



## Okaloosa County School District

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# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION

## What Is MTSS/Response To Instruction/Intervention (RtI)?

Response to Intervention (RtI) is a process where schools use student assessment data to make sure that all students are progressing in both academics and behavior. Multiple Tiers (or levels of intensity) of both academic and behavioral supports are made available to groups or individual students based on data that the schools collect on a regular basis. Some students who need the most intensive level of support may be referred for possible eligibility determination for special education.

### **PARENT RESOURCE:**

[Parent Brochure on RtI](#)

<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/Parent-Guide-MTSS.PDF>

## How Do I Request Assistance If I Think My Child May Need Special Education Services?

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

### **PARENT RESOURCE:**

[Evaluations for Special Education Services: Information for Parents](#)

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

## What Are My Rights As A Parent Of Child With A Disability?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law that makes available a free appropriate public education to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to those children. The Notice of Procedural Safeguards for Parents of Students with Disabilities describes the parent's rights under the IDEA. These rights, or procedural safeguards, are intended to ensure that you have the opportunity to be a partner in the educational decisions made regarding your child. Contact your child's school or visit the below listed websites to access a copy of the procedural safeguards.

### **PARENT RESOURCE:**

[Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#) (<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/about-idea/>)

Procedural Safeguards:

- [English](#) (<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070135-procedural.pdf>)
- [Other Languages](#) (<http://www.fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/beess-resources/presentations-pubs#p>)

## What Is A Local Education Agency (LEA)?

The LEA is the Individual Education Plan (IEP) team participant who is responsible for making decisions on behalf of the district. He or she ensures that your child's IEP meets compliance with state and federal regulations and is authorized to commit district resources.

The signature of the LEA representative on the IEP ensures that the program and services specified on the document will be provided within the timeframes delineated in the IEP.

## **Does The School District Provide A Continuum Of Services?**

Yes. The Okaloosa County School District provides ESE services for students that range from consultative services in general education through services provided at a separate day school.

### **PARENT RESOURCE:**

[Special Programs and Procedures Manual](http://www.okaloosaschools.com/files/_site/dept/ese/ese-special-programs-procedures%202018-19-through-2020-21.pdf)

[http://www.okaloosaschools.com/files/\\_site/dept/ese/ese-special-programs-procedures%202018-19-through-2020-21.pdf](http://www.okaloosaschools.com/files/_site/dept/ese/ese-special-programs-procedures%202018-19-through-2020-21.pdf)

## **How Will I Be Notified About Upcoming IEP Meetings And How Do I Prepare For Them?**

The state and IDEA emphasize the importance of parental involvement in developing, reviewing, and revising the IEP. The parent will receive a *Notification of Meeting Participation* even when the student has reached the age of majority. To ensure that parents are given the opportunity to attend the meeting, the LEA will schedule a meeting, providing a reasonable amount of notice for parents as well as all other IEP members.

### **PARENT RESOURCE:**

[Getting Ready for Your Child's IEP Meeting](http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070119-iep-card.pdf)

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

## **How Often Are IEP Meetings Held?**

IEP meetings must be held at least annually. However, an IEP meeting may be held anytime a change needs to be noted in the student's IEP. Meetings may be requested by the parents or the school. Parents should receive a Parent Input Contact Record form to record any strengths, needs or concerns that they have about their child. This information will be included in the IEP.

### **PARENT RESOURCE:**

Procedural Safeguards

- [English](http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070135-procedural.pdf) (<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070135-procedural.pdf>)
- [Other Languages](http://www.fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/beess-resources/presentations-pubs#p) (<http://www.fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/beess-resources/presentations-pubs#p>)

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## **What Constitutes A Change In Placement?**

A change in your child's placement occurs when the level of service required for your child to progress either increases or decreases significantly. Parental consent is required if the proposed placement would mean changing your child's instructional program from Florida Standards to the Access Points and/or changing your child's educational setting to a separate day school.

## **PARENT RESOURCE:**

Procedural Safeguards

- [English](http://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070135-procedural.pdf) (http://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070135-procedural.pdf)
- [Other Languages](http://www.fl DOE.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/beess-resources/presentations-pubs#p) (http://www.fl DOE.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/beess-resources/presentations-pubs#p)

[Getting Ready for Your Child's IEP Meeting](http://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070119-iep-card.pdf)

(http://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070119-iep-card.pdf)

**What are Access Point Standards?** Access Points are academic expectations written specifically for students with significant cognitive disabilities. They reflect the essence or core intent of the standards that apply to all students in the same grade, but at reduced levels of complexity.

