

Office of Student Services Parent & Family Handbook



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Office of Student Services
Parent & Family Handbook
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A MESSAGE FROM DR. YOUNG

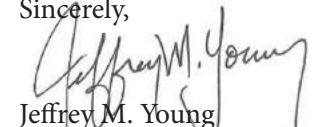
Dear CPS Families,

It is my great pleasure to provide you with this Parent and Family Handbook. Our Office of Student Services is committed not only to offering the best possible service to our students but also communicating effectively with families about how best to access those services so that together we can build the kind of powerful home-school partnership that is instrumental to every child's success in school.

As a district, we are dedicated to ensuring that ALL children, regardless of learning need or any other demographic factor, are treated with respect and dignity and afforded all the support they require to reach their full potential. We know that when schools and homes can communicate and collaborate in ways that are characterized by shared responsibility, children will soar.

Our mission is to create schools and learning environments where our core values of *academic excellence* and *social justice* are lived out in daily life. Every child deserves the opportunity and support to excel academically, and every child must feel welcome and appreciated for who they are as individuals. Our community is strengthened by its diversity, and we celebrate the many ways in which we bring our differences to the table in order to find our commonalities. You as family members are not only your children's first educators, you are their lifelong teachers. We look forward to working with you make education in Cambridge a journey we take together with caring, understanding and pride.

Sincerely,


Jeffrey M. Young
Superintendent of Schools



A MESSAGE FROM DR. GREER

Dear Cambridge Families,

Welcome to the Office of Student Services, our primary business is service. We are committed to ensuring that students receive a high quality education in the least restrictive environment through the provision of specialized services and supports that meet their unique learning, social, emotional and behavioral needs. We are excited to partner with you to improve the academic and social outcomes for our students.

The Office of Student Services is primarily responsible for special education and 504 services and accommodations. One of our core values is effective collaboration with all stakeholders including parents, district and school leaders and general education teachers and providers. Students with disabilities have access to some of the most highly skilled teachers and practitioners in the field of special education.

We offer a wide range of services for students based on their individual needs. Those services include direct special education services, related services and consultation services across varied settings. It is our goal to ensure that students are served in the least restrictive environment based on their unique learning and social needs.

Over the past year, the Office of Student Services has been working to enhance the services that we deliver and our partnerships with all stakeholders. While we have accomplished a lot in a very short time, we look forward to the future of our work and the success of our students. Thank you for joining us on this journey.

Sincerely, ..



Victoria L. Greer, PhD

Assistant Superintendent of Student Services

A MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES LEADERSHIP TEAM

The vision of the Office of Student Services is that each student receives a high quality education in the Least Restrictive Environment through the provision of specialized services and supports that meet their unique learning, social, emotional and behavioral needs.

In Cambridge Public Schools students are provided a free appropriate education in schools and where placement and service decisions are based on the individual needs of the student, in the least restrictive environment and in accordance with the systems core value of social justice and equity for all.

The Office of Student Services is committed to ensuring that its vision is carried out and that every student and family is a part of a community of care and belonging in each and every school in Cambridge.

This handbook is designed to help you better understand the special education process and work as partners with the Office of Student Services to help children with disabilities reach their maximum potential. It is our hope that this handbook will help you be better informed and actively involved regarding special education and 504 services and processes.

The Office of Student Services Leadership Team

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Dr. Victoria L. Greer | Assistant Superintendent of Student Services

Dr. Greer joined Cambridge last July from Metro-Nashville Public Schools in Tennessee. During Dr. Greer's tenure as Director of Exceptional Education in Nashville, she had a track record of success. She was responsible for leading district initiatives focusing on inclusive education, gifted education, Response to Intervention (RTI) and district-wide interventions. Dr. Greer began her career as a special education teacher and worked as an Instructional Facilitator providing instructional support through coaching to teachers. Dr. Greer has extensive experience in school and district leadership by serving as a Special Education Coordinator in Metro-Nashville prior to becoming Director and as school level Instructional Coach in Memphis City Schools. Dr. Greer holds a Master's degree in Special Education from Tennessee State University and Doctorate in Philosophy, Educational Leadership and Administration from Cappella University. Dr. Greer brings extensive experience in urban education to lead the Office of Student Services in Cambridge.

Ms. Jean Spera | Director

In over 25 years of experience in Cambridge Public Schools, Jean has worn many hats: Psychologist, Assistant Director, Director, and Interim Executive Director. She has extensive experience with interpreting psychological evaluations as well as experience with designing and developing programs to support student's social, emotional, and behavioral needs. Jean will be contributing this wealth of knowledge and expertise to the OSS Leadership Team. Jean holds a Master of Education in Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology from Boston College and advanced certificates in School Psychology and Administration.

Ms. Rebecca Altepeter | Coordinator High School, Upper School, Out-of-District

Rebecca earned her Masters degree in Special Education from Wheelock College and has a 14-year career as a leader in the area of special education. Her leadership roles include Special Education Coordinator, Assistant Principal, and Principal for both public and private schools and agencies in the Massachusetts area. Rebecca has extensive experience with developing and refining programs that serve students with social, emotional, and behavioral needs. Her diversity of experiences will be of great value to the newly formed OSS Leadership Team.

Ms. Shelagh Kelley-Walker | Coordinator Pre-School/Special Start

Shelagh has experience in the private sector developing educational programs and as a coach consultant. She holds a Masters degree in Curriculum, Instruction, and Administration from Boston College and has both public and private experience with organizational design and leadership of educational programs. Shelagh has 20 years of experience as a classroom teacher and educational support. In addition, Shelagh brings extensive local and international experience with developing appropriate educational supports for children. Her educational experience combined with her organizational design skills will be most useful as the OSS Leadership Team charts a new direction for the students and families it serves.

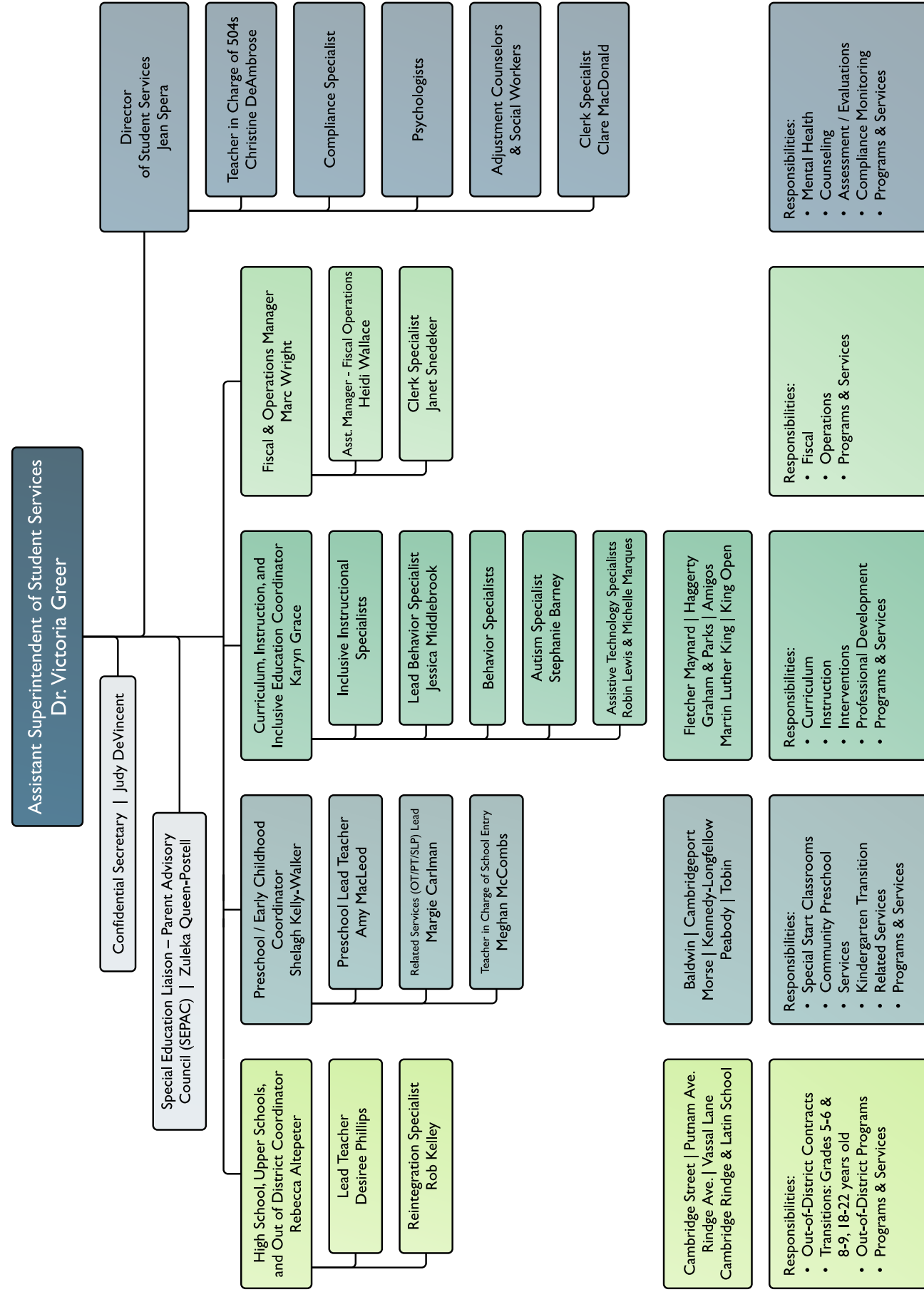
Ms. Karyn Grace | Interim Coordinator Curriculum, Instruction, Inclusive Education

Karyn has graciously agreed to serve as Interim Coordinator for Curriculum, Instruction and Inclusive Education during the first year of the reorganized leadership in the Office of Student Services and will be serving on its Leadership Team as well. Karyn is currently enrolled in the doctoral program for Educational Leadership and Supervision at the American International College. She holds a Masters degree in Special Education and also degrees in Human Development and Early Childhood Education. She brings to this role 16 years of teaching in Cambridge Public Schools. She has extensive experience as a teacher-leader with developing and designing professional development both within district as well as the surrounding areas. Karyn has a great track record for the academic gains of her students and has developed positive teacher-mentor relationships throughout the district.

