

Special Education in Centralia



A Family's Guide

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Introduction

Dear Parents,

Your child may already be a part of the Special Education program here in Centralia, or they may be in the evaluation process. Regardless, our goal in this document is to provide an overview of our services and an outline of each step as your child progresses through the program.

Our current Special Education students fall under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This law, commonly referred to as IDEA, provides the basis for all special education services in the state of Missouri. The major purpose of the IDEA is to provide children with disabilities the supports and services which they need to learn and progress in their schoolwork. It requires that each child receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). As the parent of child with a disability, you will participate in many meetings, working alongside school personnel in planning the special education services and supports that your child needs. It is important to understand your child’s rights under IDEA. This Parent’s Guide is written to assist you in understanding some of the important aspects of special education in Centralia.

Should you have questions about your child's special education services, I recommend that you first contact your child's case manager, followed by the building administrator. In addition, the Director of Student Services can be of assistance to you.

The Centralia School District sets high standards for ALL students. Special Services staff members and building level personnel will work closely together to provide effective services for your son or daughter. Our departmental goals are:

- improve student achievement scores on statewide assessments
- reduce the number of drop outs and increase graduation rates.
- improve the preparation of students for their post-secondary life, whether that be a chosen vocation or continued education upon graduation.

These high expectations have been set for all children, including those with disabilities. Our district needs your help and involvement in reaching these goals for your child. We welcome your help and collaboration in reaching these goals as we work to improve the educational outcomes for all students in the Centralia School District.

Sincerely,

Dr. Cristina Heet

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Services

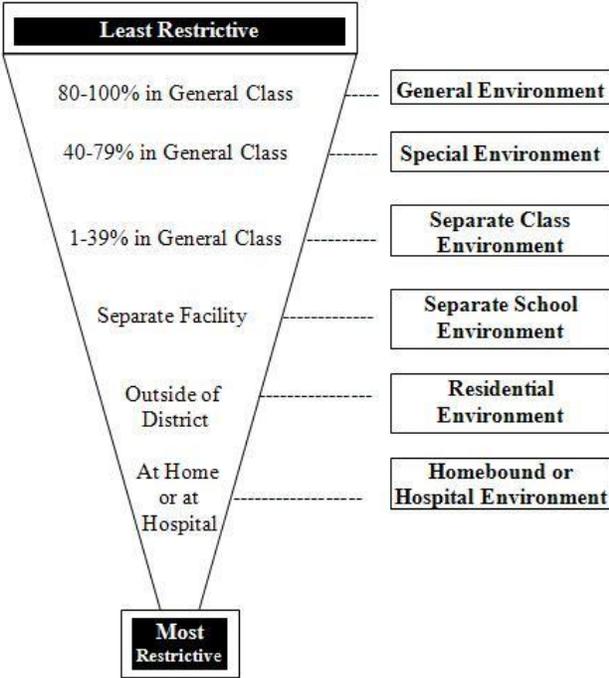
Centralia offers a continuum of services for special needs students ages 3-21 including specialized instruction that focus on life skills, behavioral needs, sensory needs and communication needs.

We recognize that each child is an individual with unique needs and IEP teams drive student services. In order to offer our best services to students, we cannot discuss our continuum of services and children's specific needs over the phone.

Below are the general descriptions of services and classrooms available in Centralia or that our school district utilizes:

- Early Childhood Services (preschool setting)
- 504 Services
- Push-In and Pull Out Special Education Services
- Missouri School for the Severely Disabled

- Missouri School for the Deaf
- Public Separate Day Facility
 - o Staff trained and classroom setup designed specifically for students with more significant emotional/behavioral needs.



Your First IEP

An IEP (Individualized Education Program) is the plan for your child's success. Once a student in Centralia has qualified for Special Education services, an IEP team will meet to develop a plan that best meets the needs of your child.

The team will include:

- a. You, the parent/guardian.
- b. One or more of your child's general education teachers.
- c. One or more special education teachers.
- d. A representative of the district.
- e. Individual(s) who can interpret instructional needs identified in the evaluation process.
- f. Other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise about the child, invited by either the parent or the school.
- g. Your child, whenever appropriate.