## **PARENT RESOURCE:**

[Florida Standards Alternate Assessments](http://www.fl DOE.org/accountability/assessments/k-12-student-assessment/fl-alternate-assessment.shtml)

(http://www.fl DOE.org/accountability/assessments/k-12-student-assessment/fl-alternate-assessment.shtml)

## **Do I Have To Sign My Child's IEP?**

A parent does not have to sign the IEP in order for their child to receive the specialized services included in the plan. A parent must provide a signature giving initial consent, however, for specialized services to begin being provided to their child.

## **PARENT RESOURCE:**

Procedural Safeguards

- [English](http://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070135-procedural.pdf) (http://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070135-procedural.pdf)
- [Other Languages](http://www.fl DOE.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/beess-resources/presentations-pubs#p) (http://www.fl DOE.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/beess-resources/presentations-pubs#p)

[Getting Ready for Your Child's IEP Meeting](http://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070119-iep-card.pdf)

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## **What Can I Do If I Disagree With Decisions Made At An IEP Meeting?**

Parents and schools have a partnership, with the child as the primary focus. This partnership will grow when parents and school staff work together. Disagreements may happen, but the IEP team should work together to resolve the issues. Parents can refer to the Notice of Procedural Safeguards for Parents of Students with Disabilities for formal ways to resolve disagreements.

## **PARENT RESOURCE:**

Procedural Safeguards

- [English](http://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070135-procedural.pdf) (http://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070135-procedural.pdf)
- [Other Languages](http://www.fl DOE.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/beess-resources/presentations-pubs#p) (http://www.fl DOE.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/beess-resources/presentations-pubs#p)

## **How Will I Know What Kind Of Progress My Child Is Making Toward His/Her IEP Goals?**

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

## Does My Child Qualify For A McKay Scholarship?

McKay Scholarship eligible requirements can be found at the link below. Parents are required to file intent prior to withdrawing from public school. Military families relocating to Florida are exempt from the prior year's attendance requirement. The link below provides information about the McKay Scholarship as well as the state's Gardiner Scholarship, Hope Scholarship, and Florida Tax Credit Scholarship.

### **PARENT RESOURCE:**

[FLDOE Office of Independent Education & Parental Choice](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org) (www.floridaschoolchoice.org)

## What Is A Section 504 Plan?

A Section 504 plan describes the accommodations that the school will provide to support your child's education. Your child may be entitled to Section 504 accommodations if s/he has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one (1) or more major life activities. Parents, teachers, and other staff members will meet to discuss all relevant information about your child to determine eligibility for a Section 504 plan. For more information on Section 504, contact the Student Intervention Services Department at (850)833-3108.

### **PARENT RESOURCE:**

[A Parent and Teacher Guide to Section 504](http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070055-504bro.pdf)

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

## What Resources Are Available For Military Families?

The state of Florida participates in the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children, enacted by the Florida Legislature in 2008. The purpose of the compact is to enable member states to uniformly address educational transition issues faced by military families. The compact governs member states in several areas, including school placement, enrollment, records transfer, and graduation for children of active-duty military families. In addition, our school district collaborates with our military bases to assist families through the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP). This program is designed to provide a bridge between the military and the school district for families of students with special needs.

### **PARENT RESOURCE:**

[Military Compact](http://www.mic3.net/) (http://www.mic3.net/)

[Eglin and Hurlburt School Liaison Program](https://www.okaloosaschools.com/files/_site/programs/eglin-hurlburt-slo-brochure-2019.pdf)

(https://www.okaloosaschools.com/files/\_site/programs/eglin-hurlburt-slo-brochure-2019.pdf)

[Military Child Education Coalition](https://www.militarychild.org/) (https://www.militarychild.org/)

## Where Can I Go To Get Early Intervention Services For My Infant Or Toddler?

For screening and evaluation of infants and toddlers suspected of having a developmental delay or disability, you can contact our local Florida Diagnostic Learning Resource System (FDLRS Emerald Coast), which provides Child Find services for Okaloosa County. There is no cost to the families for these services.

**PARENT RESOURCE:**

[FDLRS Emerald Coast](http://www.fdlrsemeraldcoast.org/) (http://www.fdlrsemeraldcoast.org/)

1-888-445-9662

## **What Services Are Available For Students Who Speak A Language Other Than English?**

The current policies and procedures assure the appropriate identification and placement of English Language Learner (ELL) students of special education. The Division of Special Education monitors schools to ensure the appropriate identification and placement of special education students who speak a language other than English at home. For more information on ELL services, contact the Student Intervention Services Department at (850)833-3108.