Mr. Marc Wright | Fiscal and Operations Manager

Marc holds an Executive MBA and a BSBA in Finance Concentration from Northeastern University. He comes to us most recently from the University of Massachusetts-Boston as the Operations Director for the Collins Center for Public Management. In his 26 years of experience in fiscal management and operations, he has served as Fiscal Administrator for the Boston Public Health Commission and Senior Business Analyst and Senior Financial Analyst for Coventry Health Care and Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Massachusetts. His focus on improving customer service and relations as well as developing effective processes and procedures for improved organizational outcomes means that the OSS Leadership Team will benefit from his servant-leader philosophy.

The Office of Student Services Organizational Structure



OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES | STAFF CONTACT LIST

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PROGRAMS & SERVICES

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER PROGRAM/SERVICES

Overview:

The Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) program is an eleven-month program designed for students diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in grades PK-12 who require intensive, specially designed instruction and support in order to access the curriculum. Students served in the program have needs in multiple areas such as communication, social, behavior and academic.

Program Components:

- Eleven-month program
- Evidenced based instruction, intervention and support emphasizing safety, independence, social, functional, academic and behavior skills.
- Empirically based instruction
- Needs based-instruction, intervention and support delivered throughout various settings
- Service delivery (i.e. inclusive, small group, one-to-two, or one-to-one)
- Group and community based activities emphasized during the summer
- Applied Behavior Analysis
- Highly skilled teaching staff in development, social interaction, verbal and non-verbal communication, distractibility, sensory integration, etc.
- Low student to teacher ratio (1 lead teacher and at least two Para-professionals)
- Maximum class size elementary (5), upper (7), high school (9)
- Related services consult to teaching staff and direct services to students
- Students participate in lunch, recess and other school-based activities with non-disabled peers
- Non-disabled peer buddies as models

Program Locations:

- Fletcher Maynard Academy
- King Open School
- Cambridge Street Upper School
- Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (CRLS) (begins Fall 2015)

BASIC ACADEMICS PROGRAM

Overview:

The Basic Academics Program is offered to students in grades K-12 who have moderate to severe disabilities across various domains (i.e. language, fine motor, gross motor, social and cognitive). The program focuses on functional academics and social skills development. Students are taught with a modified curriculum that is aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. There are three K-5 and one 6-8 Basic Academics classrooms. The program is provided across the core academic areas in grades 9-12.

Program Components:

- Low student to teacher ratio (12:2), staffed with a Certified Special Education Teacher and a Para-professional
- Individualized curriculum and instruction based on student's needs and readiness level
- Multi-sensory approach to instruction
- MCAS-Alt Assessment

- Positive behavior supports
- Social pragmatics
- Related Services consult to class and direct services as per the students IEP
- Service delivery (inclusive, small group, one-to-two, one-to-one)
- Students participate in lunch, recess and other school-based activities with non-disabled peers

Program Locations:

- Morse School
- Putnam Avenue Upper
- Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (CRLS)

FUNCTIONAL ACADEMICS PROGRAM

The Functional Academics Program is the continuum of services from the Basic Academics program. It is offered to students in grades 6-12 through age 22 who have moderate to severe disabilities across various domains (i.e. language, fine motor, gross motor, social and cognitive). The program primarily focuses on functional academics, life skills and social skills development. Students are taught with a modified curriculum that is aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. There is one 6-8 classrooms and two 9-12 through age 22 classrooms offered in Cambridge.

Program Components:

- Low student to teacher ratio (12:2 or 12/3), staffed with a Certified Special Education Teacher and one to two Para-professionals depending on the severity and needs of the students
- Individualized curriculum and instruction based on student's needs and readiness level
- Multi-sensory approach to instruction
- MCAS-Alt Assessment
- Positive behavior supports
- Social pragmatics
- Transition planning and preparation
- Community Networking
- Vocational Supports
- Related Services consult to class and direct services as per the students IEP
- Service delivery (inclusive, small group, one-to-two, one-to-one)
- Students participate in lunch, recess and other school-based activities with non-disabled peers

Program Locations:

- Putnam Avenue Upper School
- Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (CRLS)

LANGUAGE BASED LEARNING DISABILITIES PROGRAM

Overview:

The Language Based Learning Disabilities Program began the 2012-2013 school year with a small cohort of third grade students with language-based learning disabilities. The program is designed for students with language-based learning disabilities who require a substantially separate program to maximize learning. The program is highly structured to provide intensive specially designed instruction that is individualized based on the need of the students.



In addition to providing instruction that maximizes learning, the program is intentionally focuses on developing a positive attitude, healthy esteem and self-confidence for each child. To ensure student success, they are grouped academically according to their strengths, areas of need, and their academic level.

Program Components:

- Low student to teacher ratio (12:2), staffed with a Certified Special Education Teacher with specialized training in Language-Based Learning Disabilities
- Related Services consult to class and direct services as per the students IEP
- Service delivery (i.e. inclusive, small group, one-to-two, or one-to-one)
- Ongoing program consultation by expert(s) in the field of Language-Based Learning Disabilities
- Specially Designed Instruction in the areas of decoding, vocabulary, reading comprehension, writing, note taking, organizational skills, and spelling ensuring that all learning modalities are engaged
- Students are supported in the general education classroom for social studies and science
- Students participate in lunch, recess and other school-based activities with non-disabled peers

Program Location:

- Cambridgeport School

LEARNING DISABILITIES ACADEMICS PROGRAM

Overview:

The Learning Disabilities program is designed to address the academic needs of students in grades K-12 who are diagnosed with a specific learning disability and who are performing significantly below grade level. The goal of the program is to ensure maximum progress and success so that students are successful in the general education curriculum. The program is instructed using a structured, sequential, multisensory, systematic reading and language arts approach to instruction.

Program Components:

- Low student to teacher ratio (12:2), staffed with a Certified Special Education Teacher with specialized training in Learning Disabilities and one Para-professional
- Related Services consult to class and direct services as per the students IEP
- Service delivery (i.e. inclusive, small group, one-to-two, or one-to-one)
- Specially Designed Instruction designed around each student's individual learning need
- Students participate in lunch, recess and other school-based activities with non-disabled peers

Program Locations:

- Graham and Parks School
- Vassal Lane Upper School
- Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (CRLS)



STRUCTURED ACADEMICS PROGRAM

Overview:

The Structured Academics program is a therapeutic program designed for students who exhibit both internalizing and externalizing behaviors that adversely affect their educational performance and impede their ability to be successful in the general education classroom with additional supports and services. The program provides academic, social, emotional and behavior interventions and supports for students who meet the eligibility requirements for special education and is outlined in their Individual Education Plans (IEP's).

Program Goals:

- Achieve academic success and access to the general education classroom and curriculum
- Develop positive interpersonal relationships and skills with peers and adults
- Develop and maintain healthy social and emotional behaviors across settings

Program Components:

- Group and individual counseling (i.e. theory of mind or perspective taking, building trust, increasing self-worth, taking risks)
- Behavior planning (i.e. individual and classroom)
- Social Pragmatics (i.e. general socialization, communication, non-verbal cues)
- Self-regulation (i.e. sensory integration/regulation, motor planning, coping skills)
- Related Services (consultation and direct services) as designated for individual student IEP's and program needs
- Executive Functioning (i.e. setting goals, prioritizing, problem-solving)
- Life Skills (i.e. developing independence, taking responsibility)
- Social work support/outreach

SERVICE DELIVERY AND SUPPORTS

The program can be delivered in a variety of ways depending upon the needs of the students. Initially, students receive intensive services in a separate setting with low student to teacher ratios. The goal always is to return the student to a lesser restrictive environment based on student readiness.

Interdisciplinary teams including the family and outside service providers will meet at least four times per year to align supports and plan services for each student.

Program Locations:

- Baldwin School
- Rindge Avenue Upper School
- Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (CRLS)

PRE-SCHOOL/SPECIAL START PROGRAM

Overview:

The Pre-School program for students with disabilities in Cambridge Public Schools is the Special Start program. The program provides services for preschool aged children, 3-5, who have a disability as outlined by state and federal requirements under the Individual's with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The program is designed to service students with a variety of needs from mild to severe disabilities. The program is intentionally designed to ensure that students are educated with



non-disabled peers with integrated classrooms and intensive, integrated classrooms. In addition, sub-separate classrooms are always paired in buildings with integrated classrooms in order to provide inclusive opportunities for students, as they are ready. The delivery of services is based on the intensity and need of each individual student and is determined by the student's IEP team.

Identification Process:

There are two ways in which pre-school aged students are identified to receive services through the Special Start program:

- Transition from Early Intervention Services-Students who previously were identified with a disability through Massachusetts Early Intervention (EI) division are referred to the school district by Early Intervention prior to the student turning 3 years of age. The school district conducts a transition meeting to determine continued eligibility and write an IEP that outlines the services and supports for the student that will begin at age 3.
- Child Find (District Screening)- Cambridge Public Schools Office of Student Services collaborates with local child-care agencies to ensure that students, ages 3-4, are identified for services early. In addition, screening appointments are held bi-weekly for any student, ages 3-4, whose parent or guardian are concerned of a suspected disability that may require specialized services and supports. Families should contact the Special Start office if you suspect your child may have a disability.

