



LINDALE ISD

SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT HANDBOOK



Our mission is to provide individualized learning opportunities, services, and supports to students, in order to empower them to achieve their potential. We are committed to fostering collaborative partnerships with parents, school teams, and the community to help achieve our mission.



Lindale ISD Special Programs



Introduction

Lindale ISD Special Programs would like to welcome you to our Special Education parent community. We would like to make this process easier for you by providing the information you need to understand the Special Education process and services available for your child.

We would also like to provide you with some organizational tools to make storing of Special Education paperwork easier.

This Parent Handbook is designed to be placed in the binder, along with other important information about your child. The following page contains pre-printed divider labels for your convenience. We hope this book will serve as a resource to empower you with the information you need to support your child and to partner with us in your child's success!

Page Divider Inserts

These divider inserts have been provided for your convenience. They are designed to cut apart and slip into the plastic tabs on the page dividers.

LISD Special Education Handbook
Resources For Parents
Evaluation Documents
Current ARD/IEP Documents
Progress Reports/Report Cards/Data
Medical Information
Student Work Samples
Procedural Safeguards
Parent's Guide To The ARD Process
Words To Know
School Contact Information

Steps in the Special Education Process – An Overview

Step 1: Referral: If a student is suspected of having a disability and it is suspected that specially designed instruction is required to address said disability, a parent, legal guardian, teacher, or other professional involved in the care or education of the student may refer the student to special education. The school will gather information to decide if the student should be evaluated (tested) for special education eligibility.

Step 2: Notice of Rights and Consent: During the referral process, and at other significant decision-making steps after the referral, the district will send you written information (called “notice”) informing you about the actions the school would like to take regarding your child’s education and about your rights. If the school wants to evaluate your child, it will give you written notice of your rights and obtain your written consent. The evaluation process will not begin until you have consented in writing.

Step 3: Full and Individual Evaluation: If the referral process indicates that a student has a suspected disability and may need special education and related services, the school will, after obtaining the parent’s consent, do a full and individual initial evaluation to determine if the student has a disability and needs special education services. This evaluation process will be completed within 45 school days from the date the school receives written consent for testing signed by the parent or legal guardian. When the evaluation is completed, the school will contact you to schedule an ARD meeting. This meeting will be held within 30 calendar days of the completion of the evaluation. At the first ARD meeting after the evaluation, the team will determine whether your child is eligible to receive special education services. If the student is eligible, the ARD committee will propose a plan to assist the student in making progress toward the curriculum.

Step 4: The ARD Meeting: The Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee meets at least once a year to develop your child’s IEP (Individualized Education Program). You, the parent, are an important member of your child’s ARD committee. The ARD committee includes a parent, the student (if age-appropriate), an assessment representative (if evaluation results are being discussed), a campus administrator (principal or assistant principal), a special education teacher or representative, and a general education teacher. Other support personnel who provide services to your child (speech pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, etc.) may also be a part of the ARD committee. An annual ARD will be scheduled each year to review your child’s progress, placement, proposed services, and IEP for the coming year.

Step 5: The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written plan designed specifically for your child. It is an agreement between the school and parents on how the student will be educated. The IEP will be reviewed at least annually. Your participation and input is important. As the parent, you may have additional information to share with the committee.

Step 6: After the ARD Meeting

- You will receive a copy of the ARD document.
- Keep in contact with your child’s teachers. Find out the best way to communicate with the the team (email, notebook, phone calls, etc.).
- You will receive progress reports each 6 weeks detailing how your student is making progress toward his/her goals.



A Parent Guide to the Lindale ISD Special Education Process

The following steps provide a detailed overview of the Special Education process:

