

# Special Education Parent Handbook

**Math and Science Academy**



Prepared by:  
MSA Special Education Department  
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## **What is Special Education?**

“Special Education” is instruction, specific to the child, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. **It is important to note:** Students with disabilities are general education students first. They receive special education support services *in conjunction* with the general education curriculum. Special Education is an instructional service, **not** a place. Special education services must be reasonably calculated to allow the student to benefit from instruction. If the student is receiving benefit from the special education services, the student will progress at his/her own individual rate. A student who has a disability will always have the disability and would not be expected to progress in all areas at the same rate as his/her regular education peers.

### **Math and Science Academy Special Education Mission Statement**

Our Mission: To identify and meet the diverse needs of each student through individualized educational programming. Our mission is to work cooperatively with families, students, community, colleagues, and other professionals in order to promote the the success of students and ensure their well-being as they prepare for future endeavors.

### **Special Education Goal Statements**

| <i><b>Learner Goals</b></i>   | <i><b>Program Goals</b></i>   |
|---|---|
| The goal of the special education program is to promote independence and personal responsibility so the learner will:                         | The goal of the special education program is to provide the framework for effective program planning and service delivery so that:      |
| 1. Demonstrate interpersonal skills necessary for healthy relationships and functioning in home, school, and community                        | 1. Effective collaborations and transitions are planned and communicated within and between buildings, programs and community agencies. |
| 2. Demonstrate healthy physical and emotional awareness and the skills needed to be a self-advocate.  | 2. All learners have access to a full continuum of service delivery options that are consistent and appropriate.                        |
| 3. Demonstrate measurable, continuous progress in development of skills and strategies that generalize to academic and non academic settings. | 3. Staff development practices are available, effective and encouraged.   |

## **What Special Education IS Not...**

- Tutoring in regular courses;
- An assurance that students will pass regular classes;
- A cure...it assists in removing barriers caused by the disability but doesn't remove the disability; for below average academic performance alone;
- Rehabilitation for a physical disability

## **What are Related, Direct and Indirect Services?**

*Related services* are services that are the supportive services or activities needed for some students with disabilities to maximize their educational outcomes. Related services may include but are not limited to: occupational therapy, physical therapy, psychological services, school health services and school nurse services, speech-language pathology services, orientation and mobility services, and special transportation.

Some related services such as occupational therapy and adapted physical education (DAPE) cannot be provided as a stand-alone service. In order to receive the support of some related services, the student must be eligible for special education services under a primary disability other than speech language. In addition, the Individual Education Program (IEP) team must determine the need for a related service are necessary to support the student's IEP goals and objectives.

These related services may be direct or indirect. *Direct services* are provided directly to the student from a special education professional. *Indirect services* are provided from the special education professional to the general education teacher, parents, or others that work directly with the student.

## **What is IDEA-97?**

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA-97) is a federal special education law. Periodically congress will revise and reauthorize the IDEA statute. Parents/Guardians should always be aware of your rights under these regulations, being that they may affect the placement of your child and curriculum in the school. The most current authorization was in 2004, the Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA-2004). Children with disabilities are entitled to receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE). There are procedural safeguards in place so each student receives an appropriate evaluation and an individualized education program that meets specific needs.

Your child should be educated with his or her peers as closely as possible. You should only consider alternative programming when the needs of your child cannot be met within the regular school setting with supplementary aid and services. This is referred to as the least restrictive environment (LRE).

Each state has special education laws. In Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is responsible for the rules and regulations affecting special education. More detailed information about laws, regulations, and statutes are available on their website., [www.education.state.mn.us](http://www.education.state.mn.us)

## **What is a Referral?**

Children may be eligible for special education services at birth. Identification of school age children is usually based on the child's performance in school.

**Pre-referral:** Before referring a school- aged child for an evaluation, the general education classroom teacher may plan strategies to see if his or her performance improves with simple changes in curriculum or environment. These are called "pre-referral interventions." At least two pre-referral interventions must be implemented and documented. If your child's performance improves, an evaluation may not be needed. If problems continue, an evaluation will help identify more specific ways to help your child learn. A pre-referral intervention does not require parent permission. It is important for parents to know what interventions are to be tried and the amount of time that they will be attempted before it is decided if they are working or not.

**Referral:** When classroom interventions are not successful, the classroom teacher may make a referral to the Child Find team to consider whether the child should receive further evaluation. The team decides the areas to be evaluated and the types of evaluations to be completed.

The referral is the starting point of the special education process, and is a written document requesting an evaluation. Parents may initiate a request for an evaluation, in a written request. The document should include the reason for the referral and details describing any behavioral or academic concerns. Upon request, the team will determine if interventions should be implemented or if the assessment process should begin.

