

# Special Education Parent Handbook



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# Welcome from the Special Education Advisory Council

Being a parent or guardian is one of the most incredible and significant roles one can undertake. This journey is filled with unparalleled joys, profound responsibilities, and immense rewards. However, it also brings daunting challenges that test our skills and abilities. This handbook aims to help you identify a supportive team for you and your child as you navigate the special education process.

Whether you are attending your first Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting in Academy District 20 or have participated in several, we hope this handbook serves as a valuable resource to answer your questions and guide you along the way.

We want to reassure you that you are not alone on this journey. We invite you to join the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC). SEAC collaborates with the Academy District 20 Department of Special Education and comprises a dedicated group of parents, guardians, and staff members from District schools.

Our mission is to actively represent children and youth with disabilities, influencing decisions to enhance the quality of educational services provided in Academy District 20.

SEAC has historically undertaken various projects and activities, including:

- Organizing open houses where community organizations related to youth and special education provide information to families.
- Creating documents to support students with IEPs as they transition between grade levels.
- Providing training and support to parents, guardians, and staff members on special education topics.

These efforts ensure that transitions, whether between different educational levels (e.g., preschool to elementary) or between schools at the same level, are as smooth and supportive as possible.

We hope you find this handbook helpful and look forward to your participation in SEAC, where together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of our children.

Sincerely,

Special Education Advisory Council 2024-2025

# Welcome from Academy District 20 Executive Director for Special Education

Dear Families,

Welcome to Academy District 20! We are delighted to have you join our community and are committed to providing an exceptional educational experience for every student. Our District is dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment where all students, regardless of their abilities, are supported and encouraged to reach their fullest potential.

Navigating the special education process can be challenging, but you are not alone. This handbook has been designed as a comprehensive resource to guide you through every step of your journey. Whether you are new to the special education process or have been a part of it for years, we hope you find the information here helpful and empowering.

We believe that a strong partnership between families and the school district is crucial for the success of our students. By working together, we can create a supportive network that ensures every child has the opportunity to thrive. Our Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), composed of dedicated parents, guardians, and staff members, plays a vital role in this collaboration. We invite you to join SEAC and contribute your valuable insights and experiences.

Our mission is to provide high-quality educational services tailored to meet the unique needs of each student. We are constantly striving to improve our programs and services to better support our children and families. This handbook is a living document, regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the latest best practices and resources available.

Thank you for entrusting us with your child's education. We look forward to partnering with you to create a positive and enriching educational experience for all our students.

Warm regards,

Dr. Belinda Lujan-Lindsey

Executive Director for Special Education  
Academy District 20

# ASD20 Programming Information

Academy District 20 believes all students, regardless of disability, should be supported and encouraged to reach their potential. We offer a continuum of services and alternative placements (PK-21) that provide students with specialized instruction, while also minimizing the impacts of their disability.

## Resource

Students served in the resource program are provided individualized instruction and intervention to support the following: academics, behavior, communication, social, emotional, adaptive, sensory, and physical needs in the least restrictive environment. Our purpose is to provide students with access to general education and grade level standards.

## Related Services

Related services are determined by evaluation data that includes parent/guardian input and information gathered by the IEP team. These services are provided to help students access their educational environment. Individual service providers are able to serve all schools within Academy District 20. Related services include Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Audiology, Interpreting Services, School Nursing and Health, School Psychology services, School Social Work services, Transportation, and Orientation and Mobility Services.

## Preschool

Preschool introduces children to the structure, routine and focus of school. Students also build cognitive, social, emotional and language skills. Preschool gives children, ages three to five (if not yet eligible for kindergarten), and introduction to learning as teachers guide them through play-based programming. Our classes are integrated. Children with developmental delays benefit from typical models that encourage language, cognition and social development.

## Bridges

Bridges is the Academy District 20 program to support students as they transition from high school to the adult world. Bridges is a dynamic partnership involving young adults, families, staff, agencies, and the community-at-large through shared participation and responsibility. Services are flexible and varied according to students' needs and support opportunities that promote skill development, self-advocacy, and independence. Transition services are provided to students based on their need, determined through the IEP process, until the semester a student turns 21 years of age.

## Aspire

Aspire Learning Academy serves students grades 6-12 outside of their traditional neighborhood school in a separate school program. Students served in this setting show deficits in various areas including social/emotional, behavioral, academic, and/or communication. Aspire Learning Academy is a highly structured learning environment individualized based on student needs with an emphasis on positive teacher relationships. The program seeks to address the academic, behavioral, functional, communication, and social/emotional needs of each unique student and prepare students for success within their neighborhood school. Aspire Learning Academy strives to target student deficits through intensive intervention within a small group setting.

## Center Based Programs

Center Based programs are specialized classrooms located in many neighborhood schools across the District. These programs provide an intensive level of support based on the individual needs of the student and access to additional resources and support. Students in center-based programs can demonstrate deficits in academics, behavior, communication, social, emotional, and/or independence that are impacting their access to general education. These students are unable to have their needs met within the neighborhood school setting alone. The process for a center-based program is data driven, an IEP team decision, and the District's Special Education Department must be included in the decision to change a student's placement. Our Center-Based Programs are:

## Affective Needs Programs

Affective Needs (AN) Programs serve students with social, emotional, or behavioral needs who require specialized programming based on their unique needs. In AN programs, we focus on building relationships in a safe and consistent environment within an academic setting. Students who come to AN programs have frequently had behavior challenges in their previous setting, and require more structure and time to build school-ready behaviors.

## Significant Support Needs Programs

Significant Support Needs (SSN) programs serve students who have cognitive, developmental, physical or orthopedic disabilities, including Traumatic Brain Injuries. Rigorous instruction and programming is designed to address individualized needs to maximize potential including increased communication and independence for further education, employment, and independent living. Instruction is guided by District-approved curriculum and the state modified standards.