	Parent/Guardian	School District
Referral The process of requesting that a student be evaluated for eligibility to receive special education and related services	The Parent/Guardian May: *Make a request, preferably written, to the principal, counselor, or special education designee at your child's campus if you suspect your child has a disability that is causing his/her learning difficulties	The District Will: *Make a referral if a student is suspected of having a disability that is causing his/her learning difficulties *Contact parent, explain the referral process, and provide the parent with a copy of "Notice of Procedural Safeguards"
Notice and Consent The School District will provide prior written notice before several actions occur. In some cases, the district will request informed consent from the parent in order to proceed with the proposed action. Parental consent is needed in writing before the district: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducts an evaluation. Begins special education programs and/or services for the first time. 	The Parent/Guardian Will: *Receive a copy of "Notice of Procedural Safeguards" *Receive notice of a Full and Individual Initial Evaluation	The District Will: *Provide the parent with the notice for a Full and Individual Initial Evaluation
Evaluation The collection of information about a student's special learning needs, strengths, and interests	The Parent/Guardian Will: *Provide information for the evaluation process (medical, family and educational history, and perceptions of the student's strengths and needs at home, school, and in the community) *Review evaluation data with school personnel *Provide input in determining if additional data is needed to complete the evaluation *Receive a copy of the evaluation report	The District Will: *Collect information from parent, teacher, and others who can provide pertinent information *Review existing evaluation data, and determine if additional data is needed *Complete the evaluation *Summarize and interpret evaluation results, and explain the results to parent/guardian *Provide a copy of the evaluation report to the parent
Initial ARD/Eligibility The ARD committee determines if the student is eligible for special education and/or related services	The Parent/Guardian Will: *Receive "Notice of ARD Meeting" and "Notice of Procedural Safeguards" *Ask questions about the evaluation results *Share information about your child's strengths and educational needs *Share information to help determine eligibility and appropriate services	The District Will: *Provide the parent with "Notice of ARD Meeting" and "Notice of Procedural Safeguards" *Review and explain evaluation results with members of ARD committee *The ARD Committee will determine eligibility for special education services

A Parent Guide to the Lindale ISD Special Education Process (Continued)

The following steps provide a detailed overview of the Special Education process:

	Parent/Guardian	School District
Initial ARD: Individualized Education Program (IEP) Development	The Parent/Guardian Will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Share information about your child *Assist in the development of individualized education program goals, short-term objectives, and benchmarks (attainable goals) * Contribute to the determination of special education and related services to be provided, if appropriate * Contribute to the determination of accommodations/modifications needed for success *Contribute to the determination of assessments to be given *Contribute to the determination of appropriate educational placement *Give permission for your child to receive special education and related services (initial placement only) 	The District Will: <p>Contribute to the development of an individualized education program, in collaboration with the student's parents/guardians, that will enable the student to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum IEP to include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student's strengths and needs 2. Measurable annual goals, short-term objectives, and benchmarks 3. Appropriate special education and related services 4. Appropriate educational placement in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) 5. How the student will participate in statewide/district assessments
Annual ARD Review Meeting <p>(The ARD Committee Meeting is held annually to review the student's educational status and special education placement)</p>	The Parent/Guardian Will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Receive "Notice of the ARD Meeting" *Receive a copy of the "Notice of Procedural Safeguards" *Collaborate at the ARD meeting to assist in the development of the student's IEP 	The District Will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Notify parent & participants of the meeting *Provide a copy of the "Notice of Procedural Safeguards" to the parent *Gather information on the student's progress, including involvement and progress in the general education curriculum *Review current IEP <p>In collaboration with the parent/guardian, the team will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Develop and review the present levels of Academic, Achievement, and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) *Develop new IEP that, in collaboration with the ARD Committee, will enable the student to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum *Determine appropriate special education and related services and accommodations or modifications, in collaboration with the ARD Committee *Determine an appropriate educational placement, in collaboration with the ARD Committee

The ARD Process/Agenda

Use the following ideas and suggestions to help you better plan for and participate in the IEP process and ARD meetings for your child.

Opening Remarks and Introductions

- You are a valued member of the ARD Committee. Introduce yourself to the committee, and share any input you may have.

Reviewing Present Levels of Educational Performance

- Share your ideas about your child's progress. Share what you have seen outside of school. Share your child's strengths and abilities. What do you think he/she needs more help with?
- Share any reports you have from outside therapists, tutors, consultants, or doctors.
- Ask questions if something is not clear. At this point, you should have a specific picture in your mind about how your child is doing.

Developing Measurable Annual Goals and Short-term Objectives or Benchmarks

- Talk about your goals for your child when he/she leaves school.
- The school will develop a draft of goals and objectives prior to the meeting. This is a working draft. You and the school will work together to finalize goals and objectives. Talk about all the goals and objectives/benchmarks suggested by you and school staff. Working collaboratively, the ARD committee decides which ones should be included, keeping in mind the long-term outcomes for your child.
- As you review the draft of the goals and objectives/benchmarks, remember that the IEP must be designed to meet your child's educational needs that you and the school staff agree upon in the ARD meeting. Goals are set to what the committee expects the student to be able to master in one year.
- Ask questions if you do not understand how your child's progress will be measured, what services he/she will receive during the school day, and/or who will provide the services.

