



AFC'S GUIDE TO

Preschool Special Education Services

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Advocates for Children of New York
Protecting every child's right to learn

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This guide does not constitute legal advice. This guide attempts to summarize existing policies or laws without stating the opinion of AFC. If you have a legal problem, please contact an attorney or advocate.

INTRODUCTION

Preschool special education services are available for children ages 3-5 who have disabilities or developmental delays that impact their ability to learn. These services are provided to eligible children free of charge by the New York City Department of Education (DOE). Special education services can help to address concerns that you have about your preschool child's learning, speech, physical development, or behavior, among other areas.

Your child may be eligible for preschool special education services if they show a significant delay in any of the five areas of development:

- **cognitive** (thinking and learning);
- **communication** (understanding and using language);
- **physical/motor** (vision, hearing, and movement);
- **social/emotional** (getting along with other people); and
- **adaptive/self-help** (independent living skills, such as toileting, eating, and dressing).

If your child is showing developmental delays, you can ask the DOE to evaluate your child to see if they need services. If your child is found to be eligible, the DOE must work with you to create an **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**. An IEP is a plan that discusses your child's abilities and states the services that the DOE will provide to meet your child's unique needs. These services may be provided at home, at your child's preschool or child care center, in a separate special education setting, or in a combination of settings.

For example, some children may receive speech therapy to address a delay in communication, while other children may work with a special education teacher for a set number of hours per week. With these types of services, many children are able to participate in a general education preschool program, such as Head Start, 3-K or Pre-K, alongside children who do not have disabilities. Some children with more significant needs may attend small, structured special education preschool classes taught by special education teachers.

The preschool years are a very important time to provide special education services to children with developmental delays or disabilities. At this early age, children's brains are going through their most important period of development, so this is the time when services can make the biggest impact. This guide explains how you can help to ensure your preschool child receives the services they need to make academic, social, and emotional progress and enter kindergarten prepared to succeed.

Every child develops at a different pace, but experts have put together a [chart of skills](#) that preschool children are typically able to perform at different ages.

OVERVIEW OF PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION

What is the preschool special education program?

The preschool special education program is part of a national law called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The IDEA states that children with disabilities or developmental delays have the right to a **free, appropriate public education (FAPE)**. The law provides services for children ages 0-3 (Early Intervention), ages 3-5 (preschool special education), and ages 5-21 (school-age special education). Preschool special education services must be provided in the **least restrictive environment (LRE)**, which means, to the maximum extent possible, a student who qualifies for special education services should be educated alongside students who do not have disabilities.

Who runs the preschool special education program in NYC?

The NYC Department of Education (DOE) has ten **Committees on Special Education (CSEs)**, each located in a different area of the city. In every CSE, there is a **Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE)** that coordinates special education services for children ages 3-5 who live in that area. See page 33 for the [list of CSE offices](#).

When is my child eligible for preschool special education?

Your child can begin receiving preschool special education services in the year when they turn 3 years old. The exact date of eligibility depends on your child's birthday:

- January 2: If your child's third birthday is between January 1 and June 30.
- July 1: If your child's third birthday is between July 1 and December 31

Some young children may already be receiving services through the Early Intervention (EI) program, which serves children ages 0 to 3 with developmental delays or disabilities. If you want your child to receive special education services after EI ends, you need to refer your child to CPSE. Services will not continue automatically. You should make sure that the referral to CPSE happens well before your child's third birthday in order to avoid a gap in services. See "Transition from Early Intervention" on page 25.

How do I get preschool special education services for my child?

There are four steps in the preschool special education process.

- 1. Referral (page 6):** You should write a letter to your local [Committee on Preschool Special Education](#) (CPSE) to ask for preschool special education evaluations. This letter is called a “referral.”
- 2. Evaluations (page 7):** Once you send the referral letter, the CPSE will send you a list of evaluation agencies so that you can schedule an evaluation of your child. The evaluation is provided at no cost to you. The evaluation will look at your child’s areas of strength, areas of developmental delays, and educational needs. The CPSE will also assign your child’s case to a CPSE administrator who will be your contact person.
- 3. Development of the IEP (page 10):** After the evaluations are done, the CPSE administrator will schedule a meeting with you to determine whether your child is eligible for preschool special education services. If your child is eligible, the team will create an educational plan, called an Individualized Education Program (IEP), which states the special education services that your child has the right to receive to meet your child’s needs. The team will decide whether your child needs a special education class, instruction from a special education teacher, related services, or another type of program.
- 4. Starting IEP Services (page 19):** After the IEP meeting, the CPSE must set up all of the special education services listed on your child’s IEP. This includes finding a special education class for your child if their IEP recommends one and finding therapists to provide any related services on your child’s IEP.

LEARN MORE:

To learn more about special education for children ages 5-21, please see AFC’s *Guide to Special Education*, available on our website, in [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Arabic](#), [Bengali](#) and [Chinese](#).



STEP ONE: REFERRAL

If you are concerned about your preschool child’s development and you are interested in an evaluation for special education services, you should write a letter to your local Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE). This letter is called a referral.

Where do I send the referral letter?

The CPSE is part of the Committee on Special Education (CSE). There are 10 CSE offices, and each one covers a different area of the city. You should address the referral letter to the chairperson of the CSE office that covers the area where you live. See page 33 for the contact information for each CSE office and the name of the chairperson. To find out which CSE office covers your address, you can either:

- Call 311; or
- Visit the DOE’s [School Search website](#). Enter your child’s home address and click “Search.” The website will give you the zoned school for your address. Look below the name of the school to see which school district the school is located in; that is your district. Each CSE office covers several school districts. See page 33 to find out which [CSE office](#) covers your district.

What should I write in the referral letter?

You should state that you are concerned about your child’s development and are requesting a preschool special education evaluation. You should describe any specific areas of concern, and you should state any services your child has received in the past. You should provide your full contact information, including an address and telephone number where the CPSE can reach you. If you speak a language other than English, you should state your preferred language.

If your child is currently receiving Early Intervention (EI) services, you can ask your EI service coordinator to help you write this letter. You should state in the letter that your child is receiving EI services. See “Transitioning from Early Intervention” on page 25.

TIP

We recommend that you send the referral letter using a method where you have proof of the date the CSE received it. You can email, fax the letter and keep the fax confirmation sheet, hand deliver the letter to the CSE office and have a staff member stamp a copy with the date, or mail the letter using the post office’s return receipt requested service.

STEP TWO: EVALUATIONS

Once the CSE office receives your referral letter, the CPSE should immediately send you a packet in your preferred language. The packet will include: a notice that the referral was received, a list of approved preschool special education evaluation agencies in NYC, a “consent for initial evaluation” form, a housing questionnaire to determine if a family lives in temporary housing and may need additional support, the DOE [Family Guide to Preschool Special Education Services](#), a flyer with information about DOE early childhood programs, and information about your rights. The CPSE will also assign a **CPSE administrator** who will be your contact person throughout the process. If you do not receive this packet within a week after sending the referral, you should email or call the CSE office for help. Once you receive the packet, you should set up an evaluation of your child.