Pre-School Services:

- Consult Services- Related Service providers, Assistive Technology specialists, Applied Behavior Analysis Specialists (ABA), and Special Educators collaborate with staff in Cambridge pre-schools to ensure that students with disabilities enrolled in those preschools are able to access the curriculum and are successful in their outlined pre-school program.
- Walk-in Therapy- Families are able to access related services for students who are enrolled in private or community pre-school/day-care programs or who are home by attending services held at one of the designated elementary school sites. The student's IEP team determines services. Related Services include Speech/Language therapy, Occupational therapy, or Physical therapy.
- Special Start Classrooms- IEP teams who determine that student's needs can not be met through consult and/or walk-in therapy assign students to one of the two type of Special Start classrooms. The two types of classrooms are as follows:
 - Integrated Preschool Classrooms are inclusive classrooms that have six students with an IEP and six students without an IEP enrolled. Students with disabilities range across the eligibility categories. The classroom utilizes a language-based, hands-on, multi-sensory curriculum that is aligned to the Massachusetts Early Childhood program standards and frameworks. The student's IEP team assigns students with IEP's to this classroom. Students without disabilities are assigned to the classroom by completing an application and entering the Pre-School lottery. Integrated classrooms operate three hours per day, five days per week, 10-months per year.
 - Substantially Separate Preschool Classrooms are classrooms for students with moderate to severe disabilities who require intensive, small group or individual services and instruction. The capacity of the substantially separate classroom is eight students. The classroom promotes discrete, direct teaching in a highly structured environment. The substantially separate classrooms operate six hours per day, five days per week, 11-months per year.

Program Components:

- Behavior planning (i.e. individual and classroom)
- Speech and Language therapy/consultation (i.e. general socialization, communication, non-verbal cues)
- Occupational therapy (i.e. sensory integration/regulation, motor planning)
- Low student to teacher ratio, staffed with a Certified Special Education Teacher with specialized training in early childhood/pre-school education and special education and one-three Para-professionals based on the intensity of the needs of the students
- Eleven-month program
- Evidenced based instruction, intervention and support emphasizing safety, independence, social, functional, academic and behavior skills.

Classroom Locations:

- Baldwin School
- Cambridgeport School

- Graham and Parks
- Kennedy Longfellow
- Morse School
- Peabody School
- Tobin Montessori

ACADEMIC SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Overview:

Academic services are services that are designed for students based on their unique learning needs that are impacted by their disability. Academic services are provided by a special educator and can be delivered across content areas and through various curriculum.

Service Goals:

- Students are able to access the general curriculum
- Students develop into independent learners
- Students perform at rates that align with their non-disabled peers
- Students experience academic growth at rates that align with their non-disabled peers

Service Delivery:

- Individual or small group instruction
- Provided within the general education classroom
- Provided outside the general education classroom
- Collaboration with general education teachers and other service providers

Service Locations:

- All Cambridge Schools K-12

RELATED SERVICES

Overview:

Related Services are designed to help students benefit from special education. Related services are specific support services provided to students with disabilities to help them be successful in their instructional programs. The need for these related services is assessed through the evaluation process, with the involvement of individuals who have specialized knowledge in a specific area. Any such services are included in the IEP.

Goals:

- Ensure access to the instructional program
- Ensures success in their instructional/school program
- Ensures support to the student in achieving overall school success

Types of Related Services (see p. 16 for descriptions):

- Audiology
- Counseling
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Assistive Technology
- Transportation



SECTION I: KEY COMPONENTS OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS

CHILD FIND

Child Find is an ongoing process used by the Office of Student Services to identify children and youth from the age of 3-21 who may be eligible for to receive special education and related services because they have a disability. Cambridge Public School's Office of Student Services is responsible for locating, identifying, assessing, and evaluating (with parental consent) students ages 3-21, who may have a disability to ensure they receive needed special education and related services.

The Office of Student Services is responsible for conducting Child Find activities to inform the public that every child with a disability is entitled to a free, appropriate, public education designed to meet the child's individual needs.

If you have a concern about your child, contact your child's school or the Office of Student Services to discuss your concerns and determine if further assessment is warranted.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

If there is a suspected disability by a parent or school personnel, it will lead to a referral for the student to be assessed for special education services.

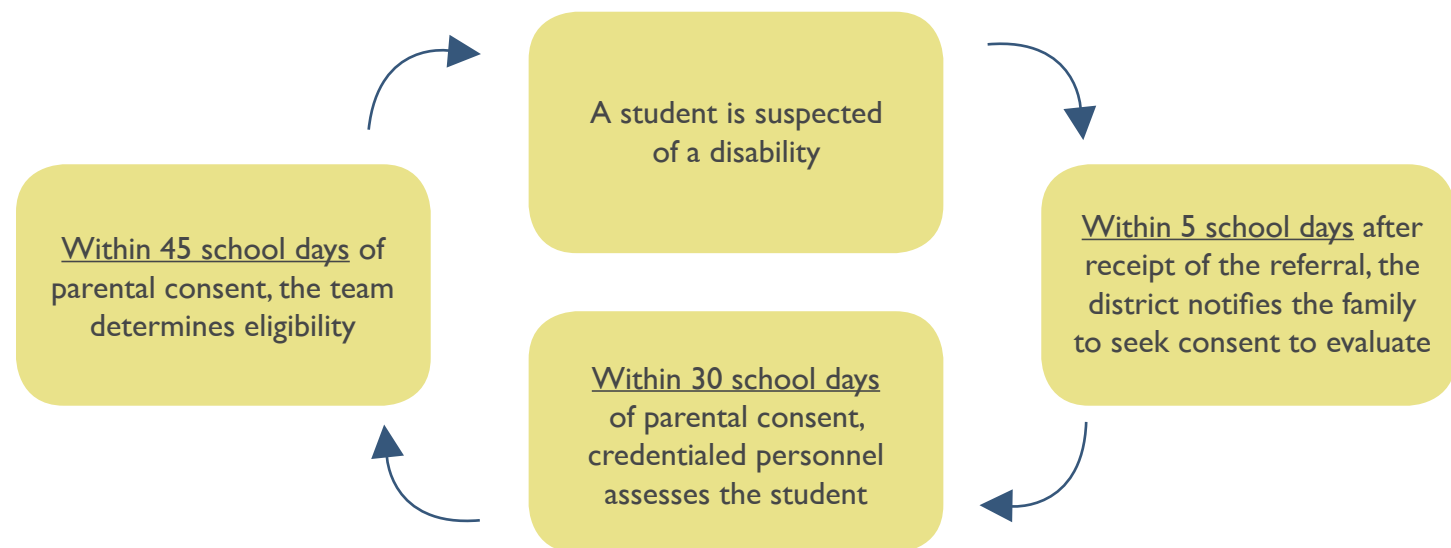
What is a referral?

A referral is a written request for an evaluation that is given to the school district when a child is suspected of having a disability and might need special education services.

Who can make a referral?

- Parents
- School personnel
- Outside Agencies concerned with the welfare of students.

If you believe that your child may have a disability, you may refer your child for an evaluation by submitting a written request to your child's school or the Office of Student Services.



DISABILITY CATEGORIES

Autism

A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction. The term shall have the meaning given it in federal law.

Federal Definition:

Autism means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The term does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance. A child who manifests the characteristics of "autism" after age 3 could be diagnosed as having "autism."

Communication Impairment

The capacity to use expressive and/or receptive language is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: speech, such as articulation and/or voice; conveying, understanding, or using spoken, written, or symbolic language. The term may include a student with impaired articulation, stuttering, language impairment, or voice impairment if such impairment adversely affects the student's educational performance.

Developmental Delay

The learning capacity of a young child (3-9 years old) is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: receptive and/or expressive language; cognitive abilities; physical functioning; social, emotional, or adaptive functioning; and/or self-help skills.

Emotional Impairment

As defined under federal law at 34 CFR §300.7, the student exhibits one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects educational performance: an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. The determination of disability shall not be made solely because the student's behavior violates the school's discipline code, because the student is involved with a state court or social service agency, or because the student is socially maladjusted, unless the Team determines that the student has a serious emotional disturbance.

Health Impairment

A chronic or acute health problem such that the physiological capacity to function is significantly limited or impaired and results in one or more of the following: limited strength, vitality or alertness including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli resulting in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment. The term shall include health impairments due to asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit with hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, and sickle cell anemia, if such health impairment adversely affects a student's educational performance.

Intellectual Impairment

The permanent capacity for performing cognitive tasks, functions, or problem solving is significantly limited or impaired and is exhibited by more than one of the following: a slower rate of learning; disorganized patterns of learning; difficulty with adaptive behavior; and/or difficulty understanding abstract concepts. Such term shall include students with mental retardation.

Neurological Impairment

The capacity of the nervous system is limited or impaired with difficulties exhibited in one or more of the following areas: the use of memory, the control and use of cognitive functioning, sensory and motor skills, speech, language, organizational skills, information processing, affect, social skills, or basic life functions. The term includes students who have received a traumatic brain injury.

Physical Impairment

The physical capacity to move, coordinate actions, or perform physical activities is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: physical and motor tasks; independent movement; performing basic life functions. The term shall include severe orthopedic impairments or impairments caused by congenital anomaly, cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures if such impairment adversely affects a student's educational performance.