A referral does not mean the student has a disability. It is the first step to determine if concerns are due to a disability. Following the referral, the school district will invite you to an evaluation-planning meeting. You will work with the school team to determine what areas will be evaluated, what tests will be used and who will do the testing. The evaluation cannot take

place without your written consent. Once the school district receives consent, the evaluation must be completed within 30 school days.

## **What is an Evaluation?**

When an evaluation is recommended, it means that your child's academic team of teachers feels your child may have issues at school that are interfering with his or her ability to learn.

The purpose of the evaluation is to determine if the student qualifies for special education. This starts with the evaluation of the child in all areas of concern. The evaluation should examine all areas of suspected disability and provide a detailed description of your child's current educational performance and needs. The evaluation may include formal tests, informal measures and informal observations. Evaluation may also include review of student's educational and medical history. Several professionals may be involved, and may include, but are not limited to: the general education teacher, a special education teacher, the school nurse, the school psychologist, a speech-language pathologist, an adapted physical education, occupational therapist, or physical therapist. The evaluation will attempt to determine if factors related to a disability are affecting your child in school.

Teachers can refer a student to Child Find Team without your authorization; however, no special education evaluation can take place without your written consent. The school will invite you to an evaluation planning meeting. You will work with the school team to determine what areas will be assessed, what tests will be used and who will do the testing. A form requesting permission to evaluate your child will be sent to you for your signature shortly after the evaluation-planning meeting. The form will indicate what areas are to be tested, the title of the professional who will be doing the evaluation and specifically what types of tests they are going to administer.

The school district has 30 school days (not including holidays and weekends) to complete the testing. This time period is determined by state rules in order to provide schools with enough time to conduct an appropriate evaluation of your child's needs.

**You must give you consent in writing before the evaluation can take place.**

### **After the Evaluation...**

After the evaluation, the case manager or school psychologist , or due process facilitator assigned to your child will contact you. This person will coordinate a date and time for you to discuss the results of your child's evaluation with members of the evaluation team along with at least one classroom teacher.

The assessment results will be summarized in an evaluation report. A draft of the report may be given to you at the meeting. You will be able to have input into the final report.

If a student does not qualify for special education and still struggles in school, there are other options that may be available to him or her.

### **Development of the "Team"**

The IEP requirements under IDEA-97 emphasize the importance of working cooperatively as a team. The team brings together parents, the student (when appropriate), general educators, special educators and administrators. Important educational decisions for students with disabilities are made with this approach. Under IDEA-97, the following people are required to be on the team and at the meetings:

- At least one parent
- At least one general education teacher
- Special education teacher
- District representative (This person is required to provide or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction, is knowledgeable about general education curriculum, and is knowledgeable about the availability of school district resources).
- The student, if appropriate

The team process should be a collaborative process between parents, school staff members and other professionals involved with your child. You have the right to be involved in ALL meeting that discuss the identification, evaluation, IEP development and educational placement of your child. The law ensures you and school personnel are equal partners in all steps during the team process.

**\*\*\*IEP Meetings take place before school from 8:00-9:00am.**

## **Parent Support Information**

### **Procedural Safeguards**

Procedural Safeguards Notices also referred to as Parental Rights, give general guidance regarding special education rights afforded to parents of children with special education needs. These rights are provided to parents under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It is provided to parents of students receiving special education services at least one time per year. It also is provided the first time your child is referred for a special education evaluation.

**Procedural Safeguards Notice Part C is for birth through age 2; Part B is for age 3 through 21.**

Website: [www.education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/SpecEdComp/ComplMonitor/ProcSafe](http://www.education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/SpecEdComp/ComplMonitor/ProcSafe)

### **The Arc of Minnesota**

Private, non-profit, statewide voluntary organization to promote and protect the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively support their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.

Phone: 800-582-5256 or 651-523-0823

Website: [www.thearccofminnesota.org](http://www.thearccofminnesota.org)

### **Autism Society of Minnesota (AuSM)**

Organization of families, educators, caregivers and professionals committed to supporting individuals with autism spectrum disorders.

Phone: 651-647-1083

Website: [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org)

### **Brain Injury Association of Minnesota**

Non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for Minnesotans affected by brain injury.

Phone: 800-669-6442 or 612-378-2742

Website: [www.braininjurymn.org](http://www.braininjurymn.org)

### **Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)**

Non profit Organization serving individuals with ADHD and their families.

Phone: 952-922-5761

Website: [www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org)



**Family Means**

Family Means is a place where families, children, couples and individuals can come to find help and work through challenges during difficult times in their lives. Family Means offers financial and bankruptcy services and education; family counseling and mental health services; collaborative divorce services; caregiver support services; youth enrichment programs; and an employee assistance program.