How do I arrange the evaluation?

You have the right to choose an evaluation agency from a list of agencies approved by the state. You should review the list of approved agencies included in the CPSE packet. An [evaluation agency list](#) is also available online at (look for MDE or multi-disciplinary evaluations). While most of the approved evaluation sites are private agencies, each CSE office also has a preschool assessment team that can evaluate your child. You should choose an agency from the list and schedule an appointment as soon as possible. The evaluations will be done at no cost to you. If you would like assistance with choosing an evaluation site, you may contact your CPSE administrator.

If your child’s home language is a language other than English, your child should receive a bilingual evaluation. The evaluation will be conducted both in English and in your child’s home language by professionals who understand both languages. Contact your CPSE administrator to help you find an agency that can do a bilingual evaluation. It is **not** your responsibility to find someone to interpret for you and your child.

When choosing an evaluation agency, you should ask how quickly the agency can complete your child’s evaluations. At your first appointment, you will be asked to sign the consent form agreeing for the agency to evaluate your child. The DOE must hold an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting within 60 calendar days from the date you sign the consent form. Since this timeline does not start until you sign the consent form, it is important to schedule your first evaluation appointment as soon as possible.

What does it mean to consent for evaluations?

You must give permission in writing before the evaluation agency can evaluate your child. This is called **informed consent**. Informed consent means that the agency has fully informed you, in your preferred language, of all relevant information and rights. Your consent must be voluntary and in writing and can be revoked (taken back) at any time. If you as a parent do not consent to evaluations, special education evaluations cannot begin, and the CPSE will take no further action.

By consenting to evaluations, you are not consenting to special education services. You can have your child evaluated and choose not to have your child receive special education services.

You have the right to end the evaluation process at any time by writing to the CPSE and informing them that you wish to revoke your consent to evaluate your child. Once you choose to stop the evaluation, your child's CPSE case will be closed automatically.

What evaluations will my child receive?

Before the evaluation begins, the evaluation agency should give you information about the types of tests that can be conducted and ask for your input. If you have concerns about a particular area of your child's development, such as speech and language or physical development, you should let the agency know and request an evaluation in that area.

If your child is being evaluated for the first time, the agency will conduct an initial set of evaluations that will include:

- Psychological evaluation (IQ and academic testing);
- Social history (an interview with the parent to learn about the family and child);
- Physical evaluation (a medical form that families often have their doctor complete);
- Observation of your child.



OTHER POSSIBLE EVALUATIONS INCLUDE:

- Speech and language evaluation
- Physical/occupational evaluation to assess motor (movement) development
- Functional Behavioral Assessment if your child's behavior interferes with learning
- Auditory processing evaluation
- Hearing or vision exam

Can I submit an evaluation from a private doctor or evaluator?

Yes, the CPSE must consider all information about your child, including information you provide. If you have evaluations from a private doctor or evaluator that you would like the CPSE to review, you should show them to the evaluation agency and send them to your CPSE administrator. If your child receives Early Intervention (EI) services, with your permission, your EI service coordinator should send EI evaluations and records to the CPSE. The CPSE will sometimes accept private evaluations or recent EI evaluations instead of having an evaluation agency conduct new evaluations. Other times, the CPSE will decide that the evaluations you provide are not sufficient and will still have an evaluation agency conduct new evaluations. Either way, the CSPE must consider any material you provide.



What happens after my child has been evaluated?

After your child has been evaluated, the evaluations will be given to your child's CPSE administrator, who will review the evaluations and schedule an IEP meeting. You should receive copies of all evaluations along with a summary report in your preferred language. If your IEP meeting has been scheduled and you have not received copies of the evaluation and a summary report, you should ask your CPSE administrator and evaluation agency for a copy so that you can review the evaluations before the meeting.

What if I disagree with the evaluation?

If you are not satisfied with the evaluation, you can request that the DOE pay for an independent evaluation done by a different evaluation agency. An independent evaluation, unlike a private evaluation, is paid for by the DOE, and the DOE has a right to see the results. If you want your child to receive an independent evaluation, you should make your request in writing to your CPSE administrator. The DOE must either agree to your request or file an impartial hearing to prove that the evaluations done by the first agency were appropriate. If the DOE fails to respond to your request for an independent evaluation within a reasonable amount of time, you can file an impartial hearing request to ask the DOE to pay for an independent evaluation. See "Due Process Rights" on page 30.

STEP THREE: DEVELOPMENT OF THE IEP

After the evaluations are complete, your CPSE administrator will send you a notice with the time and date for a meeting. You should receive written notice at least five days before the meeting. At the meeting, the team will review your child's evaluations and decide if your child is eligible for preschool special education services. If your child is eligible, the team will create an **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**. The IEP is a legal document that describes your child's strengths and needs, states the type of special education services that your child has the right to receive, and sets out goals for the progress that your child will make with those services.

When will the IEP meeting be held?

The IEP meeting must occur within 60 calendar days of the date that you sign the consent form agreeing to your child's evaluation. If the meeting has not been scheduled by this time, you should contact your CPSE administrator. If you do not hear back from your CPSE administrator, you should call the CSE chair for your region. See page 33 for the contact information for each [CSE office](#). If that still does not resolve the problem, you can contact the DOE's Special Education Hotline at 718-935-2007 or specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov. You can also contact Advocates for Children.

TIPS FOR PREPARING FOR YOUR CHILD'S IEP MEETING

- Review all of your child's evaluations, observations, reports, and documents. Consider which parts of the evaluations you think are the most important, which parts you agree with, and which parts do not seem accurate.
- Review the eligibility criteria. See page 12.
- Be prepared to discuss your child's strengths and needs and any concerns you have. Make sure you are able to describe your child's delays in detail and how they affect their academic, social and emotional, and physical development.
- Review the available programs and services and think about which ones you want your child to receive. See pages 14-17 for descriptions of programs and services.
- Gather information from people who interact with your child, such as preschool teachers or doctors, that may be helpful in explaining your child's needs.
- Think about people who should attend the IEP meeting and arrange for them to attend with you or participate by telephone. You should make sure that your child's preschool teacher is planning to participate.

Who will attend my child's IEP meeting?

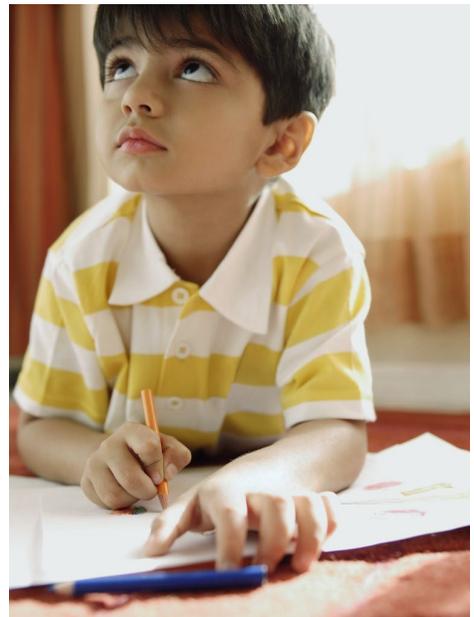
The team at your child's preschool IEP meeting must include:

- You, the parent;
- The CPSE administrator, who will lead the meeting;
- At least one special education teacher or related service provider (after your child begins receiving preschool special education services, at least one of the special education teachers or service providers who works with *your child* must participate in your child's IEP meetings);
- At least one general education teacher if general education is being considered for your child (if your child participates in a general education public preschool class, such as 3-K, Pre-K, EarlyLearn, or Head Start, at least one of *your child's* teachers must participate in your child's IEP meetings);
- A representative of the agency that did the evaluations or someone who can interpret the results of evaluations;
- Your child's Early Intervention service coordinator if your child is transitioning from EI (at your request);
- An interpreter, if your preferred language is not English.