Sensory Impairment

The term shall include the following:

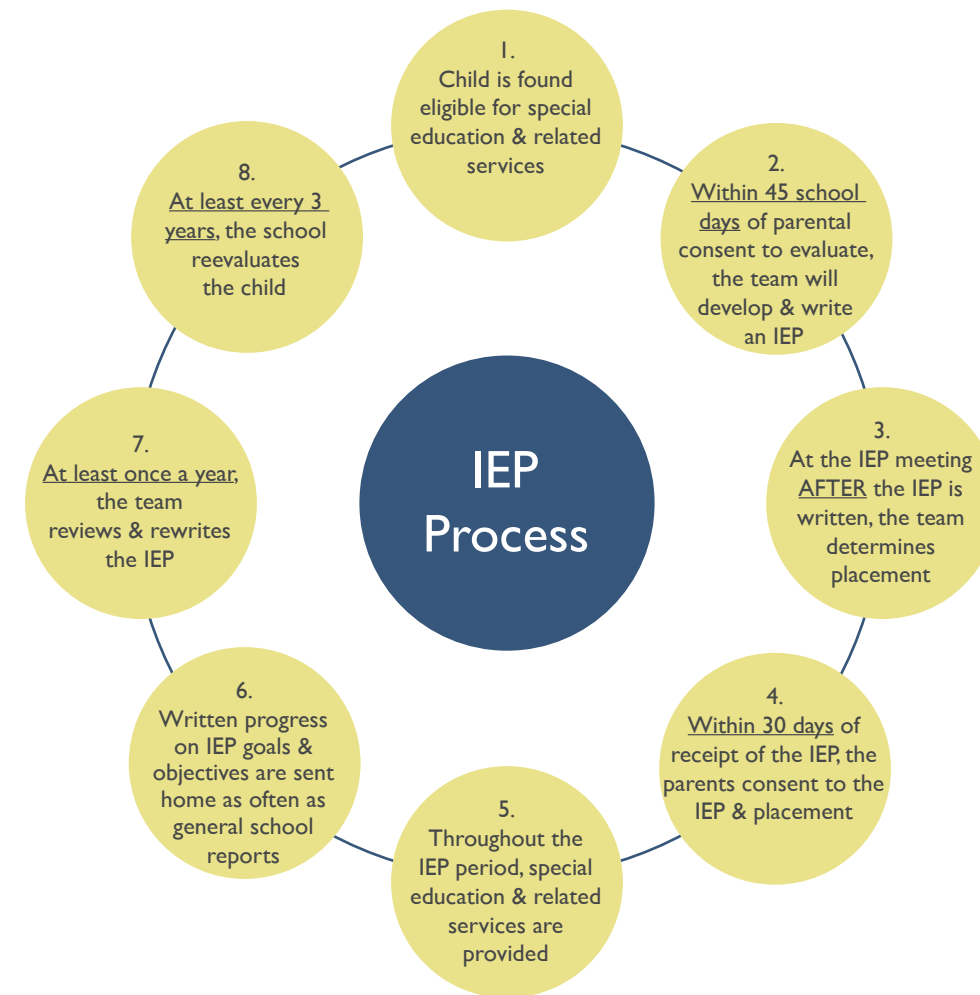
1. **Hearing** - The capacity to hear, with amplification, is limited, impaired, or absent and results in one or more of the following: reduced performance in hearing acuity tasks; difficulty with oral communication; and/or difficulty in understanding auditorally-presented information in the education environment. The term includes students who are deaf and students who are hard-of-hearing.
2. **Vision** - The capacity to see, after correction, is limited, impaired, or absent and results in one or more of the following: reduced performance in visual acuity tasks; difficulty with written communication; and/or difficulty with understanding information presented visually in the education environment. The term includes students who are blind and students with limited vision.
3. **Deaf-Blind** - Concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes severe communication and other developmental and educational needs.
4. **Vision Impairment, Blind, and Deafblind** | Sensory Impairment; the term shall include the following:
 - Vision - The capacity to see, after correction, is limited, impaired, or absent and results in one or more of the following: reduced performance in visual acuity tasks; difficulty with written communication; and/or difficulty with understanding information presented visually in the education environment. The term includes students who are blind and students with limited vision.
 - Deaf-Blind - Concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes severe communication and other developmental and educational needs.
5. **Deaf and Hard of Hearing** | Sensory Impairment; the term shall include the following:
 - Hearing - The capacity to hear, with amplification, is limited, impaired, or absent and results in one or more of the following: reduced performance in hearing acuity tasks; difficulty with oral communication; and/or difficulty in understanding auditorally-presented information in the education environment. The term includes students who are deaf and students who are hard-of-hearing.



Specific Learning Disability

The term shall have the meaning given in federal law at 34 C.F.R. §§300.7 and 300.541. Federal Definition: Specific learning disability is defined as follows: A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Disorders not included. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)



RELATED SERVICES

To help your child benefit from special education, he or she may receive additional help, called “related services.” Related services are specific support services provided to students with disabilities to help them be successful in their instructional programs. The need for these related services is assessed through the evaluation process, with the involvement of individuals who have specialized knowledge in a specific area. Related services should be provided in the least restrictive and natural environments of the classroom and other educational settings. They should be directly related to special education services and support the student's access to the curriculum. The following is a list of related services with a brief description:

Audiology- Audiologists consult with classroom teachers, parents, and support staff regarding a student's hearing loss and technical aspects of the hearing loss; interpret audiological testing results; assess the classroom environment and individual auditory skills to make appropriate recommendations for assistive listening devices and aural habilitation; monitor hearing aid function and middle ear status using a variety of audiological tests and equipment; provide informational presentations regarding hearing loss and related technology to the school community and may serve as liaisons between the schools and private health care professionals in matters related to hearing loss.

Counseling- Services provided by qualified social workers/adjustment counselors, psychologists, and guidance counselors.

Occupational Therapy- Occupational therapy may be determined necessary to support students with disabilities who require additional specialized interventions to successfully access their special education activities and participate in educa-

tional experiences. Occupational therapists may provide direct services to students and consult with staff members and families. Occupational therapists identify modifications, specialized supports, and adapted equipment needed by a student to improve the ability to perform school tasks and promote independent functioning in school. Occupational therapists make suggestions to school staff members about ways to modify the educational environment to meet the needs of the student when functioning is impaired or lost.



Physical Therapy- School based physical therapists assist students with disabilities by addressing needs that impact their ability to participate and access instructional programs and school settings. Therapy services in the educational setting support students who require additional specialized interventions to successfully participate in their educational programs. Physical therapists work closely with teachers and other school professionals to assess the needs of students and establish plans that will help students to access instructional programs and be more successful in their educational settings. Physical therapists assist in identification of required interventions, modifications, accommodations, and specialized supports related to motor skills. Therapists make recommendations regarding environmental adaptations or equipment needed by the student to participate successfully in school activities, negotiate the educational environment, and maximize opportunities for independent functioning in the school setting.

Speech and Language Therapy- School based speech-language pathology services include screening and identification of students with speech or language impairments. Speech language pathologist evaluate and diagnose specific speech or language impairments including voice, fluency, articulation, receptive and expressive language disorders that adversely impact educational performance. Pathology services include medical referrals and interpretation of reports related to communication impairments. Support from the pathologists may include counseling and guidance for teachers, staff, and parents to address the communication needs of students; provision of speech and language therapy interventions for students who require additional specialized supports for access to curriculum; and successful participation and communication in the educational setting.

Assistive Technology- Assistive technology can empower students with disabilities to increase their overall capacity to be successful both in school and in every day life. Assistive technology devices refer to any “item, piece of equipment, or product system” that will help your child increase, maintain, or improve his or her ability to function in some way. These can include anything from a simple low-tech device, like a magnifying glass, to a high-tech device, like a complex communication system. Assistive technology services refer to any service that directly assists your child with the selection, acquisition or use of a device. Examples of these services include evaluating your child for assistive technology needs, selecting or fitting a device, and training you or your child in the use of a device. An assistive technology assessment should be conducted to determine your child’s assistive technology needs. This assessment will take place in your child’s customary environment. It is important that the assessment address your child’s strengths and deficits. The end result of the assessment is a recommendation for specific devices and services. Assistive technology can be an invaluable component in your child’s daily life, allowing your child to participate more fully with his or her peers and increase your their functional skills.

Transportation- Travel to and from school and between schools; the provision of specialized equipment, accommodations, and/or supports if they are required to provide transportation for a student who receives special education services.

DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES

“Disagreeing with my child’s school”

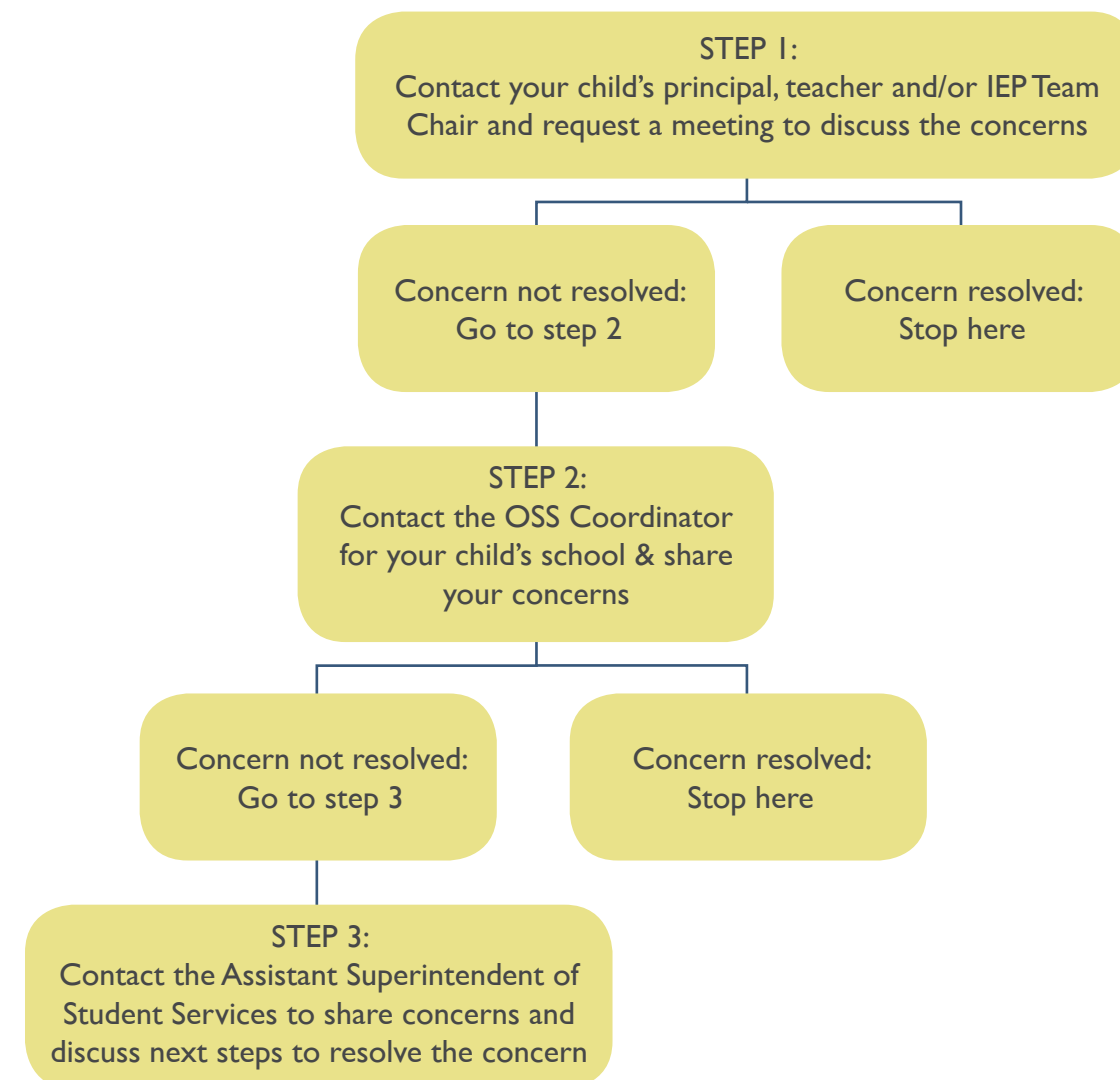
There may be times when you and the school district disagree. Many disagreements can be resolved through informal avenues such as communication with your child’s teacher, case manager, school principal, and OSS Coordinator, Director or Assistant Superintendent. There are also formal procedures established under state and federal law to address your concerns, such as complaint resolution, mediation or a due process hearing.

The avenue that is chosen to resolve any disagreement is up to the parent/family/guardian. The key to effectively resolving disagreements is to be as collaborative as possible and keep the lines of communication open with the school and the school district. A great place to start is to request a meeting or conference with your child’s teacher, school principal or the person that is more greatly involved with your child.

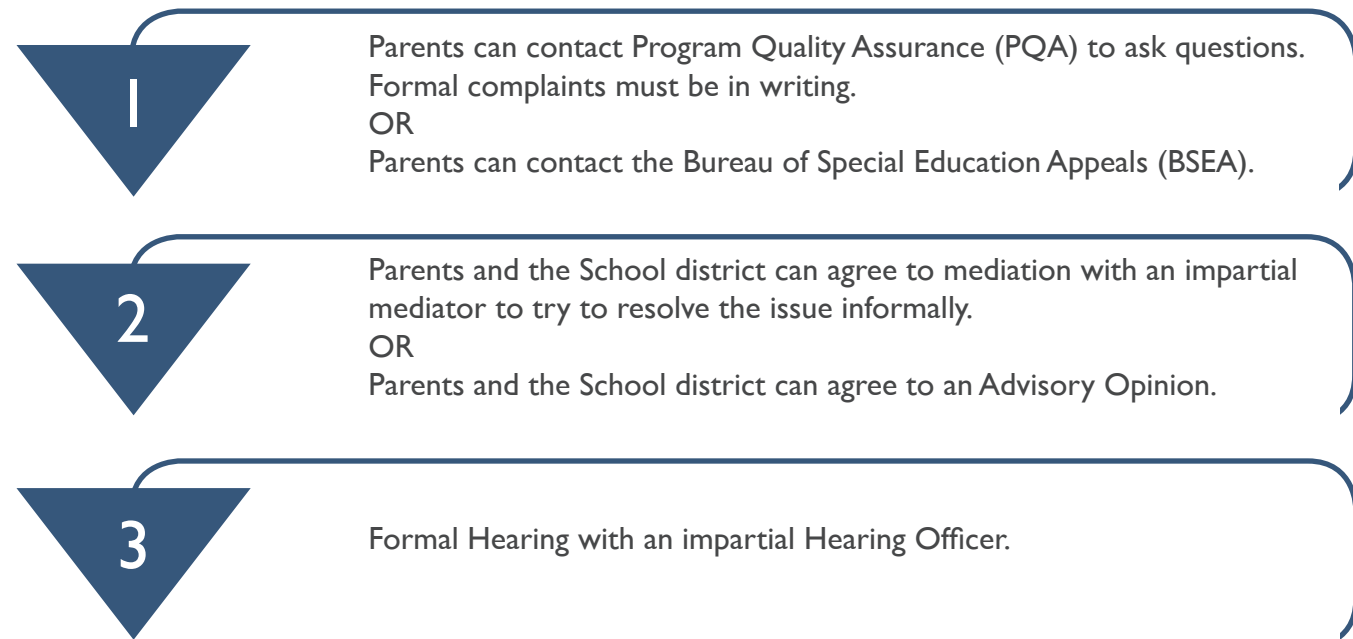
If you cannot come to agreement with the school, you have the right to disagree with the school’s decisions concerning your child. This includes decisions about:

- Your child’s eligibility for special education;
- Your child’s special education evaluation;
- The special education and related services that the school provides to your child
- Your child’s educational placement

In order to resolve conflict regarding special education services in Cambridge, the following procedure can be followed:



The Office of Student Services is committed to resolving concerns internally but understands when there continues to be differing resolutions to a concern and support the parent/family following the outlined problem resolution process as outlined by state and federal guidelines. The Massachusetts dispute resolution procedure is outlined below:



Step 1 Explanation:

- A PQA specialist will review the complaint and determine if education laws and regulations are being followed.
- The parents and school district can provide information to the PQA specialist for review regarding the issues raised.
- The PQA specialist will provide written notification to the parent explaining the results of the review and actions taken.
- If the school district is not adhering the law, the Department of Education will make findings to the school district with required actions to correct the problem.
- If the parent contacts the BSEA, they can consider a couple of resolution options such as mediation or advisory opinion as outlined in Step 2.

Step 2 Explanation:

- Mediation is a voluntary and informal process where you and the school meet with an impartial mediator to talk openly about the areas where you disagree and to try to reach an agreement.
- Advisory Opinion is a process where you and the school agree to each present information in a limited amount of time to an impartial Hearing Officer, who will give an opinion as to how the law would apply to the situation as presented. An advisory opinion is not written, nor is it binding, and allows either the parent or the district to proceed to a hearing if either party is dissatisfied.

Step 3 Explanation:

- Hearing is a process where the parent/family and the district each present your case to an impartial Hearing Officer for a written binding decision on the best outcome for the student. A hearing is a fairly complex legal proceeding and averages three to five days in length.

SECTION 2: STEPS IN THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS

For you to be an effective partner in the special education process, it's important that you understand how the process works. This part of the Handbook describes the various steps, beginning with what happens before a formal referral for special education assessment is made and ending with the three-year reevaluation process.

PRE-REFERRAL INTERVENTIONS

If you feel your child is having difficulties with his or her academic achievement, difficulty with controlling behavior, or is not making developmental progress, you should contact your child's teacher, counselor, principal or school psychologist to arrange a conference and discuss your concerns. Some of the behavioral difficulties and learning problems that may indicate the need for this type of discussion may include:

- Lack of focus usually seen in children the same age
- Persistent difficulty following direction
- Frequent outbursts for no apparent reason
- Difficulty keeping up with classmates in math and reading
- Inability to talk as well as children the same age
- Unusual play with toys and other objects
- Difficulty with changes in routine or familiar surroundings
- Repetitive body movements or behavior patterns
- Physical or emotional problems that are out of the ordinary
- Difficulty relating to people, objects and events

The conference with the teacher or counselor provides an opportunity for you to explore strategies that can help your child be more successful in school. In addition, a team at your child's school may be asked to review your concerns and make additional suggestions about procedures and practices that your child's teacher can implement to address any difficulties your child is experiencing. If these interventions are successful, a formal referral for special education is not needed. However, if there is no noticeable improvement in your child's learning, the actions taken by your child's school to address his or her difficulties in the classroom may become part of the pre-referral documentation used to support a formal referral to the Student Support Team.

Note: At any time throughout the pre-referral process a parent can request that a referral is made to special education to determine eligibility for special education process.

FORMAL REFERRAL

In cases where pre-referral interventions fail to address your child's difficulties in the classroom, his or her teacher will discuss with you any continuing concerns and the possibility of referring your child to the Student Support Team. Be sure you clearly understand why your child is being referred, and don't hesitate to ask questions. You will work closely with the school to decide whether additional support services are appropriate, or whether your child requires a comprehensive individual evaluation.

What is a referral?

A referral is a written request for an evaluation that is given to the school district when a child is suspected of having a disability and might need special education services.