## Communication and Social Development Programs

Communication Social Development (CSD) programs support students identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder who require specialized programming based on their unique needs. Students who come to CSD programs demonstrate significant deficits in functional communication, social skills and/or restrictive interests/repetitive behaviors that are impacting their access to general education and are unable to have their needs met within the neighborhood school alone.

# Should my student be evaluated for Special Education Services?

If you think your child may have a disability that is affecting their education, you can ask the District to evaluate your child to determine if they may be eligible for special education. Request the special education evaluation at your child's school. If you request an evaluation, the District must either request your permission to conduct the evaluation or inform you that it will not conduct an evaluation. In both situations, the District must inform you of its decision by providing you with prior written notice within a reasonable time after your request. The District may also ask you at any time for permission to evaluate your child if staff members believe your child may need special education. After the District has received your written permission (informed consent), it must finish the initial (first) evaluation within 60 calendar days unless you refuse or repeatedly fail to make your child available for testing or change school districts.

## Child Find for Ages Three Through Five Years Old

Child Find for children ages three through five years old is part of the public school system in Colorado to identify children suspected of having a delay in development as early as possible. If a young child is not meeting typical developmental milestones, or someone is concerned about the child's growth or learning, a referral can be made to Child Find. Starting at age three, the District is responsible for the Child Find process and will work with families about their concerns, with a focus on meeting the child's educational needs. Steps may include collecting information from families and from previous developmental screenings, conducting a screening, and/or completing an evaluation. The purpose is to determine if there is an educational disability that requires special education and related services for the child to make progress in preschool. Our Child Find program is available at no cost, to families that live within ASD20 boundaries.

Children who are not yet in kindergarten may be referred at any time there is a concern about their development. Referrals to Child Find can be from any source. Medical providers, home visitation programs, friends and family, private and public preschools (including Head Start), and community-based childcare programs can make a referral. Parental consent is not required for referral; however, parent(s) involvement is required throughout the process of evaluation.

- For concerns and referrals for children birth to three years old please go to [Early Intervention Colorado](#).
- Preschool children three through five years old are screened and/or evaluated as a part of the preschool special education process.

Parents/guardians of children who are entering kindergarten or are five years old or older by October 1 of the current school year should contact their neighborhood school if they have a concern about their child's development.

For preschool aged children, three years up to five years old, including preschool children who attend a charter school, childcare, or private preschool:

### Contact:

Academy School District 20 Child Find Coordinator

719-234-1755

## Tips for Meaningful Parent/Guardian Participation

Parents/guardians are an important and integral part of the IEP team. Meaningful parent/guardian participation is every parent/guardian's right. The IEP team includes a special education provider, general education teacher, parents/guardians and individuals they would like to have attend, other professionals and related service providers who know and support the student, and the student with a disability. Each IEP is individualized and proper IEP development and implementation are critical to your student's success. Parents/guardians play a crucial role in the IEP development as they share unique knowledge and perspective regarding their student's needs. It is important to remember that your participation and ongoing involvement are a crucial part of your student's success.

Here are some tips for a successful IEP meeting to help your student reach their fullest potential:

- Be an active participant in your student's educational journey. Collaborate with your IEP team throughout the year on ways to improve your student's outcomes.

- Find ways to be involved with your student’s education throughout the year. (Volunteer, join a committee or Parent/guardian Teacher Organization, attend special events, schedule time at home for working on school projects and homework, read to/with the student)
- Communicating with school staff on a regular basis via phone, e-mail, or communication log can help you be aware of your student’s progress at school. Your student’s case manager will likely be the most helpful point of contact. If your student is being initially evaluated for special education services, please refer to the contact information listed on the consent to evaluate form.
- Be prepared to talk to your team about your student’s strengths and interests, the goals you have for your student, and tips for teachers regarding how to support your student’s educational needs. These can be recorded in the Parent/guardian/Student input section of the IEP. Parents/guardians can also submit a written document with their feedback for enhancing the education of their child to be included in the Parent/guardian/Student input section.
- Review the draft copy of your student’s IEP report. If you have questions, contact the case manager to clarify and gather additional information prior to the meeting. Mark any questions you have.
- Share information from outside providers as appropriate, including copies of outside reports. This information will be considered in the IEP process.
- Bring a person who can be a support to you. This individual can be a friend, relative, community-based service provider, advocate, or other important person. They can help you to navigate the process and to remember to ask important questions and help review what was said in the meeting. If you are going to bring an additional participant, please let the school know so that accommodations can be arranged.
- During the IEP meeting, feel free to take notes and ask questions. Seek clarification about any unfamiliar terms used in the meeting.
- Ask to schedule a continuance of the meeting if time runs out.
- Remember, the goal of the IEP team is to work together to identify the special education services and supports your child needs. This collaborative effort results in a written document, the IEP, which outlines these services and supports. The entire process should be focused on finding solutions to help your child succeed.
- If you have any other questions, please contact your case manager or the school. Don’t be afraid to ask for information that will help you become an effective partner in your student’s educational program and to appropriately advocate for your student’s educational needs.

## Parent/Guardian Rights and Procedural Safeguards

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Federal law concerning the education of students with disabilities, requires schools to provide parents/guardians of a child with a disability with a notice containing a full explanation of the procedural safeguards available under the IDEA and U.S. Department of Education regulations. A copy of this notice must be given to parents/guardians only one time each school year, except that a copy must be given to the parents/guardians: (1) upon initial referral or parent/guardian request for evaluation; (2) upon receipt of the first State complaint and upon receipt of the first due process complaint in a school year; (3) when a decision is made to take a disciplinary action that constitutes a change of placement; and (4) upon parent/guardian request. [34 CFR §300.504(a)].