You can also invite any other people to participate in the IEP meeting. For example, you can invite a staff member from your child's preschool, a friend, family member, advocate, Early Intervention service provider, or doctor.

Most IEP meetings are now done by phone. Feel free to ask everyone to introduce themselves at the start of the meeting so that you know who is participating.

If your child is transitioning from Early Intervention to preschool special education, you should tell your EI service coordinator and CPSE administrator if you would like your child's EI service coordinator to participate in the IEP meeting. If your preferred language is not English, you may want to make sure that the CPSE administrator knows that you need the CPSE to provide an interpreter for the meeting.

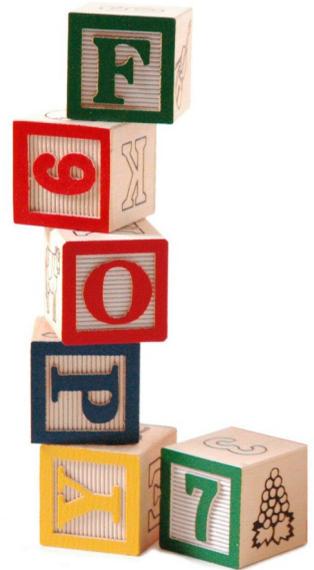


How will the team determine if my child is eligible for services?

At the IEP meeting, the team will review your child's evaluations. Your child will be eligible for preschool special education services if the evaluations demonstrate that they have a **developmental delay or disability** that impacts their ability to learn.

Your child may have a delay in one of the following functional areas of development:

- **Cognitive:** skills related to thinking, learning, and interacting with the environment.
- **Communication:** skills related to speaking, understanding, and using language and gestures.
- **Physical/Motor:** skills related to vision, hearing, and movement, such as crawling, walking, using hands and fingers, and eye-hand coordination.
- **Social/Emotional:** skills related to getting along with others, such as awareness of others, ability to express feelings, and imitating other children.
- **Adaptive/Self-Help:** skills related to independence, such as toileting, eating, and dressing.



You may want to review this [chart of the skills](#) that preschool children typically demonstrate in each of these areas at different ages .

Your child will be eligible for preschool special education services if they have a **developmental delay** that affects the child's ability to learn. The delay must be:

- A 12-month delay in one of the functional areas listed above; **or**
- A 33% delay in one functional area or a 25% delay in two functional areas; **or**
- A score of at least 2.0 standard deviations below the mean in one functional area or a score of at least 1.5 standard deviations below the mean in two functional areas (as long as appropriate standardized instruments are used).

Your child will also be eligible for preschool special education services they meet one of the following classifications of **disability** under the law that affect the child's educational performance: autism, deafness, deaf-blindness, hearing impairment, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, traumatic brain injury, or visual impairment.

If your child meets one of these criteria, your child is eligible for preschool special education services. On the IEP, your child's eligibility classification will be listed as "preschool student with a disability."

What happens if the IEP team decides that my child is not eligible for preschool special education services?

If the IEP team reviews the evaluations and determines that your child is not eligible for preschool special education services, the CPSE will provide you with information regarding why your child is ineligible.

If you disagree with the CPSE's decision that your child is not eligible for services, you may request mediation and/or an impartial hearing to resolve the disagreement. See "Due Process Rights" on page 30. You may also request an independent evaluation. See page 9.

Your child may be eligible for a general education public preschool program such as an EarlyLearn, Head Start, child care, 3-K or Pre-K program. See page 23.

If my child is found eligible for preschool special education services, what does the IEP have to include?

If the team decides at the IEP meeting that your child is eligible for preschool special education services, the team will create an IEP that must include the following:

- A description of your child's current abilities, needs, and evaluation results in the areas of academic achievement, social development, and physical development.
- Annual, measurable goals and short-term, measurable objectives or benchmarks that will be used to evaluate your child's progress.
- A description of how and when you will receive reports on your child's progress.
- Information about the preschool special education class, services, and/or supports your child will receive. See pages 14-17.



What types of programs can my child's IEP recommend?

A range of special education programs and services are available to eligible preschool children. These services fall along a continuum from less restrictive to more restrictive. Less restrictive programs allow children to receive their services alongside preschoolers who do not have IEPs. More restrictive programs are available to children with more severe disabilities who require more specialized, supportive services alongside other children who also have IEPs. The law requires that children be educated in the least restrictive environment that is appropriate to meet the child's needs.

Preschool children can receive the following types of programs (listed from less restrictive to more restrictive):

→ **Related Services**

Related services include speech therapy, physical therapy (PT), occupational therapy (OT), counseling, vision and hearing education services, orientation and mobility services, school health services, and parent counseling and training. These services are provided by licensed professionals who work with your child either one-on-one or in a small group. The services may be provided at your child's 3-K, Pre-K, preschool, or child care center; in your home; or, if appropriate based on your child's specific needs, at a therapist's office. At the IEP meeting, the team should decide which related services your child needs, the number of sessions per week, the length of each session, the size of the group, and the location where the service will take place (usually your child's preschool). Preschool children may receive related services as their only special education program, or they may receive related services in combination with any of the programs below.

→ **Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT)**

A SEIT is a certified special education teacher who comes to work with your child on academic, emotional, and social skills either one-on-one or in a group. SEIT services may be provided at your child's 3-K, Pre-K, preschool, or child care center or in your home. If your child's IEP provides SEIT services, it will state the number of hours a SEIT will work with your child each week, the size of the group, and the location where the SEIT services will take place. An IEP team may also recommend "indirect SEIT" services, which allow a special education teacher to work with your child's 3-K, Pre-K, preschool, or child care teacher to change the learning environment and instructional methods to meet your child's needs.



→ ***Special Class in an Integrated Setting (SCIS)***

A special class in an integrated setting is a preschool class that includes preschool students who have IEPs and preschool students who do not have IEPs. This classroom must include at least one special education teacher and one paraprofessional, and may have additional staff members. This class can be provided for the full day (at least five hours) or for half a day. Some of these classes are in community-based preschool programs, while others are in DOE public schools or DOE Pre-K Centers (programs run by the DOE that only serve 3- and 4-year-olds).