Who can make a referral?

- Parents
- School personnel
- Agencies concerned with the welfare of students, including city and state agencies

If you believe that your child may have a disability, you may refer your child for an evaluation by submitting a written request to your school district.

Referral for a special education evaluation is the first step in the process of determining if your child should receive special education services. The evaluation should examine all areas of suspected disability and provide a detailed description of your child's educational needs. The evaluation should answer these questions and the answer should be yes in order to determine if your child is eligible for special education services:

1. Does the child have a disability? What type?
2. Does the disability cause the child to be unable to progress effectively in regular education?
3. Does the child require specially designed instruction to make progress or does the child require a related service or services in order to access the general curriculum?

ASSESSMENT

When your child is referred to the SST, he or she may receive a full and comprehensive diagnostic evaluation of the suspected disability and of his or her educational needs. This diagnostic evaluation will be based on an assessment plan developed by the SST to address the suspected area(s) of disability and your related concerns as the parent (Refer to the Disability Categories outlined in Section 1 of this handbook). Your written consent is needed prior to beginning the administration of assessments. You will receive an explanation of the reasons the SST wants to assess your child, the areas in which your child will be assessed, and the type of assessment(s) to be administered. This evaluation process will provide insight into factors influencing your child's academic and behavioral problems that may be interfering with his or her educational success. Your child will be evaluated in all areas related to the suspected disability.

You are encouraged to ask questions to ensure that you understand what this diagnostic evaluation means so you can provide informed consent. The assessments will be completed by a trained professional and/or team of professionals within 30 school days from the date that you sign the consent to evaluate form. A team meeting must be held within 45 school days of receipt of the consent to evaluate to determine eligibility for special education services.

ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

After the assessment is completed, you and other members of the SST will review all of the information collected about your child. The results of the assessment must relate to your child's classroom and academic performance, and should identify both strengths and areas of need. You should ask enough questions that you fully understand the results of the assessments given to your child. A general education teacher, a special education teacher, your child as appropriate, the assessment specialist(s), school psychologist/team or the administrator's representative will be present at the SST meeting to determine whether your child has a disability and is eligible for special education and related services.

Note: Parents have the right to receive all special education evaluation reports two days before the Team meeting. You must ask the school for copies of these reports in order to receive them in advance of the meeting.



What if my child is not eligible for special education services?

If your child is found not eligible, your child may still receive help, although not special education services.

If your child is not eligible for special education services, you will receive a letter from the school stating that your child is not eligible, detailing why the student was found not eligible, along with information about your rights.

Read the notice carefully to decide if you agree or disagree with this decision. You have the right to appeal a finding of no eligibility (follow the dispute resolution process outlined in this handbook).

If my child is eligible for special education services, what are the next steps?

1. The team will develop an Individualized Education Program/Plan (IEP).
2. Special education and related services will begin by the start date as outlined in the IEP once you have signed the IEP.
3. You will receive periodic updates on your child's progress towards his/her IEP goals as often as non-disabled peers receive reports home on their progress.
4. You will participate in an IEP meeting with your child's team at least one time each calendar year.
5. Your child will have an updated evaluation occur at least one time every three years from the date of completion from the first evaluation.

DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

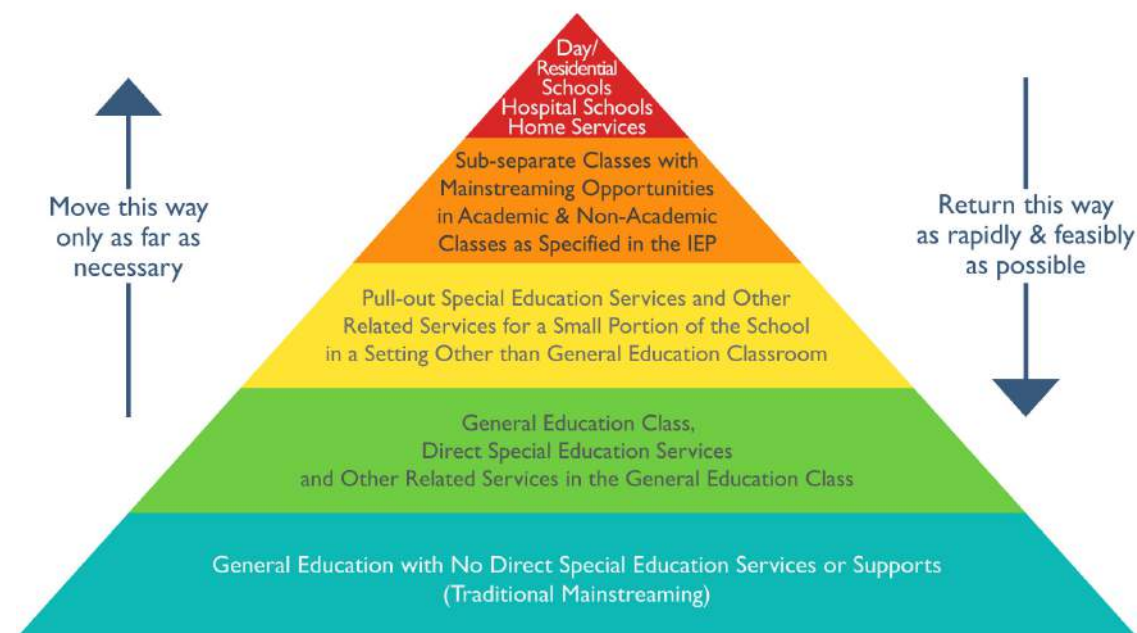
After determining your child's eligibility and need for special education, the IEP team must develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for your child in order for him or her to receive special education and related services. As an equal partner in the IEP team, you will work with school personnel in developing your child's IEP, and will be actively involved in the IEP team meetings. When appropriate (particularly for students 14 or older), your child may also be involved in the development of his or her IEP. The development of the IEP is a student driven process. There are several components that are required to be addressed when developing the IEP. Several areas are outlined below with specific explanation (these are not all components):

- The vision statement is the vehicle that focuses the team on the future of the student. It is designed to help the team take a step back from the present and focus on the long term plans for the student. This is the place where parents should be very clear in regards to their hopes for their child's future.
- The present level of educational performance (PLEP) uses various assessments (formal and informal) to determine the areas where a student has strengths and areas where the student has needs. The PLEP is based on current, relevant data and information from a variety of sources that guides the development of the student's goals and objectives. The PLEP determines when there will be goals written.
- Transition planning is required for students who will turn 14 years of age during the IEP period. Transition planning ensures that the team plan for students needs in regards to independence, post-secondary, daily living and social areas.
- A core concept of IEP development is the student's participation in the general curriculum or the extent to which a student will be excluded from the general curriculum. This is a very important part of the discussion to ensure that consideration and discussion is always given for a student to meaningfully participate in the general education setting to some extent with non-disabled peers.
- Goal development is directly tied to the present level of educational performance (PLEP). Goals should address the gaps in skills where students are not performing within the curriculum, socially or behaviorally in line with their non-disabled peers. Attainment of the goals should consider the need for specially designed instruction, accommodations, modifications, and/or supplementary aides and services. Goals should be written so that they are measureable and progress can be easily monitored.

Note: Placement should never be discussed or even considered prior to discussion by the team of the vision, PLEP and goals.

The IEP goes into effect after you agree to the services and sign the IEP form. Your child's IEP must be reviewed at least annually but may also be reviewed any time concerns arise regarding the services being provided. You will receive a copy of the IEP after it is finalized.

THE CONTINUUM OF SERVICES



ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE IEP

Your child's IEP must be formally reviewed and revised at least once a year by your IEP team. The purpose of this review is to see whether your child is making progress toward the stated annual goals.

At the annual review, you should share your observations about any changes in your child's education, including areas of growth, regression or lack of progress. You can prepare for the review meeting by reading your child's current IEP and listing considerations for the development of the next IEP.

During the annual review, the team will consider your child's strengths, your ideas for improving your child's education, results of any recent evaluations, and how your child has performed on system-wide and state assessments.

Whenever there are questions, concerns, or changes in your child's academic, social, or emotional well-being, you and your child's teacher or team chair should talk. If you or the school decide the IEP is not working for your child, or expect progress is not occurring, the Team should meet to review and possibly change the IEP (this can and should happen prior to the annual review date).

THREE-YEAR RE-EVALUATION

In keeping with the mandates of IDEA, DESE requires that a student with a disability be reevaluated every three years (or more often, if conditions warrant) to determine whether he or she continues to have a disability and continues to need special education and related services. This process may be referred to as the triennial reevaluation. This reevaluation is a time to look critically at your child's progress and instructional needs, and determine the effectiveness of the services that are being provided.

The scope of the reevaluation is determined individually at a IEP team meeting and is based on your child's performance, behavior and needs. Information that you provide to the Team is also very important during this process.

The school will request your consent to conduct the three-year reevaluation. The school can also recommend to you that the evaluation information they have is sufficient to know that your child continues to be eligible and is also current enough to write an appropriate IEP. In that case, the school may recommend that no assessments are necessary. This helps to prevent over testing, but it should not prevent evaluation that you or the school believes is needed. You have the right to say you still want some or all of the assessments to be certain that the information is current; the school must provide the assessments that you request. A three-year reevaluation generally will include all of the types of assessments of the initial evaluation.

SECTION 3: AGE-SPECIFIC COMPONENTS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

PRE-SCHOOL SERVICES (AGES 3-5)

Federal and state regulations require that school districts provide special education services to students who are identified with a disability beginning at age 3 and continuing until age 5. When a student turns 5 years old and is eligible to enter kindergarten, services will continue under school-aged special education services.