For a full copy of your parent/guardian and child rights in special education, please contact your student’s school. You may also find these at:

[English Procedural Safeguards](#)

[Spanish Procedural Safeguards](#)



## What is an IEP?

The Individual Education Program (IEP) is a plan, or road map, developed by parents/guardians and school personnel to help make the student's school journey a success. This yearly plan addresses instruction, goals, identifies services and supports, and includes ways to measure individual student progress.

The focus of the IEP meeting is to determine what services, supports, and accommodations a student needs as well as to determine the best strategies or programming needed to meet the student's particular needs. The team discusses the student's strengths, as well as their weaknesses. The team determines what kinds of support and services are needed to bring about the best results. These decisions are made through a close look at the data and parent input captured in the Present Level section of the IEP. In addition, criteria are established for monitoring the student's progress. It is important to remember that this plan is reviewed annually and adjusted according to a student's individual needs. Parents/guardians always have the right to ask for updates on the student's progress and request an IEP meeting regarding progress if there are concerns.

## Eligibility for Special Education Services

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that a multidisciplinary IEP team (a group of qualified professionals and the parents/guardians) determine if a student has a disability that requires special education services.

Evaluation data and information from a variety of sources to include outside information provided by the parents/guardians, are used by the IEP team to determine if the student meets state eligibility criteria. To be eligible simply means that your child has been found to need certain educational services because their ability to learn is impacted by disability in such a way that they cannot reasonably benefit from general education classes without these additional services. To be considered a student with a disability under IDEA, your child must require special education due to their disability in one or more of the following disability categories. You can click on the link below to see the model eligibility checklist that is used for each specific category.

### Areas of Eligibility include:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Hearing Impairment, Including Deafness
- Serious Emotional Disability
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech and Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment, Including Blindness
- Deaf-Blindness

More information about disability categories and eligibility can be found at:

[https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/iep\\_forms#review: Colorado Eligibility Criteria](https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/iep_forms#review: Colorado Eligibility Criteria)

## Types of Meetings

**Eligibility Meeting** - This is the initial meeting that takes place once a referral has been made and the testing has been completed. In this meeting the results are discussed, and the team determines whether the child is in need of special education services. If the child is eligible, school personnel and the parents/guardians develop an IEP within 30 days of the eligibility determination, by outlining services, specific goals, accommodations and modifications.

**Annual Review Meeting** - An IEP must be reviewed annually. This meeting takes place during the school year (within 365 days of the last IEP date) to determine how the student is progressing and what changes need to be made to the IEP. Additional meetings may be requested by the parent/guardian or school staff if necessary.

**Triennial Eligibility Meeting (re-evaluation)** - Every three years the student's eligibility for special education services must be re-evaluated. The District must have parent/guardian consent to re-evaluate through the Prior Written Notice and Consent Process (PWN/C). The IEP team coordinates with parents/guardians to determine what assessment data is needed. Before the meeting, the appropriate testing will be completed and new information gathered to be placed in an evaluation report. From that information, the team will determine if the student continues to be eligible for special education services and, if so, what adjustments need to be made to their IEP.

**IEPs may be amended without a meeting** If the parents/guardians and the District agree, minor changes to an IEP may be made without a full and formal IEP meeting through an amendment. This process can save time for parents/guardians and staff when only minor changes to the IEP are being made. Amendments do not change the due date of the next Review/Annual Meeting.

## Contacting the Right Person for Your Child's Needs

When you need assistance or have concerns regarding your child's education, it's important to know who to contact to ensure your concerns are addressed promptly and effectively. Below is a guide to help you navigate who to reach out to:

1. Case Manager
  - Role: The case manager coordinates and facilitates the IEP process and services for your child, collecting and processing relevant information.
  - When to Contact: Reach out to your child's case manager first if you have questions or concerns about their IEP, services, or general progress.
  - How to Contact: You can find the contact information for your child's case manager in the IEP documentation or by calling the school's main office.
2. Building Principal
  - Role: The building principal oversees special education services within the school, ensuring that all students receive appropriate support.
  - When to Contact: If you feel your concerns are not fully addressed by the case manager, or if you have broader concerns about special education services in the school, contact the building principal.
  - How to Contact: You can contact the principal through the school's main phone line or email, available on the school's website.

3. Principal Supervisor (PSSG)
  - Role: The Principal Supervisor provides oversight and support to the building principal.
  - When to Contact: If your issue is not related to special education and remains unresolved after speaking with the case manager and building principal, contact the Principal Supervisor.
  - How to Contact: Contact information for the Principal Supervisor can be obtained from the school's main office or the District's website.
4. District Special Education Administrator
  - Role: The District special education administrator supports the special education program for their assigned school, ensuring compliance with federal and state laws and District policies.
  - When to Contact: If your concerns regarding special education remain unresolved after speaking with the case manager and building principal, reach out to the District special education administrator.
  - How to Contact: Contact information for the District special education administrator can be found on the District's website or by calling the District's main office.
5. Director for Special Education for Compliance
  - Role: The Director for Special Education for Compliance ensures that the District adheres to all legal and regulatory requirements related to special education.
  - When to Contact: If your concern is related to compliance issues and remains unresolved, contact the Director for Special Education for Compliance.
  - How to Contact: You can find contact information on the District's website or by contacting the District's main office.
6. Director for Special Education for Instruction
  - Role: The Director for Special Education for Instruction oversees instructional practices and programs within special education.
  - When to Contact: If your concern is related to instructional issues and remains unresolved, contact the Director for Special Education for Instruction.
  - How to Contact: Contact information can be found on the District's website or by calling the District's main office.
7. Executive Director for Special Education
  - Role: The Executive Director for Special Education provides overall leadership and direction for the District's special education programs.
  - When to Contact: If all other avenues have been exhausted and your concern remains unresolved, contact the Executive Director for Special Education.
  - How to Contact: Contact information for the Executive Director for Special Education can be found on the District's website or by calling the District's main office.