Related Services and Instructional Supports

- Make you understand what related services, instructional supports, and accommodations or modifications are being proposed for your child.
- Let the team know if your child receives any services outside of school. It may be beneficial for the school to collaborate with those service providers.

Determining Placement

- Make sure you understand:
 - What is needed to implement the IEP in general education classes?
 - What would the student's daily schedule look like?
 - Who will provide support, adaptations, or modifications?

Signing the ARD

- You will sign the ARD to indicate your agreement.



Individual Education Program (IEP)

Individual Education Program (IEP)

What is in an IEP?

An IEP (Individualized Education Program) is a written plan that is designed to meet the specific needs of your child. Your child's special education needs are likely to be different from those of another student, even one with the same disability.

The IEP Will Include:

- A statement describing the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP). This statement is based on a review of the most recent PLAAFP and a summary of the student's strengths and educational needs. The ARD committee will also review the student's present level of "functional" performance, which includes areas other than academics, such as social or behavioral functions.
- Measurable annual goals, both academic and functional: Goals are statements about what your child will learn during the school year.
- Instructional/Related Services: Many students who receive special education also need related services in order to benefit from the educational program. Though there are others, the most common related services are: assistive technology; speech therapy; physical therapy; occupational therapy; psychological services; counseling; special transportation; audiological services; orientation and mobility training; school nursing services; and interpreter services. The ARD committee decides whether a student is eligible for related services.
- Considering Other IEP Elements: The ARD committee will also discuss the following special factors when applicable. The Diagnostician can further explain each element and the requirements upon request:

- *Extracurricular Activities
- *Statewide Assessments
- *Assistive Technology
- *Autism Supplement
- *Transition
- *Extended School Year Services
- *Termination of Services/Graduation
- *Discipline/Behavior
- *Communication Needs
- *Transportation



A Parent Checklist for ARD Preparation

How can you prepare for an ARD meeting?

- ☐ Read your notice to see what will be discussed and who will attend.
- ☐ Make sure you know the date and time for the ARD meeting. If it is virtual, make sure you have the meeting link and know how to access it.
- ☐ Gather any reports you have from outside therapists, tutors, consultants, or doctors. Provide a copy of these to the school (if possible) for review prior to the ARD meeting.
- ☐ Think about your child's strengths. What would you like to see him/her accomplish this next year? What are your long-term goals for your child?
- ☐ Make a list of questions you have.



Words to Know

Special Education includes many acronyms for educational terminology. The most common terms are listed below.

Accommodations: Adjustments made in how a student with a disability is taught or tested. Accommodations do not change what the student is taught or what he/she expected to know. Common examples of accommodations are: highlighted textbooks, extensions of time for a student who writes slowly, or seating close to the teacher.

Adapted Physical Education (APE): An appropriate physical education plan for students with special needs who are not able to participate in regular PE with modifications.

Adult Student: Students age 18 and over are considered to be adult students unless the student's parent, or other individual, has been granted guardianship under the Texas Probate Code.

Alternate Education Programs (AEP): A disciplinary placement for students who violate the district's student code of conduct or engage in behaviors that would result in an AEP placement.

ARD Committee (Admission, Review, and Dismissal Committee): In Texas, the name for the group made up of a student's parents and school staff who meet at least annually to decide whether or not the student has an eligible disability and what special education and related services will be provided. Its major responsibility is the development of the individual education program (IEP) for students receiving special education services. In Texas, these meetings are called "ARD meetings," and the committee develops the ARD document.

Assessment: Testing completed by school staff to gather information about a student. All students are required to take the statewide assessment called the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR). Students receiving special education services take the same state and district-wide assessments given to all students, unless their ARD committee determines they should take an alternate assessment.

Assistive Technology (AT): An assistive technology device is any item, piece of equipment, or product used to increase, maintain, or improve the functioning of a student with a disability. Assistive technology devices for students with disabilities include those used for seating and positioning, mobility, augmentative communication, computer access and instruction, environmental control, adaptive toys and games, and visual and listening aids.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP): A written plan, based on a Functional Behavior Assessment, designed to identify and address (through specific supports and services) behaviors that prevent appropriate social interactions and learning.