A teacher or diagnostician from your child's school will call to schedule this meeting at a time you are available. Most meetings generally occur during or after the school day and last for about an hour. If you are unable to attend in person, a conference call or Zoom may be an appropriate way to ensure your participation in this important plan.

A Typical Centralia IEP Meeting At-A-Glance

- **Introductions** – We always take time to help you get acquainted with everyone at the table and their role(s) on the team.
- **Purpose of Meeting** – The focus is on your child, but not all meetings are the same. Some will simply be an update on your child's progress, while others will serve as preparation for a transition, possibly as your child moves to a new school.
- **Review of Page 1 – demographics** – This is a double-check on all basic information, just in case something has changed (address, phone number, etc.).
- **Review of progress on Goals and Objectives** – The plan states the goals we are working towards. Time to review helps us clarify our focus for the meeting.
- **Present Level of Performance** – What do the current assessment data and teacher evaluations say about your child's current status and performance?

- **Transition Plan (for students 16 years or older)** – When appropriate, the team will discuss the transition from services as graduation approaches, or the continuation of services up to the age of 21.
- **Development of New Goals and Objectives** – At this point, the team will evaluate the need for new goals to meet the changing needs of your child.
- **Modifications/Accommodations/Transportation** – What services in these areas is your child currently receiving? What do they still need?
- **Special Considerations** – During this time the team determines if the student needs a particular device, service, accommodation, or modification.
- **Reporting Progress** – This section of the IEP is for reporting progress against specific IEP goals.
- **Service Summary** – Special education services and related services are addressed here (speech, OT, PT, etc.).
- **Extent of Participation in Regular Education/Physical Education** – In this portion, the team will discuss the appropriate level of participation for academics and physical education.
- **Placement** – This is a summary of the following: present level of academic achievement, goals & objectives/benchmarks, services and adaptations.
- **Additional Information** – Finally, the team takes time to consider any other pertinent info needed for the IEP.

A Closer Look at the IEP

There are several required components to the IEP that need to be discussed and developed at the meeting and written in the IEP document.

1. Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance

The present levels of academic achievement and functional performance should provide a snapshot of your child. It should be written so clearly that anyone can easily identify your child's needs and know your child's strengths. It is the bridge between the evaluation and the instruction. The present levels of academic and functional performance must state:

- whether your child's present level of academic achievement and functional performance is consistent with evaluation/reevaluation results in the evaluation report.
- the changes in current functioning of your child since the initial/prior IEP.
- how your child's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum — the same curriculum as for children without disabilities —or appropriate preschool activities.
- the results of the initial or most recent evaluation of your child.
- your child's strengths.
- your concerns for enhancing the education of your child.
- the academic, developmental and functional needs of your child.
- whether or not your child participates in the Missouri Assessment Program Alternate (MAP-A)
- transition assessments (at age 16 or older)

2. The IEP must include measurable annual goals including academic and functional goals that are designed to enable your child to be involved and make progress in the general education curriculum. Goals should meet the needs that result from your child's disability. Goals should be clear, concise, results oriented and written so that anyone is able to understand what skill or behavior is being targeted.

A goal should state what your child can reasonably be expected to achieve during the twelve (12) months of the IEP.

Objectives or benchmarks must be included for students who are taking MAP-A assessment and may be used for other students with disabilities but are not required for them. Benchmarks describe the amount of progress your child is to achieve within specific segments of the year. Short-term instructional objectives separate the skills described in the goals into separate parts.

There should also be a statement of when you will receive periodic reports on the progress your child is making toward meeting your child's annual goals, such as through the use of quarterly or other periodic reports that correspond with the issuance of report cards.

3. Special education, related services, supplementary aids, program modifications and/or supports that school personnel will provide for your child

Services the team decides your child needs to meet her/his goals are listed in the IEP. These services include special education and related services that are needed for your child to:

- A. advance toward meeting the annual measurable goals.
- B. progress in the general education curriculum.
- C. participate in extracurricular and nonacademic activities, such as sports and school clubs.
- D. be educated and participate with other children with and without disabilities in these activities.

Special education services include, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including instruction in the classroom, home, hospital or institution, and in any other setting; instruction in physical education; travel training to learn to move about the environment; and vocational education.

Services could also include supplementary aids and services, program modifications, or supports for school staff to meet your child's goals.