→ ***Special Class (SC)***

A special class is a preschool class in which all the students are preschoolers who have IEPs. These classes are often smaller than a typical preschool classroom and have a lower student to teacher ratio. If your child's IEP recommends a special class, it must state the student to teacher ratio. For example, a 12:1:2 ratio means the class has no more than 12 students, at least one special education teacher, and at least two paraprofessionals. The lower the student to teacher ratio, the more restrictive the class is considered. This class can be provided for the full day or for half a day.

Most of these classes are in community-based preschool programs, though some are in DOE public schools or DOE Pre-K Centers (programs run by the DOE that only serve 3- and 4-year-olds).

→ ***Dual Recommendation***

Preschoolers with significant needs may receive a dual recommendation, which means the child is recommended for a special class with related services provided at school, as well as additional services after school, because the child needs these services to make educational progress. For example, the child may be in a 6:1:2 preschool special class and receive 30 minutes of speech therapy twice a week in school, and then also receive 30 minutes of speech therapy and five hours of SEIT services per week after school. The IEP will state the type of services, the number of sessions per week, the length of each session, and the group size of the services both in and out of school.

→ ***Residential Placement***

A residential placement is a special education program that is provided for a minimum of five hours per day, five days per week by a preschool special education program at a site where children receive care 24 hours per day. This program is for children whose needs are so intensive that they require 24-hour attention.



What other supports or services can the IEP recommend?

There are a number of other supports and services that the IEP can recommend in combination with any of the programs listed on pages 14-15. During the IEP meeting, you should ask for any of these services if you feel they are appropriate for your child:

- **PARAPROFESSIONAL:** An aide (not a teacher) assigned to work one-on-one or in a small group with a student to meet individual management needs, such as behavior management or health needs.
- **ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY:** Equipment and services that help your child move or communicate. Examples include a communication device, FM unit, or computer access. [Assistive technology services](#) are also available to help your child, your child's teachers, and you, the parents, learn to use the device. If you think your child needs assistive technology, you can ask your CPSE administrator for an assistive technology evaluation.
- **BILINGUAL SERVICES:** If your child speaks a language other than English, the IEP team can recommend bilingual services. For example, if your child is recommended for a special class, the IEP can state that your child needs a bilingual class where the teacher will work with your child in your child's home language and in English. Or, if your child is recommended for speech therapy, the IEP can state that your child needs to receive speech therapy from a certified bilingual speech therapist who speaks your child's home language.
- **TRANSPORTATION:** If your child's IEP recommends a special class in an integrated setting or a special class, then the CPSE must give your child transportation to get to the preschool class. If your child's IEP recommends related services, and those services will be provided at a location other than your child's preschool or home (i.e., at a related services agency), then the CPSE must give your child transportation or must give you a MetroCard or carfare or reimburse you for transportation costs so that you can bring your child to the agency. The IEP should state that transportation will be provided. See page 20.

Are services available during the summer?

Most preschool students receive the services on their IEPs for 10 months, during the school year (September to June). Children may be eligible for a 12-month program in which their services continue in July and part of August if they have intensive needs and would *substantially* regress (lose skills they have gained) without summer services. If you think your child needs summer services, you should ask for these services at your child's IEP meeting. You may want to bring documentation from your child's teacher, doctor, or evaluator explaining how your child would substantially regress without summer services.

What if I disagree with the services listed on my child's IEP?

At the IEP meeting, you should explain what programs and services are appropriate for your child and why you feel that your child needs those services to make progress. However, you may disagree with the CPSE administrator or with other members of the IEP team about what services your child needs. For example, you may think your child needs SEIT services to make adequate progress, but the team may not agree to include SEIT services on the IEP. You should explain your disagreement at the meeting. After the meeting, when your CPSE administrator gives you a form listing your child's services and asking for your permission to start services, you should write a statement on the form explaining your disagreement. You have the right to file for mediation or an impartial hearing to resolve the dispute. See "Due Process Rights" on page 30.

SUPPORTS AVAILABLE TO ADDRESS BEHAVIORAL CHALLENGES

A variety of special education services are available to help preschool children whose behavior interferes with their learning. For example, your child may be disrupting class, refusing to participate in activities, or acting in a way that poses a risk of harm to themselves or others. These behaviors may be due to a disability or to delays in social/emotional development. In many cases, children can receive behavioral supports on their IEP that allow them to participate in a general education preschool program.

When a child's behavior interferes with learning, the evaluation agency should conduct a **Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)** to identify what types of behaviors the child is exhibiting, when the child exhibits those behaviors, and what triggers those behaviors. If you have concerns about your child's behavior, you should mention it in your referral letter to the CPSE (page 6), and, when you meet with the evaluation agency, you should ask the agency to conduct an FBA (page 8). The IEP team can then use the FBA to create a **Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)**. The BIP describes the strategies that will be used to help the child change their behavior.

The IEP team can also recommend "support for school personnel" on the IEP, such as training provided by the DOE to Pre-K staff in how to address your child's behaviors.

Many of the programs and services discussed on pages 14-16 can be included on a child's IEP in order to address behavioral concerns. For example:

- Counseling as a related service
- SEIT instruction and indirect SEIT services
- Paraprofessional to address behavior management needs
- Special class in an integrated setting or special class (for children with significant behavioral challenges who need a smaller, more structured class)

When will my child's IEP be reviewed?

The CPSE must hold an IEP meeting at least once every year while your child is receiving preschool special education services. Your CPSE administrator should contact you to schedule the annual review meeting. At the meeting, the team will discuss your child's progress and decide whether your child's program or services should be changed.

In addition to this annual review meeting, you have the right to request a new IEP meeting at any time. For example, you can ask for a new IEP meeting if you feel that your child is not making adequate progress with their current IEP services. You can also request a new evaluation as long as it has been more than one year since your child's last evaluation. To request a new IEP meeting or a new evaluation, you should submit a letter to your CPSE administrator. You should explain why you feel that your child needs a new evaluation or new IEP meeting. See "Referral" on page 6 for instructions on how to submit the letter. Once the CPSE receives your letter, your administrator should arrange new evaluations and schedule a new IEP meeting to discuss the results and to determine whether the services on your child's IEP should be changed.

Can the CPSE end the services on my child's IEP?

The CPSE may determine that your child is no longer eligible for preschool special education services. This is called **declassification**. Before declassifying your child and ending their services, the CPSE must conduct a new evaluation.

The CPSE must then hold an IEP meeting and change your child's IEP to "No Disability." This decision must be based on a determination that your child has made progress and no longer demonstrates developmental delays that make them eligible for preschool special education services. For more information on eligibility, see page 12. At an IEP meeting, the CPSE can also end a particular service, such as speech therapy, if your child no longer needs that service.



If you disagree with the decision to end your child's services, you have the right to file for mediation or a hearing. See "Due Process Rights" on page 30.

STEP FOUR: STARTING IEP SERVICES

After the team develops your child's IEP, the CPSE is responsible for starting all the services that are recommended on the IEP. The IEP is a legal document, and your child has a right to receive all of the services on it.

After the IEP meeting, the CPSE administrator will ask you to sign a form agreeing to the services listed on your child's IEP. If you agree with the services, you should sign and return the form so that your child can begin those services. Your child cannot receive services unless you give consent by signing the form.