By following these steps, you can ensure that your concerns are heard and addressed at the appropriate level. Effective communication is key to supporting your child's educational needs and ensuring their success.

# Special Education Team 2024-2025

## Lead Team for Curriculum & Instruction

*Executive Director*

Dr. Belinda Lujan-Lindsey

*Director for Curriculum & Instruction*

Sarah Ricci

*SPED Facilitators: Instruction*

Kathie Garner – SSN

Kayla Lewis – AN/CSD

Daina Escamilla-Elementary Resources & Pre-K

TBH – Secondary Resources

*Instruction & Programming Support*

*Behavior Program Facilitator*

Rebekah Andriano

*District Behavior Teachers*

Brandi Swint

Kimberly Wilson

*Board Certified Behavior Analyst & Registered Behavior Technician*

Jayci Ventura – BCBA

Lonie Wu – RBT

Nicole Stevens – RBT

TBH- RBT

*Behavior Tutors*

Danie Calu – PCHS Strand

TBH – AAHS Strand

Christian Olsen – DCC Strand

Amy Cramer – LHS Strand

TBH – RHS Strand

*Preschool*

Beth Tyra – PK Lead Teacher

Kelly Cluxton – Child Find

*SPED Reading TOSA*

Briana Aldaz

*SPED Digital Learning Coach (DLC)*

Kimberly Watts

*SWAAAC Facilitator*

Jennifer Deakins

*SPED Generalist*

Susan DiBlasio

*SSN Tutor*

Cindy Jurgens

*Aspire Learning Academy & Bridges Administrator*

Taylor May

### *Aspire Learning Academy Staff*

Viviana Moron – Teacher

TBH – Teacher

TBH-Teacher

Stacey Turgeon – Social Worker

Hailey Goldsberry – Psychologist

Lucas Rollinger – BCBA

### *Bridges Staff*

Cari Ordway – Facilitator

Hannah Pryor – Transition Teacher

Kandy Goforth – Transition Teacher

## **Lead Team for Compliance**

### *Executive Director*

Dr. Belinda Lujan-Lindsey

### *Director for Compliance*

Jaleesa Steward

### *Special Education Administrators*

#### *SPED Administrator*

Jenny Swan – EWES, EHES, MVES, CTES, RCES, CTMS, CMS, PCHS

#### *SPED Administrator*

Lisa Brandt – ATES, TdVA, DCCES, DCCMS, DCCHS

#### *SPED Administrator*

Stacey Randle-Montoya – AEES, AIES, FRES, HPES, PIES, MRMS, RHS

#### *SPED Administrator*

Julie Palmer – EXES, PHES, LPES, TMS, LHS, Private School, HSA

#### *SPED Administrator*

Kendra Boyer-Evers – DVES, FHES, RRES, WRES, EMS, AAHS, VHS, VMS, AVHS, NSCA

### *Special Education Family Liaison*

Carol Green

## **Educational Settings**

When a student becomes eligible for special education services, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team develops a written plan for that student. This plan will include information about educational goals, services, supports and accommodations and will identify who is responsible for assessing the student in reaching each goal. Additionally, the plan will identify the educational setting where the student will receive these services. Least restrictive environment (LRE) is an important concept to understand when a team is determining how to meet the educational needs of a student. LRE means that the IEP team should design educational supports and services, so the student can be educated in the general education environment with their peers, to the maximum extent appropriate/possible. The IEP team should provide documentation and justification whenever education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Following is a description of possible service options for students, which is captured in the LRE grid and service delivery statement:

## Direct Services

Direct special education and/or related services are those services provided directly to the student in a one-on-one, small group, or large group setting by:

- An appropriately CDE-licensed and endorsed special education teacher or special education related services provider;
- A paraprofessional under the supervision of an appropriately licensed and endorsed special education teacher or related services provider;
- A speech language pathology assistant (SLPA) under the supervision of a CDE-licensed speech language pathologist who holds a national certification. SLPAs must possess a credentialing authorization from the CDE.

## Indirect Services

Indirect services are those provided by special education staff and/or related service providers on behalf of a student, but not directly to the student. These services could be delivered to educators (who are appropriately licensed, endorsed, or authorized), parents/guardians, and other agencies by a qualified special education teacher or related service provider. Indirect services may also include time spent by these professionals modifying materials.

## Least Restrictive Environment

Least Restrictive Environment means that: (1) To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and (2) Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the general educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in general educational classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

## Specialized Programs in the District or in Another District

In some cases, it is not reasonable to provide the support required by the student in a general education classroom. In these instances, the appropriate educational placement for an individual student may necessitate that the student be transported by the school district to another neighborhood school. In some instances, the student's needs may be so specialized that the student may be transported by the school district to a school or facility in a neighboring school district.

# Transition

Transition services provide post-secondary and workplace readiness and training for students. Programming prepares students for adult life after exiting high school and can be thought of as a bridge between specialized school programs and the opportunities of adult life, including higher education or training, employment, independent living and community participation. Transition planning begins with the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team starting at the age of 15, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP Team. These services continue through the semester during which the student turns 21 years old. Transition services are based on the student's individual needs while also considering the student's strengths, preferences and interests.