Case Manager: A special education teacher assigned to a student. The case manager is responsible for monitoring a student's progress and is a liaison between the school and home.

Code of Student Conduct: The rights and responsibilities of each member of the school community in establishing and maintaining good discipline at district schools. A copy of the Code of Student Conduct is online and can be requested from the campus. All students, including those served through Special Education, are subject to the Code of Student Conduct.

Community Based Instruction (CBI): A service where students go into the community to learn functional life skills.

Consent: Written permission given by a parent to have his or her child evaluated for Special Education services or for the initiation of special education services and testing.

Diagnostician: A person certified to assess students for special education eligibility. He/she is qualified to administer intelligence and academic testing used to formulate recommendations for instruction. The Diagnostician maintains the ARD paperwork and records of the students.

Developmental Delay: A disability where milestones of motor, mental, and/or social progress are not achieved at normal ages.

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI): A statewide program for children from birth to age three who have developmental delays. Services are available for eligible children in their natural environment (home, daycare, preschool, etc.). An Individual Family Service Plan is developed for each child.

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE): A continuum of services for eligible children 3 through 5 years of age. This program focuses on improving physical, language, cognitive, self-help, social, and emotional skills.

Eligibility: The determination of whether or not a child has a disability and an educational need that qualifies him or her for special education services.

Evaluation: An initial Full and Individual Evaluation is completed to determine if a student has one of the thirteen disability conditions identified by state and federal guidelines and requires specially designed instruction. A reevaluation must occur at least once every three years, unless the parent and the district agree that a reevaluation is unnecessary. A reevaluation cannot occur more than once a year, unless the parent and the district agree to the reevaluation. The evaluation will include multiple sources of information: formal standardized measures, parent information, teacher information, and observations, as well as informal data.

Extended School Year (ESY): Special education services offered beyond the regular school year to students who have difficulty retaining critical skills and require a significant amount of time to recoup the skills. The determination of ESY services is made by the ARD committee.

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): Federal law protecting the confidentiality of students and parents. FERPA requires written parent consent prior to releasing records (except to another district to which the student has moved) and allows parents the right to access and request changes to their child's records.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): Special education and/or related services designed to meet the individual needs of each student at no cost to the parents, guaranteed to all students with disabilities by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Full Individual Evaluation (FIE): A comprehensive evaluation that is conducted on individual students to determine the presence of a disability and need for special education services.

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA): An assessment of why a student behaves as he/she does, given the nature of the student's disability and considering environmental factors. The FBA is used by the ARD committee in developing a student's Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).

Homebound: An in-home program established for students whose illness or injury prevents them from attending school for four or more weeks, as determined by a physician and an ARD Committee.

IDEIA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act): The federal law requiring school districts to provide students with disabilities a free appropriate public education. Formerly known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Education of All Handicapped Children Act and P.L. 94-142

Inclusion: A service delivery option in which a student receives instruction in the general education classroom with the support of a teacher or paraprofessional from the special education department on a full-time, part-time, or consult basis. Grades are given by the general education teacher or jointly by the special education and general education teacher, as determined by the ARD Committee.

Individual Education Program (IEP): A written plan that details the specially designed instruction and related services that must be provided to each student who receives special education services. Parents and school personnel work together at the ARD meeting to write the IEP. It must be reviewed and revised every year.

Initial Placement: The initial educational setting or placement of a student needing special education services. An initial placement requires written consent by the parent.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): The right to an education, to the maximum extent appropriate, in a setting with non-disabled peers, with access to the general curriculum.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP): Through the student's Home Language Survey and assessment, if it is determined that a student has limited proficiency in the English language.

Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP): A person certified to assess students to determine eligibility for special education services. He/she is qualified to administer intelligence, academic, and psychological assessments used to formulate recommendations for academic and behavior instruction and provide counseling as a related service.

Manifestation Determination Review (MDR): A review of the relationship between a student's disability and behavior that is subject to disciplinary action.

Modifications: Modifications, unlike accommodations, change the level of instruction provided or tested. Modifications create a different standard for the student receiving them. The most common modifications are those made to the general education curriculum for a student with a cognitive disability. Curriculum modifications should be in the student's IEP.