Related services can be any service that allows your child to benefit from the education provided. The IDEA lists examples of related services that may be needed:

- audiology
- early identification and assessment
- interpreting services
- medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes
- occupational therapy
- orientation and mobility services for visually impaired students
- physical therapy
- psychological services
- recreation
- school health and school nurse services
- speech-language services
- transportation

Related services do not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, the optimization of that device's functioning or the replacement of that device.

4. Participation in state and district-wide assessments

All students must participate in state and district-wide assessments. The IEP team must make decisions about what accommodations or modifications may be needed for your child to participate in State and district-wide assessments. The decisions include if your child will participate in the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) subject area assessments or the Missouri Assessment Program-Alternate (MAP-A). When making this decision, the team should refer to the Eligibility Criteria provided by DESE at <https://dese.mo.gov/media/pdf/map-decision-making-guidance-document>.

5. Initiation, duration, frequency and location of services and modifications

The IEP must state when each special education service, modification, accommodation, supplementary aid and service, and related service will begin, the amount of time it will be provided, when it will end, how often it will be provided, and where it will be provided. The services must be provided as stated.

6. Procedures for evaluating progress and reporting to parents. The IEP must state how your child's progress on the annual goals will be measured as well as when and how that progress will be reported to you.

7. Transition services

By age 16, the IEP must also include appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment and (where appropriate) independent living skills. Also a statement of necessary transition services needed to assist your child with meeting those goals must be included. If transition is discussed, your child must be invited to attend the IEP meeting. If your child cannot attend this meeting, then the district must assure that his or her needs and interests have been considered in the development of the transition goals and services. With the consent of the parent or the child this may include linkages with other agencies that are likely to be responsible for providing transition services for your child. Consideration will be given to cooperative work programs, career and technical training, supported employment, college preparation, and other considerations to help your child transition from school to postsecondary education or work. Encourage your child to attend and explain his or her role to them so he or she feels comfortable in that role.

8. Transfer of rights

At least one year before your child turns 18, the age of majority in Missouri, the IEP must include a statement that your child has been informed of his or her rights that will transfer to him or her at age 18. If your child is still a dependent under Internal Revenue Service rules (living at home and supported by you), you still have the right to receive copies of any notices

given to your child, to attend IEP meetings, and to access your child's educational records. When your child turns 18, the district will notify you that the transfer of rights has occurred.

9. Assistive technology

If the IEP team believes your child needs an assistive device and/or service, that information must be included in the IEP. This may be a device your child needs to improve function, or technology services needed for selecting, acquiring, or using an assistive technology device. Such services might include evaluation, including trying several different devices to find the one best suited for your child; providing, maintaining, customizing or replacing devices; coordinating other therapies with assistive technology; and training and technical assistance for your child, family or others who work with your child.

10. Behavior intervention plan

If your child's behavior prevents their learning or the learning of others, the IEP team must consider positive behavioral interventions to address that behavior. If a behavior intervention plan is developed for your child, it must be a part of the IEP. This plan is not the same as your district's discipline plan.

11. Extended school year

The IEP must also indicate if extended school year services (education for more than the traditional school term) are needed. These are special education and related services provided during the summer months, Christmas break or spring break; and such services are not the same as summer school. The decision of whether or not your child needs extended school year services is an IEP team decision and is based on your child's unique educational needs, as are all other education decisions. Extended school year is not intended to initiate learning of new skills, but to reinforce learning connected to the annual goals. The school district should have an extended school year policy and guidelines to assist the team in making this decision.

One factor in determining if your child needs extended school year services is the difficulty your child may experience remembering information or skills previously learned (regression) and the amount of time it takes your child to learn those skills again (recoupment). Most children forget some skills they have learned during extended breaks in school programming, and it takes them some time to relearn those skills; it takes some children longer to relearn these skills than others. Other factors in determining if your child needs extended school year might include:

- A. the nature and severity of your child's disability.
- B. your child's progress in relation to behavior and physical needs.
- C. the opportunities for your child to practice skills.
- D. areas of development that need continuous attention.
- E. your child's transition needs.
- F. opportunities your child has to interact with children without disabilities.

- G. areas of learning critical to your child's progress toward self-sufficiency.
- H. level of independent functioning.