**PARENT RESOURCE:**

[Okaloosa School District ESOL Department](http://okaloosaschools.com/depts/esol) (http://okaloosaschools.com/depts/esol)

## **Does My Child Qualify for Extended School Year Services?**

Special education and related services provided to students with disabilities beyond the regular 180-day school year are called extended school year (ESY) services. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), school districts must provide ESY services if the student requires those services in order to receive a free appropriate public education. The most common reason why a student receives ESY services is because it is feared that the student will regress (or lose progress) in critical life skills during time off from school.

**PARENT RESOURCE:**

[ESY Resources](http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070098-esyparen.pdf) http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070098-esyparen.pdf

[Determining an Individual Student's Need for Extended School Year Services](http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070094-y2002-5.pdf)

(http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070094-y2002-5.pdf)

## **Who Do I Contact About Services If My Child Is Confined To The Home Or Hospital?**

The Hospital/Homebound Program is available for students who have medical issues that confine them to the home or hospital. Medical authorization signed by a licensed physician is required for participation in this most restrictive program. Based upon the IEP, instruction is provided either in the student's home/hospital room or through a web-based curriculum. Parents must sign an agreement which specifies *their* responsibilities during enrollment in this program. Referral to the Hospital/Homebound Program can be made by the student's doctor, hospital personnel, teacher, counselor, or parent. Eligibility requirements include medical certification that the student is expected to be absent from school a minimum of fifteen (15) days.

**PARENT RESOURCE:**

[Special Programs and Procedures Manual \(Pages 92 – 95\)](#)

([https://www.okaloosaschools.com/files/\\_site/dept/ese/ese-programs-procedures-2018-20.pdf](https://www.okaloosaschools.com/files/_site/dept/ese/ese-programs-procedures-2018-20.pdf))

## **What Is The Florida Standards Alternate Assessment (FSAA)?**

The FSAA is the statewide assessment designed for those students with the most significant cognitive disabilities whose participation in the FSA is not appropriate even with accommodations. The FSAA measures student mastery of the Florida State Standards Access Points with the Performance Task version or measures a student's access toward the Access Points with the Datafolio version. The IEP team is responsible for determining whether students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are eligible to participate in alternate assessment based on FLDOE-set criteria. Parental consent is required if the proposed decision would mean changing your child's instructional program to the Access Points and alternate assessment participation.

### **PARENT RESOURCE:**

[FLDOE Website: Florida Standards Alternate Assessment](http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/assessments/k-12-student-assessment/fl-alternate-assessment.shtml)

(<http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/assessments/k-12-student-assessment/fl-alternate-assessment.shtml>)

## **What are the state's requirements for reporting incidents of seclusion and restraint?**

The 2010 Florida Legislature passed House Bill 1073, creating section 1003.573, Florida Statutes, Use of Seclusion and Restraint on Students with Disabilities. The statute establishes documentation, reporting, and monitoring requirements for the use of seclusion and restraint on students with disabilities. The link below provides information about how the state defines seclusion and restraint and how incidents are monitored.

### **PARENT RESOURCE:**

[Documenting, Reporting, and Monitoring the Use of Seclusion and Restraint on Students with Disabilities](http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7674/urlt/0064544-restraintseclusion-parentbrochure.pdf)

(<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7674/urlt/0064544-restraintseclusion-parentbrochure.pdf>)

## **What Is A Transition IEP Meeting?**

The purpose of transition planning is to provide your child with the services and supports he or she needs to make a successful move into adult life. The IEP team identifies the services that will help your child make this transition. Florida begins to address transition in IEP meeting at age 14 and/or 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The team includes you, your child, and teachers. When developing the IEP to be in effect when your child turns 16, the team may also include representatives of agencies that are likely to provide or pay for services. Agencies can only be invited with your consent or the consent of your son or daughter who has reached the age of majority.

### **PARENT RESOURCE:**

[OCSD/ESE Department Transition Website](https://www.okaloosaschools.com/depts/ese/transition-services)

(<https://www.okaloosaschools.com/depts/ese/transition-services>)

[Secondary Transition Roadmap for Families](http://project10.info/files/TransitionRoadmapFinalFormat4Printing_6.6.16.pdf)

([http://project10.info/files/TransitionRoadmapFinalFormat4Printing\\_6.6.16.pdf](http://project10.info/files/TransitionRoadmapFinalFormat4Printing_6.6.16.pdf))