Occupational Therapy (OT): A related service for students with physical, emotional, developmental, or cognitive disabilities in the area of fine motor skills, developmental independence, or daily living skills needed for their education.

Physical Therapy (PT): A related service that serves students with physical disabilities or movement difficulties. The goal of physical therapy is to maximize physical independence and gross motor skills needed in the school setting.

Positive Behavior Supports: Activities and strategies that are positive in nature that support the student in learning appropriate behaviors.

Resource: A service delivery option to instruct students with academic needs that cannot be addressed fully in the general education classroom, because their instructional level is below grade level.

Response to Intervention (RTI): a model addressing the needs of all students through a continuum of services which provide: (1) high-quality instruction and scientific, research-based, tiered intervention strategies aligned with individual student need; (2) frequent monitoring of student progress to make results-based academic or behavioral decisions; (3) data-based school improvement; and (4) the application of student response data to important educational decisions (such as those regarding placement, intervention, curriculum, and instructional goals and methodologies).

Section 504 (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973): Federal law that protects people with disabilities to assure that they are not discriminated against because of their disability.

Speech and Language Pathology (SLP): An instructional service for students who have a communication disorder which affects educational performance. Speech or Language Impairment services can begin at 3 years of age. Services include therapy to improve fluency, articulation, or language.

State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR): STAAR will be given to students in grades 3-8 and to students taking high school level End of Course (EOC) exams including English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History.

Texas Education Agency (TEA): The state agency ultimately responsible for making sure every student with a disability receives a free appropriate public education.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS): The required curriculum for each grade level used in Texas public schools. TEKS should be considered the "general curriculum" referenced in IDEA.

Transition: The process and planning for a student moving from elementary school to junior high, from junior high to high school, and then from high school to adult life.

Vocational Education: Training and instruction designed to prepare students to work in a certain trade or profession. The programs that the district provides are the Work-Based Learning (special education setting) and the VOC (the general education setting).

Eligibility Categories for Special Education under IDEA

If the full individual evaluation shows that a student meets one or more of the following, an ARD committee will meet to determine if he/she is eligible to receive special education services under IDEA. In Texas, students are assigned to one of the following eligibility categories as defined by the Code of Federal Regulations, Section 300.7:

- **Autism (AU):** a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.
- **Deaf-Blindness (D-B):** visual and hearing impairments that occur or exist concurrently, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.
- **Deaf or Hard of Hearing:** includes deafness which means a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. This category also includes an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, and that affects the student's educational performance but who is not included under the definition of deafness.
- **Emotional Disturbance (ED):** A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance: an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.
- **Intellectual Disability (ID):** A student with an intellectual disability exhibits significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behaviors that manifested during the developmental period that adversely affect the student's educational performance. In Texas, a student with an intellectual disability is one who is functioning at two or more standard deviations below the mean on individually administered scales of verbal ability and either performance or nonverbal ability and who concurrently exhibits deficits in adaptive behavior.
- **Multiple Disabilities (MD):** concomitant impairments (such as intellectual disability and visual impairment, intellectual disability and orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include students who have deaf-blindness.
- **Orthopedic Impairment (OI):** a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes impairments due to the effects of congenital anomaly (e.g., clubfoot, absence of some member, etc.), impairments due to the effects of disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures).

- **Other Health Impairment (OHI):** A student with other health impairment exhibits limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, or sickle cell anemia and that adversely affects the student's educational performance.
- **Specific Learning Disability (SLD):** The term "specific learning disability" means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. A student with SLD exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance and achievement relative to age, grade-level standards, as indicated by significant variance among specific cognitive functional disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects the student's educational performance.
- **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI):** an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment or both, that adversely affects the student's educational performance. The term includes open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition, language, memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment, problem solving, sensory, perceptual and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior, physical functions, information processing, and speech. The term does not include brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or brain injuries induced by birth trauma.
- **Visual Impairment (VI):** an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects the student's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.
- **Non-Categorical Early Childhood (NCEC):** for students ages 3 – 5 who may have an intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, a learning disability, or autism. The child must be re-evaluated before their sixth (6th) birthday to determine eligibility under the previous categories.

District Parent Resource Sites

You can access our
district's sites using the
following QR Codes:



Special Programs Site



District Site



Virtual Learning Site



Parent Training Site