Cambridge Public Schools offers Preschool Services for Children with Disabilities to provide individually designed special education and related services to young children ages 3 through 5 years who are eligible to receive special education and related services. These services may occur in a variety of settings, including the school and various sites within your community as determined by your IEP team.

If your child has been receiving early intervention services through Massachusetts Department of Early Education Care (EEC), your Early Intervention Team will coordinate with the Pre-school area of the Office of Student Services and schedule an Early Intervention transition meeting that will include a representative from Cambridge Public Schools Office of Student Services. This meeting is required to determine next steps in regards to your child's transition. This can include further assessment to determine eligibility for special education services.

After your child exits Early Intervention Services (EIS), this is a time that many families begin to explore more organized or formal opportunities for their children. For children who are already participating in infant/toddler programs, their families may begin to explore options for pre-schools.

If your child is eligible to receive special education services, the IEP team may determine that there is a need for ongoing specially designed instruction that requires a Special Start (Pre-School) classroom to meet your child's needs. Therefore, your child will be assigned to a classroom for their services. For students do not require specially designed instruction or who are enrolled in an appropriate pre-school program, the team and/or family may determine that related services can be accessed by parents bringing their child to a specified location to receive their related services (Speech/Language, Occupational Therapy, or Physical Therapy).

SCHOOL-AGE SERVICES (AGES 5-18)

Federal and state regulations require that Local Education Agencies (LEA) provide special education services to students in Kindergarten through twelfth grade who have an eligible disability as outlined by state and federal guidelines.

Students enrolled in Cambridge Public Schools who have an identified or suspected disability can access special education programs and services as determined by their IEP teams at their assigned and/or choice school. It is the goal of Cambridge Public Schools to educate students with disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment based on their individual learning, social, emotional and/or behavior needs (See Continuum Pyramid).

TRANSITIONING BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL (AGES 18-22)

Secondary transition is a coordinated set of activities for your child to promote his or her movement from high school to post-school activities. The goal of transition is that students acquire skills that are valued in the adult world so they will become independent, productive adults and assume responsibility for their behaviors and accomplishments. Post-school activities include post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including support employment), continuing adult education, adult services, community participation, and independent living. A coordinated set of transition activities must be based on your child's needs, taking into account his or her preferences and interests, and must include:

- instruction,
- community experiences, and
- the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives.

Transition planning will begin when your child turns 14 years of age. The IEP Team, including you and your child, will develop a transition plan that identifies your child's transition goals and service needs. When your child turns 16 years of age, the Team discussion of Vision, should include a post-school vision statement to reflect the individual interests, preferences and needs of your child in adult life.

The transition plan will focus on determining a course of study and whether that course of study will lead your child where he or she wants to go upon graduation. A course of study includes educational and vocational experiences your child needs to prepare for the transition from secondary education to postsecondary life. The transition plan may also include transition services in the areas of daily living skills, functional vocational evaluation, and inter-agency linkages.

Cambridge Public Schools is committed to encouraging your child's involvement in making decisions about his or her educational programs and long-term goals. Whenever possible, the transition team should also include representatives from post-secondary environments desired by your child, so that they can establish contacts and become familiar with the requirements of the programs your child wants to enter.

During transition planning, it is important to remember that when a student graduates from high school or upon their 22nd birthday, they are no longer entitled to special education services under IDEA. In the state of Massachusetts, there is a planning process to identify needed services from human service agencies for students with significant disabilities (Chapter 688 planning).

Chapter 688 planning should begin at least two years before your child graduates high school or turns 22 years of age. The school district is responsible for making a referral for your child if adult services are needed. Cambridge Public Schools employs a full-time transition teacher who works collaboratively with students, teachers, families and school staff to plan for the transition of students with disabilities from high school.

Note: A referral to adult services does not guarantee the availability of services

AGE OF MAJORITY

In Massachusetts, a child reaches the age of majority (legal adulthood) at age 18. When a child with a disability becomes an adult, the rights granted to you as a parent by special education policies and procedures automatically transfer to your child regardless of the severity of the disability. You and your child will be notified about this transfer of rights at least one year before your child's 18th birthday. Parents are still allowed to receive all written notices and have access to school records. In certain cases, a child with a disability who has reached the age of majority may not have the ability to provide informed consent. In these cases, court action is required so that a court appointed guardian could give informed consent.



SECTION 4: PARENT RESOURCES

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

The mission of the Cambridge Parent Advisory Council on Special Education is to work for understanding of, respect for, and support of all children with special needs in the community.

- Our purpose: To educate and support parents in advocating for their children.
- Our goal: To have an active network of parents who work together to provide the best services and programs for our children.
- Our guiding principle: Services are determined by the needs of the child, not the availability of programs or resources.

Officers

Pamela Blau, Pia Cisternino, Karen Dobak, and Julie Viens. Elected on May 28, 2014, these four women will provide their leadership and vision, to give voice to the concerns of families of children with disabilities and special needs.

Pia Marrella Cisternino (Co-Chair) lives with her husband and three children in West Cambridge. Professionally, she is a speech language pathologist. In 2012, Pia founded the Twice Exceptional Parents' Support Group, and she continues to facilitate monthly meetings of the group. Pia served as a C-PAC Officer for school year 2013-14, alongside Karen Dobak, Melissa Preston Bulyko, and Zina Gomez-Liss.

Karen Dobak (Co-Chair) has been an active member of C-PAC since her 21-year-old son was diagnosed with PDD when he was 2.5 years old. Her daughter, who is 10 and has a diagnosis of PDD-NOS, epilepsy and dyslexia, has received special education services since she was in Kindergarten at the King Open School. Karen's daughter is currently in an 11-month program out of district, and her son receives services through CPS and a program at Mass Bay Community College.

Julie Viens (Co-Chair) has three children, ages 17, 11, and 8, and has experience helping her children navigate the education system while struggling with learning, sensory integration, and emotional/behavioral challenges. Julie's family has experience with special education in the general education environment, with home schooling, and with out-of-district placements. Julie describes C-PAC as a "lifeline" and assumes the position of officer with the intent of offering practical and emotional support to other families. Professionally, Julie is working on preliminary licensure credentials to work as a teacher with preK-2, elementary, and students with moderate disabilities; and works as a substitute teacher for CPS.

Pamela Blau (Vice Chair) has two children: a daughter at the Amigos School and a son at Vassal Lane Upper School who has an IEP for dyslexia and ADHD. Professionally, Pamela is a therapist in private practice in Cambridge. She has been involved with CPAC for 8 years, and says that she has learned much from other parents about how to navigate the special education system and support her son. Her goal as a new C-PAC officer is to pass on some of what she has learned to others.

Contact Info

<http://cambridgepacse.org/>

Pia Marrella Cisternino, Vice-Chair: pia.cisternino@gmail.com

Karen Dobak, Co-Chair: kdobak@comcast.net, 617.852.9227

Julie Viens, Co-Chair: julie.viens@gmail.com

Pamela Blau, Vice Chair: pamelablau1@gmail.com, 857.928.6496

Zuleka Queen-Postell, Special Education Liaison – Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC):

zqueen-postell@cpsd.us, 617.593.4402

PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS

Bay Cove Human Service Groups

Two ongoing, free support groups are available for parents or guardians of students with disabilities. Facilitated by a Parent Partner from Bay Cove Human Services Parent Support Program, these groups offer safe space to ask questions and get support from other parents and families. To participate, please contact Zuleka Queen-Postell at zqueen-postell@cpsd.us or 617.593.4402.

Online Support Group for Cambridge Families

The Cambridge Parent Advisory Council on Special Education refers parents and families of Cambridge students with disabilities or suspected disabilities to a free, online support email group run by Cambridge families, for families. This confidential and families-only resource is a place to ask questions and seek advice from other parents/guardians of Cambridge students. To sign up for this privately run email listserv, contact the list moderator Maureen Manning at mo.maureenmanning@gmail.com.

The Council of Exceptional Children (CEC)

As a professional organization for special educators, CEC's mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals with exceptionalities and their families. CEC has developed a list of resources to provide parents and caregivers with the evidence-based tools and information they'll need to effectively advocate for their exceptional child and partner with professionals to provide special education services. Those resources can be located here: <http://www.cec.sped.org/Tools-and-Resources/For-Families>

Learning Disabilities of America (LDA)

Parents are often baffled by the problems presented by a child with learning disabilities. Often this "invisible disability" does not become obvious until a child reaches school age. Even then, difficulties may be subtle and hard to recognize. Below is a link to support families of students with learning disabilities: <http://ldaamerica.org/parents/>

Autism Speaks

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 1 in 68 children in multiple communities has been identified with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). It is 30% higher than estimates from two years ago (2012). With the increase in the number of children identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder, early intervention and education is the key to their success. Autism Speaks is an organization that is committed to support families who have children and adult family members with autism. The link below provides many resources and useful information for families: <http://www.autismspeaks.org/families-adults>

Speech/Language Resources

According to the US Department of Education, approximately 21% of students ages 3-21 are eligible for special education due to a speech/language impairment or communication disorder.

Partners Resource Network: <http://partnerstx.org/speech-language-impairments>

The Center for Speech Language Disorders : <http://www.csls.org>

Cognitive and Developmental Disabilities Resources

Cognitive and developmental disabilities may be considered a low incidence disability, however, the needs of this group of children are great and their needs for support span the course of their lifetime.