If you decide that you do not want your child to receive any special education services, then you should write on the form that you do not want your child to receive any services. The CPSE will close your child's case. If you change your mind later, you can send a new referral letter to the CPSE. See page 6.

If you want your child to receive services that are different from the services listed on the IEP, you may want to write a statement on the form explaining your disagreement. If you agree that your child should receive the services on the IEP, but think that your child needs additional services as well, you can sign consent for the IEP services to begin and note on the form that you think your child needs more services. For example, if your child's IEP recommends speech therapy and you agree that your child needs speech therapy but think that your child also needs SEIT services, you can sign consent for the speech therapy on your child's IEP to begin and note on the form that you think your child needs SEIT services as well. You can ask for a new IEP meeting, mediation, or an impartial hearing to address your disagreement. See "Due Process Rights" on page 30.

When will my child receive the services on their IEP?

Your child's services should start as soon as possible after the IEP meeting. The CPSE administrator must arrange for the services to begin as soon as possible, but no later than 60 school days (around three months) from the date that you signed the evaluation consent form during your first appointment at the evaluation agency. The start date should be listed on your child's IEP.



If my child's IEP recommends only related services, how will the CPSE arrange those services?

It is the CPSE's responsibility to assign related services providers, such as speech therapists, occupational therapists, or physical therapists, to provide the related services listed on your child's IEP. Most preschool children whose IEPs are for related services only or related services and SEIT will receive these services through an agency that has a contract with the CPSE. If your child is in 3-K or Pre-K at a public school, Department of Education providers working at the school may provide the services. (If your child is in a special class in an integrated setting or a special class, they will receive related services through their preschool special education program.) When appropriate, services should take place at your child's 3-K, Pre-K, preschool, child care center, or home. The location should be discussed at your child's IEP meeting and written on the summary page of your child's IEP.

The CPSE uses the following procedure to assign providers to preschool children who are receiving related services (or related services and SEIT) only:

- If your child is in 3-K or Pre-K at a public school, providers working at the school will provide services if possible. If not, the CPSE will use the process below.
- The CPSE will send your child's case to the primary agency in the borough where you live and give the agency five days to assign a related services provider to your child.
- If the primary agency does not have a provider available, the CPSE will send your child's case to a "second tier" agency. The agency will have up to five days to assign a provider.
- If the second tier agency does not have a provider, the CPSE will send your child's case to a "third tier" agency. The agency will have up to five days to assign a provider.
- If none of the three tiers of contracted agencies can assign a provider by the deadline, the CPSE will select and sign a contract with an independent provider.

Will my child receive transportation to their related services?

Your child should receive related services in the "least restrictive environment" appropriate for your child. For most children, this is the child's 3-K, Pre-K, preschool, child care, or home. However, if the IEP team decides that your child needs to get services at a related services agency or if the DOE is not able to find a therapist to go to your child's preschool, child care, or home, then your child has a right to transportation provided by the CPSE. For example, if your child gets speech therapy at the speech therapist's office, your child has the right to transportation to and from the office. If you can take your child to the speech therapist's office, the CPSE will reimburse you for the amount you spend on MetroCards or taxi/car service. You should ask your CPSE administrator to help you complete the [transportation reimbursement request](#). If you cannot afford to wait for the DOE to reimburse you, you should ask your CPSE administrator to give you MetroCards in advance or arrange taxi/car service for you. If you cannot bring your child to the related services agency, the CPSE must arrange transportation for your child.

What should I do if there is a problem with my child's related services?

It is the CPSE's responsibility to assign related services providers to your child. You have the right for your child to receive all of the related services on their IEP in a timely manner and at the appropriate location.

If your child is not receiving the related services on their IEP, you should first contact your child's CPSE administrator or the CPSE community coordinators. If the CPSE administrator does not resolve the problem, you can contact the [CSE chairperson](#). See page 33 for contact information. You can also e-mail the Department of Education at relatedservices@schools.nyc.gov. You should include your child's name, NYC ID number, date of birth, a description of the services that your child is not receiving, and a description of your attempts to contact the CPSE or CSE. You should feel free to copy preschool@afcnyc.org so that Advocates for Children is aware of your concern.

You can also send an e-mail to relatedservices@schools.nyc.gov and copy preschool@afcnyc.org if there is a problem with the location of your child's related services. For example, if the related services provider states that you must bring your child to a related services office during the day, but your child is in a full-day preschool program, you can ask for a provider who can come to your child's preschool. You can also use these e-mail addresses if you are having difficulty getting transportation reimbursement, MetroCards, or other transportation arrangements.

If your child misses sessions of their services because the CPSE does not arrange for the services to start on time, you can ask for make-up services. You can ask your CPSE administrator for make-up services or e-mail relatedservices@schools.nyc.gov and copy preschool@afcnyc.org. You should state what types of services are listed on your child's IEP, when those services were scheduled to start, how many weeks your child missed, and what steps you took to contact your CPSE or CSE to resolve the problem. If the DOE does not agree to provide make-up services, you have the right to file for mediation or an impartial hearing. See "Due Process Rights" on page 30.



LEARN MORE:

For more information, see the DOE's [Family Guide to Preschool Special Education Services](#).

If my child's IEP recommends SEIT services, how will the CPSE arrange that program?

The CPSE is responsible for assigning your child to an agency that provides Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT) services if SEIT is recommended on your child's IEP. The SEIT agency will assign a provider to work with your child at your child's 3-K, Pre-K, preschool, child care center, or home. A list of state-approved [SEIT agencies](#) is available online (see the SEIS column).



If my child's IEP recommends a special class in an integrated setting or special class, how will the CPSE arrange that program?

The CPSE is responsible for finding a placement in the type of special class (SC) or special class in an integrated setting (SCIS) recommended on your child's IEP. The special class must be in a preschool program approved by the New York State Education Department. Most of these special classes are in preschools run by community-based organizations. Some of these special classes are in DOE public schools or DOE Pre-K Centers (programs run by the DOE that only serve 3- and 4-year-olds). A list of [state-approved community-based preschool special education programs](#) is available online (see SC or SCIS columns).

If your child has been recommended for a special class and you do not yet have a placement, you should contact your CPSE administrator. If that does not resolve the problem, you should contact the [CSE chairperson](#) and Advocates for Children. See pages 33 and 34 for contact information.

Can I end my child's preschool special education services?

Yes. You have the right to end special education services for your child at any time. To end preschool special education services, you should write a letter to your CPSE administrator stating that you no longer want your child to get any IEP services. The CPSE will no longer perform evaluations or hold IEP meetings for your child, and your child will no longer receive preschool special education services. If you end your child's special education services and later change your mind, you may write a new referral letter and your child will be reevaluated. See page 6.

OTHER PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

There are several types of public preschool programs in New York City. These programs serve children with and without disabilities. You are responsible for arranging for your child to enroll in one of these programs. The CPSE does not run these programs and will not arrange these programs for you. If your child's IEP recommends related services or SEIT services, your child can receive these services at the preschool program that you find for your child. (If your child's IEP recommends a preschool special class or special class in an integrated setting, then the CPSE will arrange your child's placement. See page 22. If your child's IEP recommends a *half-day* special class or special class in an integrated setting, your child may participate in EarlyLearn, 3-K, or Pre-K for the rest of the day.)

