

INTRODUCTION: SUPPORT SERVICES AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

Children are our first priority. We are committed to providing a strong academic foundation for our students by challenging each of our children to excellence. In addition, we seek to create an environment that instills a love of learning, fosters student growth, nurtures respect for others, and enhances each student's self-appreciation.

Student Support Services and Special Education at River Forest School District 90 are comprehensive and individualized for each child. We help all children in the District make progress consistent with their abilities. A free, appropriate public education is available to all students. Special Education services are available for children ages 3 to 15 years.

*Source:
District 90
Mission Statement*



II. A CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

District 90 has developed a continuum of services to meet the needs of students. Special assistance is available for regular education students who require supports in areas such as reading, social, emotional or organizational skills. The District also provides a variety of programs and support services for children who are eligible under State and federal laws for special education and related services.

The range of services extends from after-school tutoring or simple organizational assistance to ongoing classroom assistance. The location can range from the regular classroom to a resource room to a special education classroom. In addition, various therapies are available where appropriate during school hours.

The chart on the following page provides examples of some of the services provided by the District for both students with disabilities and non-disabled students.

Please refer to the Glossary for a description of the programs and services listed in the following chart.



Examples of Services

For nondisabled students

- English as a Second Language
- Reading Specialist Services
- Social Work
- Student Achievement
- Program/After School Support Services
- STAR Program (Students Taking Academic Responsibility) at Roosevelt School
- Individual Intervention Plans for Children in need of challenge

For students with disabilities

- Cross-categorical instruction
- Developmental Learners Program ("DLP")
- Early Childhood Special Education
- Occupational Therapy
- Out-of-District programs
- Physical Therapy
- Resource Services
- Social and Academic Learning Program ("SALP")
 - Social Work
 - Speech/Language Therapy
 - Adaptive PE
 - Vision and Hearing Itinerant Services
 - Assistive Technology Consultation and Services



III. SPECIAL EDUCATION

The following description pertains only to the range of services for students with disabilities. This is a short summary of the eligibility areas and the process involved in the District's special education program.

A. CATEGORIES OF ELIGIBILITY

District 90 provides special education and related services to children who have been identified as eligible under relevant State and federal laws and regulations, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA"), 20 U.S.C. Section 1400 et seq., Article 14 of the School Code of Illinois, 105 ILCS 5/14-1.01 et seq., Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), 29 U.S.C. Section 701, and the Americans with Disabilities Act ("the ADA"), 42 U.S.C. Section 12100 et seq.

The following are the identified categories of disability under which students are eligible for special education programs and services under the IDEA, Article 14 of the School Code, and their regulations:

- Autism
- Deaf/blindness
- Deafness
- Developmental delay (ages 3-5)
- Emotional disturbance
- Hearing impairment
- Mental retardation
- Multiple disabilities
- Orthopedic impairment
- Other health impairment
- Specific learning disability
- Speech/language impairment
- Traumatic brain injury
- Visual impairment

These disability areas are defined by federal and Illinois regulations, and they are described in the attached glossary.



B. SPECIAL EDUCATION - STEPS IN THE PROCESS

(1) Identifying A Need

If you are concerned about the possibility that your school-age child has special needs, usually the best way to start is to discuss the concerns with the child's teacher. In many cases, informal adjustments or interventions will address the problem. When more is needed, a referral may be made for further study of the child's needs. Teachers, parents, or other individuals may make a referral.

Parents who have concerns about children who are not yet of school age should contact the District 90 Office of Special Education. In addition, the District conducts screenings for preschool-aged children. Watch for public announcements of these screenings, which are issued annually.

(2) Referrals

Referrals are handled through your school's Pupil Personnel Services Team (PPS Team), a group of teachers, administrators and special education professionals. Upon referral, the PPS Team will consider whether additional informal intervention should be tried, or if a full and individual evaluation should be conducted. A parent's input and written consent is required for any evaluation recommended through this process. A parent may also initiate the request for a full and individual evaluation.

The PPS Team may consist of the school's principal, the District's special education coordinator, the school's special education facilitator, special education teachers, general education teachers, a social worker, a school psychologist, a speech/language pathologist, an occupational therapist, a physical therapist, or others.



(3) Full and Individual Evaluation

Adhering to State and federal guidelines, the PPS Team, with input from parents, conducts a full and individual evaluation for the child within 60 school days of the date when the parent provides written consent.

The evaluation may include an interview with the student and parents, a social developmental study by a social worker, a psychological evaluation, a learning environment assessment, an educational evaluation, a medical history report, a vision and hearing screening, and/or other specialized evaluations such as an occupational therapy or physical therapy evaluation.

When evaluations are complete, the PPS Team meets with the parents to review the findings and any other relevant information about the child that may be available.

(4) The Individualized Educational Program (IEP)

In the event that the evaluation process identifies the child's eligibility and need for special education and related services, the next step is the development of an individualized educational program ("IEP") for the child.

The IEP Team consists of the parents, along with a regular education teacher where appropriate, a special education teacher, the coordinator or facilitator of special education and other individuals as needed. Together the IEP Team develops the IEP document, which serves as a "blueprint" for the child's special education program and services.