Academy District 20 (ASD20) Bridges Transition Program is designed to provide transition services to students ages 18-21 years old with disabilities to gain access to the available support and services necessary to become as independent as possible. Programming focuses on the student's long-term goals while utilizing a student-centered approach. Eligible students are those receiving special education services and who have met their high school or individual graduation requirements. Students who choose to access the Bridges Transition Program following their 12th grade year will participate in a social graduation with their high school. The social graduation allows students who will continue to receive transition services the opportunity to participate in the traditional graduation ceremony with peers. However, an official diploma will not be granted to these students until they exit ASD20. Transcripts will remain open as students continue to earn credit toward diplomas. The graduation year on the issued high school diploma will reflect the year the student exits ASD20.

Under both the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004), “Transition Services” are defined as a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities including:

- Post-secondary education
- Vocational training
- Integrated employment (including supported employment)
- Continuing and adult education
- Adult services
- Independent living
- Community participation

The coordinated set of activities shall be based upon the individual student’s qualification for services and needs, taking in to account the student’s preferences and interests and shall include:

- Instruction
- Related Services
- Community experiences
- The development of post-school adult living activities
- The development of employment
- If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and/or functional vocational education

The concept of transition is simple and generally has three major components:

- Coach every student, along with his or her family, to think about goals after high school and to develop a long-range plan to get there.
- Design high school experiences to ensure that the student gains the skills needed to achieve his or her desired post-school goals.
- Identify and link students and families to any needed post-school services, supports or programs before the student exits the school system.

Early and long-range planning are critical in order for the student to receive many post-school programs or services whether they include support services in college or residential services from an adult provider. Students and families may encounter extensive paperwork to meet eligibility requirements and some adult services have long waiting lists. Early, thoughtful planning will help ensure that the student will receive needed services in a timely manner when they exit the school system.

## Additional Information

1. Academy District 20 Special Education: <https://www.asd20.org/special-education>
2. Colorado Department of Education: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped>
3. U.S. Department of Education IDEA: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/statuteregulations/>

## 504s VS. IEPs

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal anti-discrimination law that applies to qualified students with disabilities. To be eligible for the protections noted in Section 504, a student must be determined to have a disability that substantially limits a major life activity such as walking, speaking, or learning. Every school in Academy District 20 has a process to identify and provide supports to eligible students. A school counselor or administrator can provide you with more detailed information about Section 504 and 504 Plans.

There are many similarities between Section 504 and IDEA legislation, and there are some important differences. Both laws ensure a free and appropriate education (FAPE) to eligible students with disabilities. However, each act has unique and specific eligibility conditions which may result in a student being eligible under Section 504 but not qualifying for services under IDEA. A special educator, school counselor, or administrator at the student's school is available to answer any questions about these two laws.

Office for Civil Rights:

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html>

Colorado Department of Education:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/spedlaw/rules>

## Who are all these people?

You may have contact with many of the following individuals at some stage of the special education process. The following information is intended to provide information about their role.

**AUDIOLOGIST:** The audiologist tests the student's hearing to determine if the hearing is adequate for promoting the highest rate of learning. The audiologist also assists parents/guardians and teachers in managing hearing concerns.

**ADAPTIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION:** The Adapted Physical Education (APE) teacher is an educationally trained professional who is able to assess individual students and develop, adapt and implement specialized physical education programs in the motor domain.

**DIRECTOR DESIGNEE:** A Director Designee in a school district acts as a representative at annual review meetings for students with special needs. This role involves ensuring that all team members, including parents and educators, participate fully in discussions about a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). The Director Designee must be knowledgeable about special education services, the general education curriculum, and District resources. They have the authority to commit certain District resources and ensure that the services outlined in the IEP are provided.

**SCHOOL COUNSELOR:** The school counselor's role will vary across schools. The school counselor may share information on ways to help the student improve their self-concept and communicate more effectively. Some school counselors have responsibility for academic scheduling, academic assessment coordination, transition programs and post-secondary advisement.

**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST (OT):** An occupational therapist is a trained health professional that uses purposeful, goal directed activities and task analysis to enable a child with a disability to benefit from their individualized education program (IEP). Federal law mandates that occupational therapy (OT) in the school system be educationally relevant.



The focus of OT services in a school setting is to promote functional independence or participation within the educational environment.

*ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY (O&M):* Orientation and mobility services means services provided to blind or visually impaired children by qualified personnel to enable those students to attain systematic orientation to and safe movement within their environments in school, home, and community.

*EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETERS:* Interpreters for the deaf and hard of hearing who work as related service providers in a school setting are referred to as educational interpreters. The educational interpreter serves as a communication link and facilitator between deaf and hard of hearing individuals and those who are speaking to communicate (i.e., the teacher, classmates, or other school personnel).

*PARENT:* Parent means: (a)(1) A biological or adoptive parent of a child; (2) A foster parent, unless State law, regulations, or contractual obligations with a State or local entity prohibit a foster parent from acting as a parent; (3) A guardian generally authorized to act as the child's parent, or authorized to make educational decisions for the child (but not the State if the child is a ward of the State); (4) An individual acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent (including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative) with whom the child lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare; or (5) A surrogate parent who has been appointed in accordance with § 300.519 or section 639(a)(5) of the Act. (b)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, the biological or adoptive parent, when attempting to act as the parent under this part and when more than one party is qualified under paragraph (a) of this section to act as a parent, must be presumed to be the parent for purposes of this section unless the biological or adoptive parent does not have legal authority to make educational decisions for the child. (2) If a judicial decree or order identifies a specific person or persons under paragraphs (a)(1) through (4) of this section to act as the "parent" of a child or to make educational decisions on behalf of a child, then such person or persons shall be determined to be the "parent" for purposes of this section.