This section includes a brief description of different types of Department of Education (DOE) public preschool programs that you can consider for your child.

EarlyLearn (Head Start and Child Care)

[EarlyLearn](#) provides free or low-cost full-day preschool programs to children from income-eligible families from the age of 6 weeks until they enter kindergarten. Programs are available at hundreds of community-based preschool centers throughout the city as well as in home-based family child care settings.

Children may be eligible for an EarlyLearn program based on their family's income and/or their family's reason for needing child care. The EarlyLearn program of your choice will help you fill out an application and go over eligibility requirements and documentation. If you receive public assistance, you should apply for child care at your job center. If your child is undocumented, you may not be eligible for traditional child care seats and should consider applying for [Promise NYC](#).

Some EarlyLearn programs are for children who are eligible for Head Start, which serves children ages 3-5. Children may be eligible for Head Start if their parents have no income or low incomes, if they are homeless or living in temporary housing, or if they are in foster care. Other EarlyLearn programs are for children who are eligible for NYC's public child care program. Children may be eligible for child care if their parents receive public assistance, have low incomes and need child care because of their jobs or education, or have active cases with the city's Administration for Children's Services (ACS). Some EarlyLearn programs serve children eligible for both Head Start and for child care.

For more information or to find EarlyLearn centers near you, call **311**, visit the DOE [EarlyLearn website](#), or [search the online directory at MySchools.nyc](#).

3-K and Pre-K for All

The DOE also runs [3-K](#) and [Pre-K for All](#), free full-day (6 hours and 20 minutes) preschool programs. Unlike the EarlyLearn programs, all NYC families are eligible to apply for 3-K and Pre-K, regardless of income. 3-K and Pre-K classes are located in public schools, DOE Pre-K Centers, charter schools, and community-based organizations called New York City Early Education Centers (NYCEECs).

Children are eligible to start 3-K in September of the year in which they turn three and Pre-K in September of the year in which they turn four. The DOE runs a central application process in the winter before the start of the school year. You can apply online at [MySchools.nyc](#), over the phone, or in person at a DOE [Family Welcome Center](#).

There is a Pre-K seat available for every four-year-old child who lives in New York City! If you apply by the deadline, the DOE will tell you in May of your child's placement for the upcoming September. Unfortunately, because seats are limited, not every family who applies to 3-K will receive a placement offer.

For information on the DOE application process review Advocates for Children's [Early Childhood Education Programs: A Guide to Public Education Programs for 3 and 4 Year Olds](#).

If you are not sure what type of preschool class your child will need for next year, you should feel free to apply to 3-K or Pre-K to save your child a seat. If the IEP team decides that your child needs a preschool special class or special class in an integrated setting, the CPSE will find a program that has the class listed on your child's IEP.



For more information on finding a preschool or child care program, you can use the [MyCity tool](#) or contact the Child Care Resource and Referral Consortium. See contact information on page 32.

TRANSITION FROM EARLY INTERVENTION

The Early Intervention (EI) program serves children from birth to age 3 who have developmental delays or disabilities. The EI program is run by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Many children who receive EI services are eligible for preschool special education services from the Department of Education once they reach the age of 3. EI and preschool special education are separate programs run by separate city agencies. Therefore, you must go through a transition process if you want your child to receive preschool special education services after EI ends.

When does my child transition from EI to CPSE?

Your child becomes eligible to transition from EI to preschool special education services during the year that they turn 3. At least six months before your child turns 3, your child's EI service coordinator should help you begin the transition process.

EI services are scheduled to end on a child's third birthday. If the CPSE holds an IEP meeting **before** your child's third birthday and finds your child eligible for preschool special education services, you can choose to extend your child's EI services:

- Until August 31st: if your child's third birthday is between January 1 and August 31.
- Until December 31st: If your child's third birthday is between September 1 and December 31.

For example, if your child's birthday is on April 10, you should make sure that the IEP meeting occurs before April 10. If your child is found eligible for CPSE services, the team must create a complete IEP for your child. You can choose to allow EI services to end and start CPSE services right away. Or, because your child's birthday is between January 1 and August 31, you can choose to continue EI services until August 31 and start the CPSE services in September. If you choose to extend EI, the CPSE should still complete an IEP and issue a form stating what services your child will receive starting in September.

TIP

It may be very helpful to have the option to extend your child's EI services. There are often waitlists for preschool special education programs, and it is often easier to find a spot in September rather than in the middle of the school year. Therefore, extending your child's EI services can help avoid a gap in services. In order to have this choice, you should make sure to start the CPSE referral process early enough that the IEP meeting occurs before your child's third birthday.

How is my child referred from EI to CPSE?

No later than 90-120 calendar days (around three to four months) before your child will become eligible for preschool special education, EI will notify your local CPSE office in writing that your child is aging out of EI, unless you object to such notification. This notification is not the same as a referral. For the dates when your child becomes eligible for preschool special education, see page 4.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your child is referred to the CPSE for an evaluation and IEP meeting. See “Referral” on page 6. You can either submit the referral letter to the CSE in writing or give consent for your EI service coordinator to refer your child. You should make sure the referral to CPSE happens at least three to four months before your child’s third birthday so your child does not experience a gap in services. See page 25.

What is the EI transition plan and transition conference?

EI must create a written transition plan for every child transitioning out of EI. The EI Official Designee should hold a transition conference at least 90 calendar days (around three months) before your child will become eligible for preschool special education services. The conference should include you (the parent), your EI service coordinator, your EI official designee, and your CPSE administrator. At the conference, the team will discuss the process for getting preschool special education services and develop the transition plan.



With your consent, the transition conference may be combined with the EI Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP) review meeting that occurs closest to your child’s second birthday. The transition conference can also be combined with the initial CPSE meeting if it occurs at least 90 days before your child is eligible for preschool special education.

EI may ask you to waive the transition conference. However, you have the right to have the conference and you do not need to waive it, even if you know that you want your child referred to the CPSE or even if your child has already been referred to the CPSE. The conference may provide you with additional information about CPSE and other preschool services and can help make sure your child does not experience a gap in services.

How can my EI service coordinator help me with the preschool special education process?

You can ask your EI service coordinator for help with the CPSE referral process. For example, your service coordinator can help you write the letter referring your child to the CPSE, or, with your consent, can submit the referral for you. See “Referral” on page 6. Your service coordinator can also help you follow up on your referral letter and arrange an evaluation. See “Evaluations” on page 7. The agency providing EI services to your child may be an approved CPSE evaluation site.

With your consent, your EI service coordinator should send all your child’s EI records (IFSPs and evaluations) to the CPSE. The CPSE may decide to use your child’s EI evaluations rather than conducting new evaluations. However, if your child’s strengths and needs have changed, you may want to ask for new evaluations. Your EI service coordinator should also attend your child’s first IEP meeting at your request.