The IEP document states how each child will be helped to achieve individualized annual goals to enable the child to

be involved and progress in the general curriculum. By explaining a child's present levels of educational performance and establishing outcome criteria for each child, the IEP offers the baseline against which the student's progress may be measured.

(5) Annual Review

At meetings held at least annually for each student who has an IEP ("the annual review"), progress is determined by reviewing the child's performance in relation to the goals previously set forth in the IEP document. At that point, new goals, objectives, programs, and services for the next year are established.

In addition, the child participates District and State assessments, which may be either standardized group tests or, in limited circumstances, alternate assessments.

(6) Three-Year Reevaluation

Every three years the District reevaluates the child. In some cases a reevaluation may be conducted sooner by agreement between the parents and the PPS Team.



GLOSSARY

The following glossary describes some of the terms you may encounter in your conversations and meetings with District administrators and staff as you participate in the special education process.

ADA Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 12101 et seq.

ADD Attention Deficit Disorder. This term is no longer used in the official DSM-IV, which is a manual used by professionals of many different orientations as a guide to diagnosing mental disorders. The term has been replaced by Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder - Predominantly Inattentive Type. (See ADHD.) However, many people still use ADD informally to mean inattention without symptoms of hyperactivity-impulsivity.

ADHD Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. A condition in which there are symptoms of inattention and hyperactivity-impulsivity which have persisted for at least 6 months to a degree that is more frequent and severe than is typically observed in individuals at a comparable developmental level. Predominantly Inattentive Type: symptoms are primarily in the area of inattention. Hyperactive-Impulsive Type: symptoms are primarily in the areas of hyperactivity-impulsivity. Combined Type: symptoms of both inattention and hyperactivity-impulsivity are both present.

Annual Review Meetings held at least annually for each student who has an IEP, in which the child's progress under each of his or her goals is reviewed and a new IEP for the upcoming year is developed.

Auditory Processing Discriminating, recognizing and comprehending auditory information.

Augmentative Communication A system/mechanism by which a non-verbal person or a person with limited verbal skills can interact, respond and express him/herself.

Autism A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, 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.

BEST Group Builder of Excellence in Students and Teachers. Information/support group for parents of children in River Forest with learning challenges.

Full and individual evaluation A series of procedures designed to provide information about a child's suspected disability, the nature and extent of the problems adversely affecting his or her educational development, and the type of intervention or assistance needed to alleviate these problems.



Cross-Categorical Program Instructional services program offered in the same classroom to students with a range of disabilities. Services are often approximately 50% or more of the child's school day.

Deaf-Blindness Concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.

Deafness A hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Decoding Reading a word accurately. Usually refers to using phonics to figure out a word, but it can also refer to using word-parts, such as prefixes and suffixes.

Developmental Delay Delay in physical, cognitive, communication, social/emotional or adaptive development. Occurs when a child fails to develop according to normal patterns in any of these areas. Used only with respect to children from 3 through 5 years of age.

Developmental Learners Program (DLP) Instructional services that provide a functional and life skills focus, in addition to the general curriculum.



DuPage/West Cook Region Special Education

Association Organization providing access to specialists for qualifying school districts in this area. These services are most commonly provided for children with visual and/or hearing impairments, such as hearing and vision itinerant teachers.

Dyslexia A specific language-based disorder of constitutional origin characterized by difficulties in single word decoding, usually reflecting insufficient phonological processing abilities. These deficits are often unexpected in relation to age and other cognitive and academic abilities; they are not the result of generalized developmental disability or sensory impairment.

DSM Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). It is used by professionals of many different orientations as a guide to diagnosing mental disorders. DSM-IV (1994) is the most current edition.

Early Childhood Special Education Program Program for children with disabilities between ages of 3 through 5. Emphasizes language and communication in a developmentally-sensitive structured setting.



Emotional Disturbance (ED) A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over an extended period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance: an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; and 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 anxiety or unhappiness or depression; or a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems (includes schizophrenia but does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance).

English as a Second Language (ESL) Program that assesses the language needs of students with limited English proficiency and provides support in the classroom and/or small group instruction to meet the individual needs of each student.

FDSE Federation of Districts for Special Education. A cooperative for special education programs and services to which District is a member district.

Fine Motor Abilities The ability to use hands to manipulate small items (e.g., pinching, grasping, pencil and scissors use, and handwriting)

Gross Motor Abilities The ability to use the whole body to execute large muscle movements (e.g., running, jumping, skipping, climbing).

Hearing Itinerant Services Specialist who travels among schools and districts providing assistance to students with hearing impairments

IDEA Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. Section 1401 et seq.

Inclusion Although the term Least Restrictive Environment refers to the placement and programming determinations for an individual child, inclusion addresses the philosophy that fosters students with special needs to attend neighborhood schools and become members of general education classes.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) A document which describes the agreed-upon special education program and services to be provided by a school district to a child with a disability (ages 3 to 21). An IEP includes elements such as a statement of the child's present levels of educational performance, annual goals and short-term instructional objectives or benchmarks, specific special education and related services to be provided to the student, a statement of the extent of the student's participation in the regular education program, the anticipated frequency, duration, and location of services, and evaluation procedures, criteria and schedule for determining whether annual short-term goals and objectives or benchmarks have been met.

