

GaDOE Rule:

Young Children, Ages 3-5 The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 2004 mandates that special education services and supports be provided through the public schools for young children with disabilities beginning at age 3.

IDEA requires that the local school district locate, identify, and provide services and supports to young children with suspected disabilities or developmental delays. These delays may occur in the areas of self-help/adaptive behavior, cognitive development, communication, physical development, and/or social-emotional development.

Referrals from Babies Can't Wait (BCW)

Babies Can't Wait coordinates and facilitates the referral process to the local school district through a transition conference. A parent or guardian must consent to allow BCW to contact the local district. Children being referred from BCW are children with disabilities who

- are approaching the age of three;
- are transitioning from BCW;
- have an Individualized Family Service Program (IFSP);
- are identified as being potentially eligible for preschool special education service.

What is the purpose and when can I expect my child's Transition Conference?

- The transition conference will be held as early as nine months but no later than 90 days prior to the child's 3rd birthday.
- The parent/guardian, BCW coordinator, local school district representative, and other persons as appropriate attend the conference and serve as the transition team.
- The transition team reviews the IFSP and other documents that pertain to the child's disability.
- The local school district representative obtains the parental/guardian written consent to conduct a comprehensive evaluation.
- The local school district conducts a comprehensive evaluation.
- The parent/guardian, BCW coordinator, regular early childhood provider (as appropriate), special education early childhood provider, and local school district representative participate in the eligibility determination and IEP development. The local school district implements the IEP on or before the child's 3rd birthday

What Data can I expect schools to collect as part of the evaluation process?

In Georgia, children ages 3-5 (including 2-year-olds who will turn 3 during the school year) must receive a comprehensive evaluation to determine eligibility for services via the preschool program. The comprehensive evaluation includes assessment the following areas of development:

- **Adaptive development** (e.g., dressing, eating, toileting);
- **Cognitive development** (e.g., thinking and learning);
- **Communication** (e.g., hearing, speaking, language skills);

- **Motor development** (e.g., physical development, large and small muscle development); and
- **Social–emotional development** (e.g., relating with adults and other children).

After the comprehensive evaluation is completed, the Eligibility or Individual Education Program (IEP) team meets to review all of the information about the child in order to determine eligibility.

How is Eligibility Determined?

Although preschool-aged students may be determined to be eligible in various disability categories, the most common is Significantly Developmentally Delayed (SDD) [34 C.F.R. § 300.8(b)]. A young child is eligible for special education and/or related services when team members agree that the evaluation information indicates the child meets the eligibility criteria in one or more areas of development. Additionally, the team must agree that special education and/or related services are required for the child to learn and be part of an appropriate educational setting.

Initial eligibility must be established and an IEP in place on or before the child's 7th birthday. The SDD eligibility may be used for children from ages 3-9. Eligibility continues to the end of the school year in which the child turns 9.

The IEP team shall consider the child's continued eligibility no later than 3 years from the date of initial eligibility.

What's the Purpose and Goal of Preschool Special Education?

The purpose and goal for Preschool special education services: As designated by IDEA was to provide early intervention services in an attempt to have less children receive Special Education services at compulsory age and/or to require less services later. **It is not to provide a preschool experience...that continues to be a parent responsibility.** Services are driven by data...school districts are not under any requirement to have students attend a full day program, though must offer what a student's IEP dictates. All services are driven by the IEP.

How are services determined?

Student's first coming into Preschool SPED do not have data to support programming and have been seen by diagnosticians during the evaluation most likely once. Each child should have approximately 2 objectives in each qualifying goal area. It is upon the teacher and therapists (as appropriate) as that child begins services, to amend IEP's to reflect data.

Service days and hours:

There is no written rule on number of days a student needs to attend to address the IEP. Again this is an IEP team decision, if an incoming child has several academic goals and Speech goals, they may start programming with only 3 split sessions per week. As three year olds and/or medically needy, students often do not have the stamina for more than half day.

Special Education teachers provide specialized instruction, will address IEP goals and collect data, and provide access to the Georgia Early Learning Standards (GELDS) through the classroom routine.

Based on the objectives, how much time would it take to address these objectives?

Present Level drives objectives. GELDS are always our aim with objectives written to address pre-requisite skills attempting to reach them. Objectives drive services and should be written with the aim in attaining within a year. For example, if I have a student who needs direct skill instruction in every domain and speech, the initial IEP team may recommend 4-5 times a week in the morning or afternoon session. We must offer the services, we try to work with parents on afternoon versus morning. However, we have to provide the services. Teachers have the autonomy to move students from morning to afternoon and vice-versa

Where are a student's needs best met?

Settings: Services drive the settings (Exceptionality does not drive our services)... We offer a continuum to our students driven by the students' skill set and instructional programming.

Services will be determined through the IEP team and will be based on some or all of the following criteria:

- Progress on goals and objectives
- Child's age
- Emergence of critical skills

PK is not mandatory, there are insufficient slots available for all PK aged students and it is a lottery funded general education experience that those parents have chosen for their preschool aged child.

Services provided are not intended to replace all educational experiences for children not yet of PreK age. Parents continue to hold this responsibility. Services provided by CCSD are intended to extend opportunities and support for children identified as a student with a disability.