



# School-based Services

## What are school-based services?

Schools can provide extra help to students who are struggling with the regular curriculum in several ways, even if a child does not have a diagnosed disability. The teacher in a regular classroom can informally try different teaching approaches than the one used for the rest of the class. The classroom teacher can consult with other teachers and provide individual attention or other teaching strategies without having to have a child get additional testing. This first level of extra help is called response to intervention (RTI). If a child needs more help than can be provided by the classroom team, a committee on special education (CSE) might advise using school-supported resources according to a plan. This type of agreed-on intervention is called a Section 504 plan after the federal law that describes it. If a child needs to have formal testing to establish learning and language diagnoses and needs modification to curriculum, the CSE may recommend a formal Individualized Education Program (IEP). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Grants to States Program Part B gives local schools funding for students aged 3 to 21 years with disabilities who qualify for IEPs.

## Can our child receive school-based services through Part B?

Autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) are 1 of the 13 disabilities covered by Part B. If a child has an ASD and it affects how he does in school, the child is likely to qualify for school-based services. Extra services a child receives are agreed on annually by the educational team and family. Some children with ASDs have less intense academic needs, and school districts may elect to provide for social skills and other academic supports with a Section 504 plan instead of services mandated through an IEP.

## What services will our child get through Part B?

A team of specialists, which may include speech, school psychology, special education, and occupational therapists, will test your child through the school district to find out if she is eligible for services under the “autism” category as defined by IDEA and to determine what services are likely to be helpful to her. If the student has delays that affect educational and behavioral participation in school relative to criteria in your state and school district, she will be eligible for Part B services. The team will write an IEP to help work toward the best outcomes. The team, which includes the family, will work together to implement interventions and reach goals for the coming school year. The goal of an IEP is to provide services in the least restrictive environment as much as possible. This may mean that your child will have extra help in a typical class, be pulled out of class for services, or attend all or part of the day in a specialized classroom, depending on her needs. As part of the IEP, your child may get other services such as transportation and social work. Parents should help establish goals for the coming academic year and work with the educational team in writing the IEP. It is important for the school district to provide an interpreter if the family requires one to participate in the IEP process. If parents do not agree with IEP recommendations, they have the right to request mediation.

## What is an IEP?

An IEP is a record of the educational program planned for your child. If your child cannot be adequately served by informal adjustments to teaching (RTI) or modifications to curriculum agreed on with the educational team (Section 504 plan), an IEP needs to be implemented. Each child in special education must have an IEP. A student’s eligibility for an IEP is determined by examining domains or areas of disability, including health, vision, hearing, social or emotional status, communication, motor abilities, general intelligence, and functional performance. An IEP is written by a team that includes the parents, a regular education teacher, a special education

teacher, and someone from the school system. The IEP is looked at yearly and may change as your child's needs change.

An IEP must include

- Present levels of achievement in school
- Yearly goals
- Special education and other services
- How your child will be included with nondisabled children
- How your child will have statewide and district-wide assessments
- Dates and locations—when services and changes will begin, how often and where services will be, and how long services will last
- Transition goals and services for when your child moves on or when his needs change
- Measures of progress—how school staff will make sure your child meets goals

If you feel unsure about your child's program for any reason, you should take someone you trust to the IEP meeting. This could be anyone, from a relative who is a teacher, to someone from a local parent-to-parent or parent support group, to a formal educational advocate.

### **Do we pay for school-based services?**

All children have a right to a free public education that meets their individual learning needs. This means that children with disabilities can receive an appropriate education at no cost to their families. School-based services provided under Part B are also free. Students with developmental disabilities may be eligible for educational programs and services until they are 21 years of age.

### **Resources**

American Academy of Pediatrics HealthyChildren.org:  
[www.HealthyChildren.org](http://www.HealthyChildren.org)

Autism Speaks Family Services Individualized Education Program (IEP): Summary, Process, and Practical Tips:  
[www.autismspeaks.org/sites/default/files/gp\\_iep\\_guide.pdf](http://www.autismspeaks.org/sites/default/files/gp_iep_guide.pdf)

Federation for Children with Special Needs: [www.fcsn.org](http://www.fcsn.org)

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities:  
[www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)

National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center:  
[www.nectac.org](http://www.nectac.org)

Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights (PACER) Center: [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)

WrightsLaw (national information about IDEA, special education law, and families' rights): [www.wrightsLaw.com](http://www.wrightsLaw.com)

The recommendations in this publication do not indicate an exclusive course of treatment or serve as a standard of medical care. Variations, taking into account individual circumstances, may be appropriate. Original document included as part of *Autism: Caring for Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Resource Toolkit for Clinicians*, 2nd Edition. Copyright © 2013 American Academy of Pediatrics. All Rights Reserved. The American Academy of Pediatrics does not review or endorse any modifications made to this document and in no event shall the AAP be liable for any such changes.

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