ISBE Illinois State Board of Education



Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) The setting that permits a child to be educated with non-disabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.

MDC Multidisciplinary conference. This term is no longer used, but formerly it referred to meeting with parents, teachers, evaluators, and administrators to discuss the results of a case study evaluation (now called a full and individual evaluation) and to determine if a child qualified for special education and related services. Now all such conferences are called Individualized Education Plan ("IEP") conferences.

Mental Retardation (MR) Significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Motor Planning The ability to plan (unconsciously) the sequence of functions necessary to carry out a desired action (including verbalization).

Occupational Therapy (OT) Services provided by a licensed professional who deals with activities of daily living (eating, dressing, grooming, etc.) and/or fine motor skills and/or sensory processing by evaluating current function level and working with a student to develop new skills.

Orthopedic Impairment A severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance; includes impairments caused by congenital anomaly (e.g., clubfoot, absence of some member, etc.), impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns which cause contractures).

Other Health Impairment (OHI) Limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened sensitivity to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, and sickle cell anemia; and adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) PDD is an umbrella term for five disorders identified in the DSM-IV: (1) Autistic Disorder, (2) Rett's Disorder, (3) Childhood Disintegrative Disorder, (4) Asperger's Disorder, and (5) Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified, or PDDNOS. This class of disorders has in common the following characteristics: Severe and pervasive impairments in reciprocal social interaction skills, communication skills, or the presence of stereotyped behavior interests, and activities.



Phonemic Awareness The ability to manipulate the individual sounds (phonemes) that make up words.

Phonics The association of written symbols (letters) with spoken sounds (phonemes).

Physical Therapy (PT) Services by a licensed professional who evaluates function and deformity, and who plans and executes exercise and training to maintain the best possible function and to prevent or slow down deformities.

Psychological Evaluation An individual evaluation of the child's functioning, which may include assessments in the cognitive, psychomotor, social/emotional, and academic achievement or aptitude areas, using appropriately validated formal and informal tests and evaluation materials.

Pupil Personnel Service Team (PPS Team) A group from each school in District 90 that meets regularly to discuss special education issues, including possible eligibility of students for evaluation and special education.

Reading Specialist Services Reading help provided by school reading specialist to students during regular school hours. Usually occurs outside the regular classroom.

Receptive Language Capacities involved in understanding the thoughts, feelings, desires, and needs of others. This includes the ability to interpret both verbal and nonverbal information from others.

Reevaluation A school district's reevaluation of an eligible child whenever conditions warrant a reevaluation or the child's parent or teacher requests a reevaluation, but at least once every three years.

Remediation Specialized instruction that improves a deficit.

Resource Services Special education instruction provided to students for less than 50% of their school day. Services may be delivered in the regular education classroom or in a resource room.

Sensory Integration The neurological ability to process and organize information that is gathered through our senses (the sensory information that is gathered from our bodies and our environment). It is also a frame of reference for occupational therapy that involves the use of controlled sensory input to assist clients who have sensory processing difficulties.

“Social and Academic Learning Program” (SALP) Roosevelt Middle School program that provides instructional assistance to students who need more support than is available in the general education program.

Social Developmental Study (SDS) A compilation and analysis of information, usually conducted as part of a full and individual evaluation, concerning those life experiences of the child, both past and present, which may relate to the child's school-related problems and/or to the possible alleviation of those problems.

Social Work Service available to students who may require help with social, emotional, or behavioral concerns.



Social Worker A licensed professional who helps facilitate communication among the family, personnel, health care professional, and community and governmental programs that may be useful. In addition the school social worker works directly with staff and students who demonstrate needs related to social skills and emotional needs.

Specific Learning Disability (LD) 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 do mathematical calculations, including such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. 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.

Speech and Language Therapy Services provided by a licensed professional who diagnoses and develops and implements treatment programs for students who have speech, language, or oral motor problems.

Students Taking Academic Responsibility (STAR)
Program at Roosevelt Middle School that focuses on study and organizational skills and strategies in relation to the students' every day work.

Student Achievement Program An after-school program at the elementary schools providing academic support for students. These students must be recommended to receive these services by their teacher and the school principal.

Three-Year Reevaluation See Reevaluation.

Vision Itinerant Specialist who travels among schools and districts providing assistance to students with vision impairments.

West Suburban Special Recreation Organization serving special recreational needs of persons of all ages. Augments park districts' services in the western suburbs.

Copies of the Individuals with Disabilities Act, School Board policies, the Federation of Districts for Special Education policies, and "A Parent's Guide: The Educational Rights of Students with Disabilities" are available at the District 90 Administration Building. For more information, please contact your school's special education coordinator or principal or the District 90 Director of Special Education.



We wish to acknowledge all the parents, teachers, and administrators who served on the previous special education task force and those who are now serving on the Special Education Advisory Committee, who offered their valuable suggestions and cooperation in this project. In addition, we offer a special thank you to those representatives of the BEST Group who lent their support.

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