Phone: 651-439-4840

Website: [www.familymeans.org](http://www.familymeans.org)

**Down Syndrome Association of Minnesota**

Non-profit organization dedicated to provide information, resources and support to individuals with Down syndrome, their families and their communities.

Phone: 800-511-3696 or 651-603-0720

Website: [www.dsamn.org](http://www.dsamn.org)

**Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota**

Non-profit organization that offers programs and services to educate, connect and empower people affected by seizures.

Phone: 800-779-0777 or 651-287-2300

Website: [www.efmn.org](http://www.efmn.org)

**Minnesota Association of Deaf Citizens (MADC)**

Non-profit organization that advocates for and promotes a better quality of life and social wellness of Deaf people through its membership, activities and advocacy.

Website: [www.minndeaf.org](http://www.minndeaf.org)

**Minnesota Children and Youth with Special Needs (MCYSHN)**

Public, statewide program that seeks to improve the quality of life for children with special health needs and their families. They promote the optimal health, well being, respect and dignity of children and youth with special health needs and their families.

Phone: 800-728-5420 or 651--201-3651

Website: [www.health.state.mn.us/mcshn](http://www.health.state.mn.us/mcshn)

**Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)**

State agency responsible for providing laws and rules regarding special education in Minnesota, disability definitions and criteria, information for parents and students, and much more.

Phone: 651-582-8200

Website: [www.education.state.mn.us](http://www.education.state.mn.us)

### **Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS)**

State agency that provides Minnesotans with a variety of services intended to help people live as independently as possible.

Phone: 651-431-2000

Website: [www.dhs.state.mn.us](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us)

### **Minnesota Speech-Language-Hearing Association (MSHA)**

Non-profit professional organization of speech-language pathologists and audiologists that promotes the welfare of individuals with communication disorders and represents the professionals who serve them.

Phone: 651-290-6292

Website: [www.msha.net](http://www.msha.net)

### **National Alliance on Mental Illness Minnesota (NAMI Minnesota)**

Non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of adults and children with mental illness and their families through education, support and advocacy.

Phone: 651-645-2948

Website: [www.mdusa.org](http://www.mdusa.org)

## **Community Support**

Schools are responsible for the educational needs of students. Some students with disabilities, and their families, have needs that extend beyond the school. The information in this section is intended to provide an overview of some resources outside the schools.

### **Canvas Health**

Canvas Health is dedicated to bringing hope, healing and recovery to people's lives. They achieve this by helping children, adolescents and families who struggle with mental health, chemical health and domestic and sexual abuse.

Phone 651-777-5222

Website: [www.canvashealth.org](http://www.canvashealth.org)

### **ConnectWC**

ConnectWC is a one-stop website resource for any and all information regarding intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in the Washington County Area. ConnectWC provides information and links to crucial medical, government, educational, social and community services, as well as a calendar of events, and direction on where to begin to obtain needed services and support. ConnectWC also provides information to help the community learn more about the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities and how they can help.

Phone: 651-300-0875

Website: [www.ConnectWC.org](http://www.ConnectWC.org)

### **Courage Center St. Croix**

Courage Center empowers people with disabilities to realize their full potential in every aspect of life. Courage Center is a Minnesota-based, nonprofit rehabilitation and resource center that serves children and adults experiencing barriers to health and independence. Courage Center specializes in treating brain injury, spinal cord injury, stroke, chronic pain, autism, and disabilities experienced since birth.

Phone: 651-439-8283

Website: [www.couragecenter.org/index.aspx](http://www.couragecenter.org/index.aspx)

### **PACER Center (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights)**

Non-profit organization provides training and information for families of children and youth with all disabilities from birth through 21 years old. Parents can find publication, workshops, and other resources to help make decisions about education, vocational training, employment, and other services for their children disabilities.

Phone: 800-537-2237 or 952-838-9000

Website: [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)

### **Spina Bifida Association of Minnesota**

Non-profit organization dedicated to increase awareness about Spina Bifida and enhance the lives of those affected.

Phone: 651-222-6395

### **United Cerebral Palsy of Minnesota (UCP of MN)**

Non-profit organization driven to educate, advocate and provide support services to ensure a life without limits for people with a spectrum of disabilities.

Phone: 651-646-7588

Website: [www.ucpmn.org](http://www.ucpmn.org)

### **Minnesota State Council on Disability (MSCOD)**

Agency that collaborates, advocates, advises and provides information to expand opportunities, increase the quality of life and empower persons with disabilities.

Phone: 651-296-6785

Website: [www.disability.state.mn.us](http://www.disability.state.mn.us)

### **U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs**

Federal Agency dedicated to improving results for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities ages birth through 21 by providing leadership and financial support to assist states and local districts.

Phone: 202-245-7459

Website: [www.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep](http://www.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep)