An example of a critical learning area might be that your child is just learning to feed him or herself, or your child is just beginning to understand the meaning of letters (critical to reading), or beginning to learn sign language (for a child who is unable to speak). All of these factors will be considered in relation to your child's goals, as indicated in the IEP. A new IEP is not developed for extended school year. It is a continuation of the current IEP.

12. Participation in general education environment and placement — least restrictive environment

The IEP must address your child's participation in general education environment. General education includes academic instruction as well as recess, lunch and assemblies. If your child does not participate 100 percent of the time with nondisabled peers in the general education environment, a statement must be made describing the extent your child will not participate and why full participation is not possible.

After annual goals have been developed for your child in the IEP meeting, the team determines which services are needed and where they will be provided. This decision is referred to as the placement decision and is made each year. Your child's education should be in the least restrictive environment, which means: "To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are to be educated with children who do not have disabilities."

Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal from the general education classroom occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education cannot be achieved in general education classes with supplementary aids and services. There are a variety of placement options in which a child with disabilities can receive special education and related services, but the general education classroom with supplementary aids and services must always be the first consideration. A child with a disability is not removed from education in age-appropriate general education classrooms or daytime settings solely because of needed modifications in the curriculum. Unless the IEP requires another arrangement, your child will attend the public school he or she would attend if not disabled.

When making the placement decision, the IEP team should consider whether or not education in the general education classroom with the use of supplementary aids and services can be achieved satisfactorily, and if not, whether integration with nondisabled peers has been achieved to the maximum extent appropriate. To make these decisions the IEP team should consider:

- a. the curriculum and goals of the general education program.
- b. the sufficiency of the district's efforts to accommodate the child with a disability in the general education class.

- c. the degree to which the child with a disability will receive educational benefit from general education.
- d. the effect the presence of the child with a disability may have on the general education classroom environment and on the education that the other students are receiving (i.e., description of potential harmful effect for the student with a disability or disruptive effects for the students without disabilities).
- e. the nature and severity of the child's disability.

When your child receives special education services for the first time, the school will need your informed written consent for the initial provision of special education and related services. You will receive a "Prior Written Notice for Initial Services and Initial Placement." The Prior Written Notice for initial services and placement may be included on the same notice. It must include the following:

- a description of the proposed placement and why it is considered appropriate for your child
- the other placement options considered and the reasons why they were not selected (i.e., a self-contained program may require more time in special education than your child needs)
- the information that was used to make the placement decision (all the evaluation information)
- a description of other relevant factors, if any
- a statement that you, as a parent, have protection under Procedural Safeguards, where you can obtain a copy, and who you can contact to assist you in understanding these safeguards

Questions you may want to ask during the IEP conference

1. What do the tests and observations show about my child?
2. What are my child's strengths?
3. Are the evaluation results the same or different from what the teacher observes about my child?
4. In which classes will my child be with students without disabilities?
5. What goals are realistic for my child?
6. How do these goals lead to my child's long-range plans (adult living and work)?
7. How much time is required to meet the goals and objectives that we have developed?
8. Where will my child best be served?
9. How will my child's progress be checked and reported to me?
10. Is there a need for supplemental aids or services?
11. Are there ways we can help with our child's educational program at home?
12. Is my child ready to participate in the development of the IEP?

13. Does my child need a positive behavioral support plan?
14. Does my child need assistive technology?
15. Can my child's needs (for preschool children) be met in his current daytime setting(s)?

Remember, goals may not always be reached. During the year, you or your child's teacher(s) may realize the goals that were developed in the IEP meeting are not appropriate, have already been achieved, or that your child is not benefiting from the current services. If this occurs, your child's program may need to be changed. The IEP must be reviewed or revised at least once a year, but may be reviewed or revised more often if necessary. Changes to an IEP may be made by holding an IEP meeting or by amending the IEP. An amendment may be made to the IEP, after the annual IEP team meeting for a school year, when the parent of the child with the disability and the district agree not to convene the IEP team for the purpose of making changes to the IEP but instead develop a written document to amend the child's IEP. Either you or the district personnel may request that a meeting be held to change your child's IEP or that an amendment be made to the IEP.

Disagreement with the services developed during the IEP meeting may be discussed at the meeting or may be resolved by requesting another IEP meeting to discuss the issue.