If your child’s third birthday is approaching and the evaluation site has not completed the evaluations or the CPSE has not scheduled an IEP meeting, you should ask your EI service coordinator for help. If that does not resolve the problem, you should call your CPSE administrator, the [CSE chairperson](#), or Advocates for Children. For contact information, see page 33. You can also email the DOE at eitopreschool@schools.nyc.gov and specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov. Feel free to copy AFC at preschool@afcnyc.org on your email to the DOE. All services will end on your child’s third birthday unless an IEP meeting is held before then and your child is found eligible for preschool special education services. See page 25.

If your child is not eligible for preschool special education services or you do not want your child to receive preschool special education services, your EI service coordinator should give you information about other preschool programs. See pages 23-24.

LEARN MORE:

For more information on EI, see Advocates for Children’s [Guide to Early Intervention](#).



TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

An important goal of the preschool special education program is to prepare a child to enter and succeed in kindergarten. Children enter kindergarten in September of the calendar year when they turn five years old. Children who will be entering kindergarten in September will begin the transition process during the previous school year. The process includes the following steps:

Kindergarten Orientation Meetings

In the fall of the year before your child will enter kindergarten, the Department of Education (DOE) will send you a mailing inviting you to attend online [Kindergarten Orientation Meetings](#). At these meetings, the DOE will provide information about the transition to kindergarten for families of students with disabilities.

Notice of Referral

In the winter of the year before your child will enter kindergarten, the DOE notify you that the CPSE has referred your child to your district's Committee on Special Education (CSE) for school-aged children. The notice will give you the contact information for the DOE representative who will oversee your child's transition. Usually, the DOE representative is a psychologist or social worker at a local school or a CSE office.

Evaluations

The DOE representative will review your child's file, including progress reports from your child's preschool service providers, and then decide whether new assessments are needed. You can submit any information you would like the DOE representative to consider. You can also make a written request to the DOE representative if you want a new evaluation for your child.

IEP Meeting

The DOE representative will schedule a kindergarten IEP meeting (also called the "Turning 5" meeting). These meetings usually take place between February and May either at a school or a CSE office. At the meeting, the team will decide whether your child is eligible for kindergarten special education services. If your child is eligible, the team will create an IEP, which includes a classification of your child's disability and a recommendation for the program and services your child will receive in kindergarten.

Placement

The majority of kindergarten students with IEPs will attend neighborhood (non-specialized) schools. Therefore, families should participate in the [DOE's Kindergarten Admissions Process](#) for students with and without disabilities. Between December and January of the year before your child will enter kindergarten, you can complete a central application online, over the phone, or at a DOE office. In most districts, your child will receive priority at the school that is zoned for your family's address and at schools where a sibling attends. In April, the DOE will send you a letter notifying you of your child's placement offer, and you must then go to that school to register. Once your child is placed at a school through the Kindergarten Admissions Process, that school will be responsible for providing your child with the programs and services on your child's kindergarten IEP (including a special class or an Integrated Co-Teaching program).

Specialized Schools and Specialized Programs

Your child's IEP may recommend a specialized District 75 school (for students with severe needs who require greater structure and more intensive support) or a specialized program, such as bilingual special education programs or the ASD Nest and ASD Horizon programs for students with autism spectrum disorders. If your child's kindergarten IEP recommends one of these specialized schools or specialized programs, the DOE will send you a placement offer after your child's kindergarten IEP meeting for a school that has the recommended IEP program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON...

***Transition from preschool to kindergarten
special education:***

[AFC's Turning 5 Guide](#)

[DOE's Moving to Kindergarten Website](#)

Kindergarten admissions process for all students:

[AFC's Kindergarten Admissions Guide](#)

[DOE's Kindergarten Admissions Website](#)



DUE PROCESS RIGHTS

Under the law, you as the parent have due process rights to challenge the Department of Education (DOE)'s decisions regarding your child's special education services. These due process rights apply if, for example, the CPSE recommends special education services for your child that you do not feel are appropriate, or if the CPSE finds your child ineligible for services and you do not agree with that decision. Your options include a state complaint, mediation, or impartial hearing.



State Complaint

You have the right to file an official complaint with the New York State Education Department (NYSED) regarding any violation of special education law. You can find [sample state complaint forms](#) online in multiple languages. If NYSED finds that the DOE violated your rights, it can tell the DOE to correct the violation and provide services.

You may also file a complaint with the [U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights](#) concerning violations of your child's rights.

Mediation

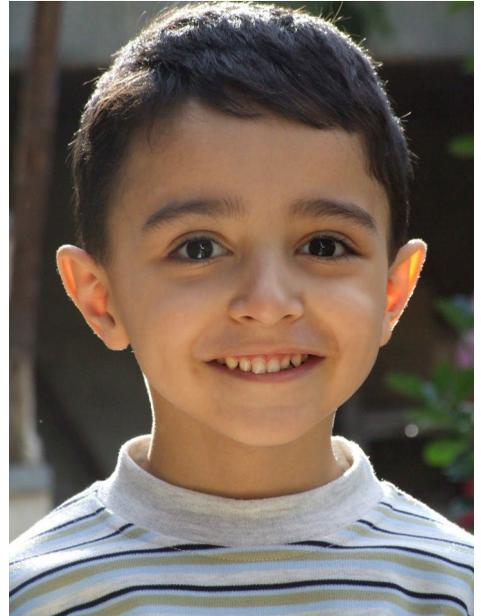
Mediation is a meeting between the parent, a DOE representative, and an outside neutral mediator to try to resolve disagreements. There is no requirement to do mediation before asking for a hearing. You can ask for an impartial hearing at any time, including before or after you have started the mediation process. The mediator is not a judge, but is trained to try to help the parties reach an agreement about their dispute. To request mediation, give your written request to your local CPSE and to the local mediation center. A list of local [mediation centers](#) is available online. Both sides must agree to participate in mediation. If both sides reach an agreement at mediation, the DOE and the parent must honor the agreement.

Impartial Hearing

An impartial hearing is held before an Impartial Hearing Officer who acts as a judge for your case. The hearing officer is an independent decision-maker who is not a DOE employee. They have the authority to hear testimony and receive evidence from both the parent and the DOE, and then decide what solution is appropriate. Because a hearing is a formal process, parents often bring an advocate or an attorney to represent them. A hearing officer's decision must be followed by both the DOE and the parent, unless either side appeals to the State Review Officer.

The hearing process can take several months. During the process, your child has the right to **pendency**. Generally, this means that until the hearing officer makes a final decision, your child has the right to continue receiving the program and services on the last IEP that was agreed upon by all sides. Pendency applies in situations where your child had an IEP that you agreed with, and then the CPSE changed your child's IEP to a new program that you do not support. You can file a hearing request to challenge the new IEP, and in the hearing request, you should ask for the services in the earlier IEP to continue while the case is being resolved.

