

Spotlight on Special Education

SPED Parental Rights Outlined

Exceptional children and their parents have certain rights in regard to special education services. These rights are safeguarded by state and federal statute. Those rights fall under seven guidelines.

1. The right to inspect and be informed about records dealing with their child in special services programs.
2. The right to independent educational evaluation under certain conditions.
3. The right to notice before the Coop initiates or changes the placement of their child in a special service program.
4. The right to consent or object to placement or changes of special education services.
5. The right to request an impartial hearing regarding special educational matters which involve their child.
6. The right to have full comprehensive and individual evaluation of a child's educational needs.
7. The right to have their child educated in the least restrictive of educational environments with non-handicapped students to the maximum extent appropriate.

With each of these rights come certain responsibilities for both the parents and the school system. Schools are there to help children grow and develop into capable adults. Schools need the help and cooperation of parents.

If you would like a further explanation of any of these rights, or if you would like to see them in full print, you may contact your Superintendent of Schools, your local Director of Special Education, the Administrator of your school building, the school psychologist who serves your district or the Special Education Outcomes Team at the Kansas State Board of Educational building in Topeka, Kansas.

The Special Services Cooperative is responsible for the screening and evaluation of all infants, toddlers, and school aged students for potential disabilities or developmental delays, to include hearing and vision. Children to be included meet any of the following criteria: (1) attend private school; (2) are highly mobile, include migrant and homeless children; or (3) are suspected of being children with disabilities even though they are advancing from grade to grade.

The Cooperative establishes four child-find screenings annually and advertises each in area newspapers approximately 3-4 weeks prior to the screening. Parents call the Coop offices to set a time for their child(ren) to be screened. These screenings are typically held for children from birth to age 5. Any child that fails the screening is further evaluated given written parental consent to do so. All parents are informed of their child's results prior to leaving the screening.

School aged children not making adequate improvement are most typically referred by their assigned general education teacher, to a building team typically referred to as a Student Improvement Team (SIT Team). This internal team meets frequently to

brainstorm alternative strategies/interventions that might be tried by the general education teacher to improve the child's overall performance. Parents are kept informed of this process from the beginning stages. In those instances in which children do not respond positively to the strategies/interventions, then the SIT Team may make a request to parents to conduct further evaluation to determine if the child in question is eligible to receive special education services or not.

Another common referral source is parents. The Special Services Cooperative of Wamego accepts parental referrals of students for evaluation as follows: Parental request must be made in writing and state the problems/issues/concerns they believe their student is having in school which prohibit natural age appropriate progress. Information to support that belief should be included. The referral is then submitted to the school psychologist who will discuss the letter with the parents. Check with the Special Services Cooperative at 785-456-9195 to ascertain the assignment of school psychologists for the current school year.

A Student Improvement Team is required to meet for the purpose of discussing the concerns of the parents and to brainstorm educationally relevant strategies/interventions that might be a remedy to solving the concerns raised. SIT Teams are formed at the beginning of every school year, are typically lead by the building principle and meet as needed to review student progress.

If further information is desired, feel free to contact the administrator in your school building, the Director of Special Education, a school psychologist, or the Kansas State Department of Education. The Special Education Cooperative phone number is 785-456-9195.