Appendix

Terms and Acronyms

Accommodation	A change in curriculum or instruction that does not substantially modify the content standards or benchmarks
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AT	Assistive Technology
BIP	Behavioral Intervention Plan
Co-Taught/Push In Services	These are classes that take place in the general education classroom. Classes are taught by a general education teacher and include a special education teacher that works alongside them to provide services or accommodations as needed.
ESL	English as a Second Language
FAPE	Free and Appropriate Public Education
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act – A federal law that regulates management and disclosure of student records
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – Federal law that entitles students with disabilities to special education services
IEP	Individualized Education Program – A document developed by a team including the parents and a team of teachers that describes goals and services deemed appropriate for the child’s special education program.
LEA	Local Educational Agency – Local school
LEP	Limited English Proficiency

LRE	Least Restrictive Environment - Describes the right of students with disabilities to be included with nondisabled students in a regular educational setting to the maximum appropriate extent.
Modification	A change in curriculum or instruction that substantially alters the content standards/benchmarks
RED	Review of Existing Data
SPED	Special Education – specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of students

Resources (not an exhaustive list)

Arthur Center Community Health (Mexico)	arthurcenter.org 573-582-1234
Audrain Developmental Disability Services	audraindds.org 573-581-8210
Boone County Family Resources	b CFR.org 573-874-1995
Boone County Health Center	boonecohealth.org/services/mental-health/ 402-395-3109
Burrell Behavioral Health Assessment Center	burrellcenter.com 573-777-8455
Center for Evidence-Based Youth Mental Health	youthmentalhealth.missouri.edu 573-882-4677
Compass Health Behavioral Health Care	compasshealthnetwork.org 573-449-2581
Easter Seals Midwest- Autism Services	easterseals.com/midwest 573-874-3777
Epilepsy Foundation of Missouri and Kansas	efmk.org StL: 314-781-4949 KC: 816-444-2800
Family Access Center of Excellence of Boone County (FACE)	faceofboonecounty.org 573-771-3223
Cedar Creek Therapeutic Riding Center	cedarcreek.missouri.org 573-875-8556
JobPoint	jobpoint.org 573-474-8560
Missouri Families for Effective Autism Treatment (MO-FEAT)	autismspeaks.org 636-527-3328
Missouri First Steps	mofirststeps.com 660-827-5004
MU Speech and Hearing Clinic	573-884-2940
Pre-Employment Transition Services	https://education.missouri.edu/outreach/pre-employment-transition-services/ 884-901-7387
Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders	thompsoncenter.missouri.edu 573-884-6052
Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation	573-441-6327

Parents' Bill of Rights

As a parent of a child with a disability, you have the right to:

1. Attend individualized education program (IEP) meetings and represent your child's interests.
2. Have an advocate or expert present at individualized education program (IEP) meetings.
3. Receive a copy of your child's evaluation, disagree with it, and request one independent educational evaluation at public expense.
4. Provide a written report from outside sources as part of the evaluation process.
5. Examine all education records pertaining to your child and be provided with a copy of the individualized education program.
6. Disagree with the decision of the individualized education program (IEP) team and pursue complaint procedures, including: filing a child complaint with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, state paid mediation, have an impartial due process hearing, and appeal the due process decision to the court.
7. Participate in reviews of the individualized education programs (IEPs) and in any decision to change any aspects of the IEP, as well as receive a written notice of action before a change in your child's educational placement or the provision of a free and appropriate public education.
8. Have your child placed in the least restrictive environment and in a general education classroom to the greatest extent appropriate.
9. Request an accommodation to provide effective communications if you have limited English language proficiency.
10. A free appropriate public education for your child with an individualized education program designed to meet your child's unique needs, which may include, but not be limited to, special education and related services, such as assistive technology devices and services; transportation; speech pathology services; audiology services; interpreting services; psychological services, including behavioral interventions; physical therapy; occupational therapy; recreation, including therapeutic recreation; counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling; orientation and mobility services; school health services; school nurse services; social work services; parent counseling and training; and, medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes.
11. Audio record any meeting under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

This document does not confer any right or rights beyond those conferred by federal or state law and is intended for informational purposes only.

For additional information, contact the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Division of Special Education at

(573) 751-0699 or webrepliespeco@dese.mo.gov.