If your child is moving from Early Intervention (EI) to preschool special education and you disagree with your child's first IEP, you do not have the right to pendency in your child's EI services. However, if you disagree with your child's IEP and file a hearing, the DOE must provide the services that are not in dispute. For example, if your child's first IEP says that your child will receive speech therapy only, but you think your child also needs physical therapy, you can file a hearing to ask for physical therapy. While the hearing moves forward, the DOE should provide your child with speech therapy since both the DOE and parent agree that your child needs speech therapy.



LEARN MORE:

For more information on how to file an impartial hearing, please see [Advocates for Children's Impartial Hearing Guide](#).

CONTACT INFORMATION

For help finding preschool and child care programs for your child, you can contact the **New York City Child Care Resource and Referral Consortium**, toll free at **(888) 469- 5999**. This network of agencies can help you find EarlyLearn, Head Start, child care, 3-K and Pre-K programs. See pages 23-24 for information about some of these programs. Child care specialists will get information from you about the type of program you need and your children's ages, and then they will give you a list of providers in your area. You will need to contact programs directly to see if they have space, and you should visit the program to decide if it is appropriate for your child. For more information, visit <http://www.nyccrr.org>.



You can also contact a Child Care Resource and Referral agency directly:

Child Development Support Corporation

(718) 398-6738 • Childcare@cdscnyc.org
www.cdscnyc.org

Chinese-American Planning Council

(212) 941-1828 (English) • (212) 792-4597 (Chinese) • childcare@cpc-nyc.org
[CAPC Info Request Form](#)

The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, Inc.

(212) 206-1090 • info@chcfinc.org
<https://www.chcfinc.org/child-care-services/>

Day Care Council of New York, Inc.

(212) 206-7818 • info@dccnyinc.org [DCCNY Info Request Form](#)

COMMITTEES ON SPECIAL EDUCATION (including Committees on Preschool Special Education)

Region	Chairperson	Districts	Address	Phone and Email
1	Steven Birkeland	7, 9, 10	One Fordham Plaza, 7 th Fl. Bronx, 10458	(718) 329-8001 SBirkeland@schools.nyc.gov
2	Tricia DeVito	8, 11, 12	3450 E. Tremont Ave., 2 nd Fl. Bronx, 10465	(718) 794-7420 TDeVito@schools.nyc.gov
3	Jennifer Lozano	25, 26	30-48 Linden Pl. Flushing, 11354	(718) 281-3461
		28, 29	90-27 Sutphin Blvd. Jamaica, 11435	(718) 557-2553 JLozano@schools.nyc.gov
4	Chris Cinicola	24, 30	28-11 Queens Plaza N, 5 th Fl. Long Island City, 11101	(718) 391-8405
		27	82-01 Rockaway Blvd., 2 nd Fl. Ozone Park, 11416	(718) 642-5715 CCinicola@schools.nyc.gov
5	Geraldine Beauvil	19, 23, 32	1665 St. Marks Ave. Brooklyn, 11233	(718) 240-3558 GBeauvil@schools.nyc.gov
6	Helene Potash	17, 18, 22	5619 Flatlands Ave. Brooklyn, 11234	(718) 968-6200 HPotash@schools.nyc.gov
7	Dina Benanti	31	715 Ocean Terrace, Bldg. A Staten Island, 10301	(718) 420-5790
		20, 21	415 89 th Street Brooklyn, 11209	(718) 759-4900 DBenanti@schools.nyc.gov
8	Carolyn Danner	13, 14, 15, 16	131 Livingston St., 4 th Fl. Brooklyn, 11201	(718) 935-4900 CDanner@schools.nyc.gov
9	Mariama Sandi	1, 2, 4	333 7th Ave., 4 th Fl. New York, 10001	(917) 339-1600 MSandi@schools.nyc.gov
10	Fabiana Czermerinski	3, 5, 6	388 West 125 th St., 7 th Fl. New York, 10027	(212) 342-8300 FCzemerinski@schools.nyc.gov

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

If you have questions about preschool or the preschool special education program, you can call **Advocates for Children’s Helpline**, toll free at **(866) 427-6033**, from Monday through Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

This guide and additional resources on educational services in New York City are available on our website, www.advocatesforchildren.org.

Visit the Early Childhood Education page to learn more about Early Intervention, early childhood programs, the kindergarten application process and the transition to kindergarten for children with IEPs.

To learn more about the topics covered in this guide, you may want to review the DOE website and resources, including the DOE [Guide to the EI-to-Preschool Transition](#) and DOE [Family Guide to Preschool Special Education](#).

You can also ask the Department of Education for help.

For additional support with....	You can contact...
The transition from Early Intervention	eitopreschool@schools.nyc.gov
Preschool related services	relatedservices@schools.nyc.gov
The transition to kindergarten	turning5@schools.nyc.gov
Enrollment in 3-K, Pre-K, EarlyLearn	Enrollment at 718-935-2009 or ESEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov

You can also contact the DOE’s Special Education Hotline at 718-935-2007 or specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov regarding any special education issues or concerns. Feel free to copy AFC at preschool@afcnyc.org or kindergarten@afcnyc.org in your emails to the DOE.

ADVOCACY TIPS

- ✓ **Keep your child's special education documents** (such as IEPs and evaluations) and all letters and reports from your child's preschool teachers and service providers in a file, arranged by date.
- ✓ **Put it in writing:** Keep a notebook for yourself with dates and times of all meetings and communication with Department of Education staff and outside clinicians (such as doctors or therapists). Follow up on conversations in writing, by letter or e-mail, and keep a copy so you have a record. If you have a phone conversation with the DOE, write down the name and phone number of the person on the phone.
- ✓ **Send all important information by certified mail**, return receipt requested, or by fax with confirmation so you have proof it was sent.
- ✓ **Talk to the people who work with your child.** Speak to teachers when things are going well or if things are going poorly and you will establish yourself as a concerned and involved parent.
- ✓ **Be persistent.** If someone says there is nothing that can be done for your child, get a second opinion.
- ✓ **Maintain a productive conversation.** Even when you are angry about something that has happened, try to speak calmly when making your point.
- ✓ **Bring along a friend**, family member, or someone who knows your child outside of school to IEP meetings if you feel your opinion is not being heard by the DOE.
- ✓ **Follow up.** If you do not receive a response to an email or call, or services are not in place, follow up with the responsible person, including your CPSE administrator, the CSE Chairperson and the DOE contacts listed on pages 33 and 34.

Our Mission

Advocates for Children of New York (AFC)'s mission is to ensure a high-quality education for New York students who face barriers to academic success, focusing on students from low-income backgrounds. AFC achieves this through four integrated strategies:

- Free advice and legal representation for families of students;
- Free trainings and workshops for parents, communities, and educators and other professionals, to equip them to advocate on behalf of students;
- Policy advocacy to effect change in the education system and improve education outcomes; and
- Impact litigation to protect the right to quality education and to compel needed education reform.

Still have more questions? Please call the Jill Chaifetz Education Helpline:

Monday through Thursday
10 am to 4 pm
866-427-6033 (toll free)

Advocates for Children of New York, Inc.

151 West 30th Street, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10001
Phone • 212-947-9779
Fax • 212-947-9790
info@advocatesforchildren.org
www.advocatesforchildren.org

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