding document used in Florida to calculate the ESE cost factor that will apply to the services and supports provided to students with disabilities.

Measurable Annual Goal: A statement in an IEP of what the student needs to learn and should be able to learn within one year.

Mediation: A process in which parents and school personnel try to settle disagreements with the help of a person who has been trained to resolve conflicts.

Modification: A change in the requirements of a course or the standards a student must meet. A change in what the student is taught or tested on. The change is based on the student’s needs because of their disability.

Occupational Therapy (OT): A related service for a student with a disability that helps them maintain, improve, restore, or develop skills needed for daily living.

Orientation and Mobility Services: Services that help students with visual impairments learn to move around safely in the school, home, and community.

Physical Therapy (PT): A related service for a student with a disability that helps maintain, improve, restore, or develop their movements and coordination.

Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance:

Statements in an IEP that describe what a student can do.

Procedural Safeguards: Requirements outlined in IDEA that give parents the rights to participate, have notice, and give permission (consent). The procedural safeguards also determine how parents and schools can resolve disputes through mediation, due process, or complaint procedures.

Related Services: Special help given to a student with a disability in addition to direct special education services. Related services help a student benefit from instruction.

Transfer of Rights: The shift of rights from the parent of a student with a disability to the student when they reach the “age of majority.”

Transition IEP (TIEP): An IEP used for a student age 16 or older. The transition IEP helps prepare the student for life after high school. Planning for the transition IEP should begin when the student is 14.