*PHYSICAL THERAPIST (PT):* Physical therapists work collaboratively with a student's IEP team to improve student access and participation in school and community settings. Physical therapists provide professional expertise in the areas of self-help skills, foundational gross motor skills, mobility skills (transfers, walking, and equipment use), posture and positioning, and recreational skills for age-appropriate play. Physical therapy interventions promote skill acquisition and environmental adaptation and are commonly embedded within the context of student activities and routines.

*School Administrator:* The school administrator, also referred to as the principal or assistant principal, participates as a team member during the meetings. They can also act as the SPED Designee, and provide oversight of the special education program in the building where the student attends school.

*GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM TEACHER:* The classroom teacher will provide information about the daily social, emotional, and academic performance of the student in the general classroom. This information helps determine eligibility for special education services and reflects the progress of the student in a special education program. The general education teacher is often the grade level teacher in elementary school, and content specific teacher for grades 6-12 (i.e. Science, PE, Choir). They are responsible for teaching the grade level standards to the student.

*CASE MANAGER:* A case manager is a staff member responsible for coordinating and facilitating the IEP process and services for a student and their family. This includes collecting, monitoring, and processing information related to the individual student to ensure their educational needs are met effectively.

*SCHOOL NURSE:* School nurses support student success by providing health care through assessment, intervention, and follow-up for all children within the school setting. The school nurse addresses the physical, mental, emotional and social health needs of students and supports their achievement in the learning process. These professionals not only provide for the safety and care of students and staff but also address the need for integrating health solutions into the education setting.

*SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER:* The school social worker evaluates the social, emotional, and cultural factors affecting the student's progress at school. The school social worker may work directly with the student or consult with parents/guardians, teachers, or community service providers to improve the student's performance at school.

*SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST:* School psychologists lower barriers to healthy learning and behavior through intervention, prevention, assessment, consultation, and advocacy. School psychologists work with parents/guardians, educators, and other mental health service providers to help each child develop resiliency, competence, and self esteem, resulting in improving the lives and learning of children and youth.

*SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER:* The special education teacher helps to assess the academic functioning of the student and will design, implement, and evaluate the instructional programming to meet the student’s special education needs. The special education teacher may provide instructional and/or consultation services in a general education classroom, a self-contained classroom, or in a center-based program other than the neighborhood school.

*SPEECH/LANGUAGE THERAPIST:* The speech/language therapist evaluates the student’s communication skills and provides direct services to the student to help improve speech, language, and social communication skills. The speech/ language therapist may also assist teachers and parents/guardians in educational programming to improve communication skills.

*TEACHER OF THE DEAF/HARD OF HEARING:* The teacher of hearing impaired provides evaluation and special programming for students who have an educationally-significant loss of hearing which would affect the ability to communicate with others. The teacher of hearing impaired may provide direct services to students and consultation services to parents/guardians and teachers.

*TEACHER OF THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED:* The teacher of the visually impaired provides evaluation and special programming for students who have significant vision impairment. The teacher of visually impaired may provide direct services to students and consultation services to parents/guardians and teachers, including orientation and mobility services.

*BRIDGES (TRANSITION) COORDINATOR:* The Bridges coordinator assists in developing transition strategies that may be appropriate for the student and family. The Bridges coordinator provides information to staff, students, and family members regarding school/community programs and may assist in the transition from school to adult/community living.

*SCHOOL TO WORK ALLIANCE PROGRAM (SWAP):* The purpose of SWAP is to assist young adults in making the transition from school to employment, providing successful employment outcomes, increasing community linkages, and new patterns of service for young adults within all categories of disabilities.

## Community Resources

### *ASD20 Resources*

ASD20 has a resource directory that can help you find the services you need. Click the link below to find additional resources.

[Community Resource Directory \(English\)](#)

[Community Resource Directory \(Spanish\)](#)

### *Advocacy Support*

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| Parent/Guardian Resource Center         | 719-599-7772 |
| PEAK Parent/Guardian Center             | 719-531-9400 |
| Pikes Peak Partnership                  | 719-633-4601 |
| Resources for Young Children & Families | 719-577-9190 |
| The Arc of the Pikes Peak Region.       | 719-471-4800 |
| Resource Exchange                       | 719-380-1100 |

### *Legal*

Colorado Legal Services 719-471-0380

### *Military*

Exceptional Family Member Program 719-526-4590

### *Other*

Department of Human Services 719-636-0000  
Park and Recreation Department 719-385-5940  
Pikes Peak Library District 719-531-6333  
Ronald McDonald House 719-471-1814  
Shriners 801-532-5307

### *Medical Resources*

Children's Hospital – Denver 303-861-8888  
Colorado Student Health Care Plan 800-359-1991  
Developmental Pediatrics 719-475-0477  
Health Department 719-578-3199  
Memorial Hospital 719-635-5000  
Aspen Point (mental health) 719-572-6330  
Visiting Nurses Association 719-577-4448  
ACES-ABA 719-924-4533

### *Services*

Student Development Center of Colorado Springs. 719-574-8300  
Board of Cooperative Educational Services – Pikes Peak (BOCES) 719-570-7474  
Colorado School for the Deaf & Blind 719-578-2100  
Easter Seal Society 719-574-9002  
Epilepsy Foundation of Colorado 888-378-9779  
Head Start 719-635-1536  
Pikes Peak Therapeutic Riding Center 719-495-3908  
Shandy Clinic 719-597-0822  
The Student Development Center 719-554-9572  
The Family Support Center 719-640-5445

### *Support Foundations*

Arthritis Foundation 719-520-5711  
Autism Society of America - Pikes Peak Chapter 719-630-7072  
Cerebral Palsy Association 719-638-0808  
Colo. Springs Down Syndrome Association. 719-633-1133  
Colorado Springs Osteopathic Association. 719-635-9057  
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation 719-444-8966  
Lending Library – PEAK Parent/guardian Center 719-531-6333  
March of Dimes 719-473-9981  
Muscular Dystrophy Association 719-260-8777  
Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) 303-866-6943  
Pikes Peak Center on Deafness 719 591-2777; TDD 719-591-2333

## Transition

Cheyenne Village, Inc. 719-592-0200

Goodwill Industries 719-635-4483

# Glossary of Terms

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)** - A Federal law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in the areas of employment, public transportation, services provided by state and local government, services and accommodations offered by private businesses, and telecommunication access for people with communication impairments. These regulations require that public schools provide students with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in all school activities.

**ADAPTIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION** - A physical education program designed to meet the special needs of individual students with disabilities who need modifications to the school's regular physical education program, or a specially designed program.

**ADVOCATE** - A person who speaks on his/her own behalf or on behalf of others to protect their rights and ensure access to services.

**ANNUAL GOAL** - A measurable outcome that a student can reasonably achieve in one year and written in the Individualized Education Program (IEP). Progress toward meeting each annual goal must be documented and shared with parents/guardians as determined in the IEP.

**ANNUAL REVIEW** - The annual meeting of the IEP Team to review a student's progress and revise the goals and services listed in the IEP.

**APPROPRIATE** - Able to adequately address/meet identified needs.

**ASSESSMENTS** - Tests given to a student by qualified professionals to determine the student's current academic levels in such areas as math, reading, and writing.

**ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES (AT SERVICES)** - Assist an individual or a family in selecting, acquiring, maintaining, or using assistive technology.

**BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION PLAN (BIP)** - A BIP includes practical and specific strategies and positive supports designed to increase or reduce certain behaviors.

**CHILD FIND** - A system of identifying children birth to age 21 that may have a disability or need special education services.

**DUE PROCESS** - A legal process to resolve a disagreement about the identification, evaluation, placement, or provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for a child with a disability and which takes place in a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ).

**EVALUATION** - A review of assessments and other information, collected from a variety of sources to include outside information/evaluations provided by parents/guardians, used to determine a student's eligibility for, or dismissal from, special education services. Evaluations determine what supports and services a student receives to access their educational environment.

**EXTENDED EVIDENCE OUTCOMES (EEOs)** - These standards were developed for a very small and specific group of students, those who have been identified with a significant cognitive disability.

*EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR SERVICES (ESY)* - Services provided to children during summer break when evidence and predictive factors show that a student would otherwise require an inordinate amount of time to regain previously learned skills.

*FACILITATED SPECIAL EDUCATION MEETING* - A facilitated Special Education meeting is a meeting that includes an impartial facilitator who promotes effective communication and assists an IEP team in developing an IEP based on the student's needs. The facilitator keeps the team focused on the appropriate development of the IEP while working through conflicts that arise and ensuring the participation of each IEP team member. The facilitated Special Education meeting includes all of the required team members. While most often it is an IEP that the team is developing, facilitation also supports Special Education meetings outside of the IEP development process. For more information on facilitation and the benefits, visit [the IEP Facilitation webpage](https://www.cde.state.co.us/spedlaw/fiep). (<https://www.cde.state.co.us/spedlaw/fiep>)

*FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION (FAPE)* – Students with a disability have the right to a free appropriate public education which meets their specific educational needs as guaranteed by IDEA.

*FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT (FBA)* - An FBA is a way of understanding why your child may behave in a certain way by looking at a variety of factors, such as social-emotional functioning and triggers in their environment. An FBA will provide information about your child that will be directly helpful in developing a behavioral intervention plan and/or other positive behavioral supports.

*INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)* - The name of the federal law that guarantees qualified children with disabilities the right to a free appropriate public education.

*INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION (IEE)* - Assessment procedures conducted by a qualified individual who is not employed by the public agency responsible for the education of the student.

*INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)* - The legally binding, annually revised document that describes what special education and related services a student is to receive.

*IEP TEAM* - A multidisciplinary team composed of regular and special education teachers, other professionals, and the parents/guardians of the student. The team is responsible for identifying and evaluating children with disabilities who are in need of special education services; developing services, reviewing progress, and revising an IEP; and determining that the student is no longer a student with a disability.

*INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SERVICE PLAN (IFSP)* - A legal document that is developed in collaboration with the family and professionals to describe the services provided to an eligible infant or toddler (0 – 3 yrs) and their family.

*LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE)* - Least Restrictive Environment means that: (1) To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and (2) Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the general educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in general educational classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

*MANIFESTATION DETERMINATION* – A formal decision about whether a student's conduct leading to a suspension of more than 10 days was a manifestation of the child's disability or a result of the failure to implement the student's IEP. A manifestation determination is required if a student is suspended for more than 10 days. This constitutes a significant change to a student's IEP placement.

*MEDIATION* - This is the process of having a trained person try to help parent/guardians and the school system reach an agreement.

*MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM* - Describes a team approach involving specialists in more than one area, to get a complete picture of a student's needs.

*NONPUBLIC PLACEMENT* - Parent/guardians may choose to pay for their student with disabilities to attend a private school yet still access some special education services from the local public school system through the IEP process. If

appropriate public services as determined by the IEP can't be provided, the school system must attempt to secure services and pay for those services through a private program.

*PRESENT LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE* - The Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance statement (PLAAFP, or “present levels”) is a **key part of your child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP)**. The very first PLAAFP for your child describes their skills and abilities based on their initial special education evaluation. The PLAAFP should cover all areas of development where your child may need support. Some examples are:

Academic skills—counting, pre-reading, pre-writing

Daily living or self-help skills—dressing, eating, using the bathroom

Social skills—playing with friends

Behavior

Sensory skills—hearing, seeing

Communication skills—talking, listening

Mobility—getting around in school and the community

*POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS* - Interventions intended to reduce inappropriate behavior and teach a student appropriate behaviors/skills.

*PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS* - Procedural safeguards are a set of legal protections under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that ensure parents of children with disabilities can participate in decisions regarding their child's education. They provide parents with the right to receive prior notice of changes, give informed consent, and challenge decisions they disagree with through dispute resolution processes.

*RE-EVALUATION* - Once a student becomes eligible to receive special education services, a mandatory reevaluation occurs after three years to determine if the student remains eligible for special education services. A re-evaluation can occur earlier than three years if the student’s needs change or if the student has made significant progress. A re-evaluation must occur before exiting a student from Special Education.

*REFERRAL* - The process of requesting an evaluation to determine if a student is eligible for special education services.

*RELATED SERVICES* - Services (documented in the IEP) that must be provided for a student who qualifies for special education in order to benefit from their educational program, i.e. transportation, speech/occupational/physical therapy/audiologist/social or emotional skill services, etc.

*RESIDENTIAL STUDENT CARE FACILITY SERVICES* - Educational services provided to a student in a state licensed residential/school facility where a student is living due to the intensive needs of the student.

*SCREENING* - Screening is the process of reviewing a student's educational situation to see if interventions should be attempted before initiating a referral for special education.

*SECTION 504* - A federal anti-discrimination law that requires public schools to provide educational accommodations and curricular modifications to students with disabilities.

*SPEECH THERAPY* - A planned program provided by a Speech and Language Therapist/Pathologist to correct or decrease problems with communication, language and/or voice disorders.

*SPECIAL EDUCATION* – Refers to a range of services, including specifically designed instruction, related services, and supplementary aids, provided to a student determined to have a disability that impacts their access to education. The services are individualized to meet the educational needs of each student.

*SUPPLEMENTARY AIDS & SERVICES* - Extra aids & services determined by the IEP team to be essential to a student who qualifies for special education services. This could include, but is not limited to, paraprofessional assistance, adapted curriculum, behavior modification program, or assistive technology.

*SWAAAC* - Any device, product, or piece of equipment that improves functional capabilities of an individual with disabilities such as walking, hearing, seeing, speaking or learning.

## Acronyms

### A

ABA - Applied Behavior Analysis  
ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act  
ADD/ADHD - Attention deficit disorder/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder  
ALP - Advanced Learning Plan  
ASD - Autism Spectrum Disorder  
AT - Assistive Technology

### B

BCBA - Board Certified Behavior Analyst  
BIP - Behavior Intervention Plan  
BMHC - Behavior Mental Health Consultant

### C

CBA - Curriculum-Based Assessment  
CBM - Curriculum-Based Measurement  
CBP - Center-based Program  
CCSS - Common Core State Standards  
CD - Conduct Disorder  
CDE - Colorado Department of Education  
CEC - Council for Exceptional Children  
CFS - Community Family Services  
CMAS - Colorado Measures of Academic Success  
COALT - Colorado Alternate  
COTA - Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant  
CP - Cerebral Palsy

### D

DD - Developmentally Delayed  
DHS - Department of Human Services  
DIBELS - Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills  
DOD - Department of Defense  
DOE - United States Department of Education

### E

ECE - Early Childhood Education  
ECSE - Early Childhood Special Educator  
EFMP - Exceptional Family Member Program  
EHCA - Education for all Handicapped Children Act, Public Law 94-142

EI - Early Intervention  
ESY - Extended School Year

*F*

FAPE - Free & Appropriate Public Education  
FBA - Functional Behavior Assessment  
FERPA - Family Educational Rights Privacy Act

*H*

HI - Hearing Impairment, Including Deafness  
HRS - Health and Rehabilitative Services  
HI - Hearing Impaired  
HIPAA - The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

*I*

ID - Intellectual Disability  
IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act  
IEP - Individualized Education Program  
ILP - Individualized Learning Plan

*J*

JTPA - Job Training Partnership Act

*L*

LDA - Learning Disabilities Association  
LEA - Local Education Agency (School Districts or Boards of Cooperative Education Services)  
LRE - Least Restrictive Environment

*M*

MD - Multiple Disabilities  
MFLC - Military Family Life Consultant  
MTSS - Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports

*N*

NASP - National Association of School Psychologists  
NICHCY - National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities

*O*

OCR - Office of Civil Rights  
ODD - Oppositional Defiant Disorder  
OHI - Other Health Impairment  
OI - Orthopedic Impairment  
OSERS - Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services  
OT - Occupational Therapy/Therapist



*P*

PARCC - Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career  
PCS - Permanent Change of Station  
PIAT- Peabody Individual Achievement Test  
PT - Physical Therapy/Therapist PTA - Physical Therapist Assistant

*R*

READ – Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development

*S*

SEAC - Special Education Advisory Council  
SED - Serious Emotional Disability  
SID - Sensory Integration Disorder  
SLD - Specific Learning Disability  
SLI - Speech and Language Impairment  
SO - Special Olympics  
SLP - Speech and Language Pathologist  
SLPA - Speech and Language Pathologist Assistant  
SRO - School Resource Officer  
SSN - Significant Support Needs  
SSS - Office of Student Support Services  
SST - Student Support Team

*T*

TBI - Traumatic Brain Injury  
TRE - The Resource Exchange

*V*

VAC - Vocational Adjustment Counselor  
VI - Visual Impairment, including Blindness  
Voc Rehab - Vocational Rehabilitation

*W*

WISC-IV - Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Fourth edition  
WISC-V -Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Fifth edition  
WRAT - Wide Range Achievement Test