Bridges for Kids: <http://www.bridges4kids.org/Disabilities/CognitiveImpairment.html>

Compiled list of resources: <http://www.jpkf.org/links/mrsites.html>

Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress

A resource for Down Syndrome information, advocacy and rehabilitation; <http://www.mdsc.org>

Vocational Rehabilitation

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program assists individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment. <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/consumer/disability-services/vocational-rehab/>

U.S. Department of Education: Office of Special Education Programs

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/index.html>

SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION

Students with disabilities are eligible for door-to-door transportation as outlined in their IEP and determined by their IEP team. The health and safety of our students is very important, therefore, the guidelines for pick-up and drop-off of students are closely adhered to. Below are some of the guidelines:

- Changes to pick-up or drop-off locations should be requested and reported to SP&R by Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) only, SP&R will not make any changes without approval or notification from CPS.
- Students will not be dropped off at public sites and only at a residence or childcare facility where an approved adult meets the bus.
- Parents should notify the bus company if their child will not be attending school on a certain day. Transportation will be discontinued after the third day of an unreported absence.
- Students are never left at a drop-off location when the bus is not met by an adult. If the bus arrives and there is not an approved adult to retrieve the child, the student will be taken to the Office of Student Services district office.

Important Numbers

- Report student absences for bus pick-up: 781.224.0003
- Report delay of pick-up or if the bus is late: 617.349.6862
- Resume transportation or make changes to transportation: 617.349.6702 or 617.349.6862
- Report problems or concerns: Contact Marc Wright, Fiscal and Operations Manager for the Office of Student services (617.349.6700) or Tina Fisher, CPSD Transportation Manager (617.349.6862)



INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL EVALUATIONS (IEE)

There are times when parents do not agree or have concerns regarding the evaluation conducted by the school district. Parents have a right to request an independent educational evaluation by a credentialed assessment specialist who is not employed by Cambridge Public Schools.

Parents must notify their school (principal and IEP team chairperson) in writing when requesting an Independent Educational Evaluation.

In order to request the district fund or share the funding of an Independent Educational Evaluation, parents are required to share their personal financial information so that the district can consider basing the fee for funding the IEE on a sliding scale. Parents can also choose not to disclose their personal financial information in which case the district can decide to fully fund the evaluation or not. Families who choose not to disclose their financial information or are not eligible for the sliding fee will be notified in writing within 5 days of receipt of the request for an IEE of the status of their request. Families who receive free or reduced lunch are entitled to the full funding of an IEE at the school district's expense without the requirement of disclosing their personal financial information.

The Director of the Office of Student services will notify families in writing who choose to disclose their personal financial information within 5 days of receipt of the financial documentation of the next steps regarding the funding of the IEE.

GLOSSARY

View glossary online: http://bit.ly/oss_glossary



Program Summaries
www.guidancectr.org

12 Tyler Street, Somerville MA 02143
 Phone 617-629-3919 Fax 617-629-4644

5 Sacramento Street Cambridge, MA 02138
 Phone: 617-354-2275 Fax 617-547-4356

111 South Street Somerville, MA 02143
 Phone 617-284-5130 Fax 617-591-0239

	Program	Age of the Child	Description of Services	Type of referrals accepted	To Make a referral call	Program Director & Location
Early childhood Services	CAMBRIDGE-SOMERVILLE EARLY INTERVENTION (C-S EI)	Birth to 3 years old	Home based evaluation and services for children with developmental delays, specific diagnosed condition, or who are at risk. Home visits, child care center visits, parent/child groups. Groups are integrated, community children and EI enrolled children. Community children may have to pay a small fee.	All children entitled to an evaluation. Cambridge and Somerville residents only Most insurance accepted, Department of Public Health covers copays/uninsured Community children 0-3 for integrated playgroups.	617-629-3919 and ask to make referral, can also dial x5730 and leave a message with information. To refer community children to enroll in group ask for group coordinator.	Lee King 617-629-3919 x 5791 or 617-702-5791 12 Tyler Street Somerville
	EARLY INTERVENTION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (EIPP) <i>Referrals for first time mothers or fathers under 21 please call Healthy Families of Central Middlesex – Jewish Family and Children Services 781-693-1232</i>	pregnancy through child's 2 month birthday Mother must be over 21 or under 21 with 2nd pregnancy	Home based. Identify maternal risk, provide comprehensive health, mental health, developmental assessments. Link families to community services. Newborns monitored during first year.	Pregnant or newly postpartum women meeting certain risk criteria. Insurance accessed for newborns. Department of Public Health covers maternal visit. Cambridge and Somerville residents only	617-629-3919 x5792	Megan Postal 617-629-3919 x5792 or 617-702-5792 12 Tyler Street Somerville
Intensive Family Services	Caring Together Continuum (CTC)	6 -19 years old	Intensive home-based wrap around services designed to support and stabilize children and families experiencing severe distress due to Mental Health issues.	Closed referral circle through DMH or DCF.	617-629-3919	Alberto Rodriguez 617-702-5715 12 Tyler Street Somerville
	FAMILY INTENSIVE REUNIFICATION and STABILIZATION TEAM (FIRST)	birth - 18 years old	Intensive home-based wrap around services for DCF involved families whose children are reunifying from an out of home placement or to stabilize the family to prevent placement.	Referrals through Department of Children and Families (DCF).	617-629-3919	Alberto Rodriguez 617-702-5763 12 Tyler Street Somerville
Family After School Program	FAMILY AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM (FASP)	6-12 years old	Therapeutic afterschool program for children with behavioral or emotional problems. Provides therapeutic groups and behavior management in highly structured milieu. Offer individual and family case management, school collaboration, clinical assessment, and diagnostic consultation. Focus on building emotional and social skills, family psycho-education, and hospital diversion. Parents work in partnership with program	Cambridge and Somerville residents. Referrals thru Department of Children and Families or Department of Mental Health only.	DCF or DMH worker involved in the case.	Maribeth Arena 617-354-1519 x111 5 Sacramento Street Cambridge

	Program	Age of the Child	Description of Services	Type of referrals accepted	To Make a referral call	Program Director & Location
	OUTPATIENT SERVICES	3-22 years old	Outpatient therapy and psychiatry for children and their families. Individual and family therapy, family & provider consultations, psychopharmacological evaluations and treatment. Home-based and school based therapy is available.	Most insurance accepted (including most types of Masshealth).		Jason Moscato 617-354-2275 5 Sacramento St. Cambridge
	CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INITIATIVE (CBHI) SERVICES: In – home therapy Therapeutic mentoring	3 -20 years old	More intensive home & community-based clinical & support services for children 3-20 and their families who need more frequent and comprehensive treatment than is provided by outpatient therapy. Has capacity to include individual work with children and parents as well as family work.	Must have Masshealth insurance with Managed Care coverage (MBHP, NHP, NWH, BMC)	Clinic referral line: 617-284-5131 Front-Desk: 617-284-5130, x0	Beth Everts 617-284-5140 111 South Street Somerville
	PRESCHOOL SERVICES	3-6 years old	Support/guidance for social/emotional growth, caregiver/child relationships, behavioral difficulties. Consult with clinicians around early childhood issues/resources. Collaborate with Early Intervention and Special Education services.	Most insurance accepted (including most types of MassHealth)	Clinic referral line: 617-284-5131 Front-Desk: 617-284-5130, x0	Beth Everts 617-284-5140 111 South Street Somerville

	Program	Age of the Child	Description of Services	Type of referrals accepted	To Make a referral call	Program Director & Location
Domestic Violence Services	FAMILIES WITH VOICES PROGRAM	Any age	Services to children who witnessed domestic violence, and to their non-offending parent: Consultations, Evaluations, Groups, Training, and Referrals to other community supports.	Children and, all non-offending parents, pregnant women. All insurance accepted. Groups are free.	617-284-5141 Or 617-755-3124	Ilana Amrani-Cohen 617-284-5141 111 South Street Somerville
	HIGH RISK TEAM	Any age	Community coordinated intensive Safety planning , housing stabilization, legal support and continued follow up with client and all service providers who are part of the team	High risk domestic violence cases in Cambridge Arlington and Belmont at no cost	781-686-5084	Cindy Nemet-Program coordinator 111 South Street Somerville
	MEETING PLACE – CHILD ACCESS SERVICES	Any age	Supervised visitation between non-custodial parents and their children and for children in foster care	All referrals accepted. Sliding fee scale	617-354-2275 x145 or x 137	Howard Yaffe 617-354-2275 x145 5 Sacramento Street Cambridge
Community Service Agency	COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCY (CSA) Intensive Care coordination and family partners	Birth to 21 years old	High intensity home & community based care coordination and family support & training through a wrap around process. For children with mental health needs and their families. Helps provide family with a partner to coordinate professional and natural supports and ultimately help family advocate in the system and develop a support network. Appropriate referrals include families with many providers, children transitioning home from hospital or group care placements.	Children 0-21 and their families. Must have Standard or Commonwealth level of Masshealth insurance with MCE coverage (MBHP, NHP, NWH, BMC).	(617)354-1519 X114 Allison Clark coordinates incoming referrals	Kim Conley 617-629-3919 x5764 Or 617-702-5763 12 Tyler Street Somerville
	FAMILY NETWORKS	Birth to 21 years old	Lead agency contract with DCF to help coordinate services provided through DCF (support and stabilization, congregate care, intensive foster care)	Closed referral system. Work only with DCF cases and only DCF can refer.	n/a	Kerry Woods 617-520-8719 810 Memorial Drive Cambridge



WWW.CPSD.US

School Committee Members, 2014-15:

Mayor David P. Maher, Fran Cronin, Alfred B. Fantini, Richard Harding, Kathleen Kelly, Patricia M. Nolan, Mervan F. Osborne

Cambridge Public Schools is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to the provision of quality educational programs for all students. Cambridge Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, genetic information, age, veteran or marital status in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

CPS
Cambridge Public Schools



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Phone: 617.349.6500 Fax: 617.349.6355