

Special Education Services

The Taconic Hills CSE office is here to ensure your understanding of the special education process that, at times, can appear overwhelming. Your child's education is our highest priority, and you are encouraged to contact this office with questions that are not readily answered by this website. Parents and families are critical partners, along with school personnel, in the education of children and our staff is here to assist you.

Special education means specially designed instruction or services to meet the identified needs of students with disabilities. While good teachers and good schools continuously individualize programs to meet the needs of students, special education is a more formal and comprehensive process of five basic steps:

1. Referral for Special Education
2. Individual Evaluation
3. Determination of Eligibility for Special Education Services
4. Individual Education Programming
5. Annual review and reevaluation (conducted every three years)

If you feel that your child is having difficulties in school and may be a student with a disability, first speak to the child's teacher. Our schools offer many supports for students within regular education, such as counseling, speech and language services, curriculum and instructional modifications and Academic Intervention Services. Not all school problems are a result of a disability. School counselors, psychologists and principals are aware of the school's support services and can help match student's needs to services. While a parent always has the right to refer their child to the Committee on Special Education, the special education regulations require pre-referral strategies through general education programs before determining that the child is unable to make adequate progress in a program designed for typically developing students.

Additional sources of information on Special Education topics:

General introduction to special education-

Parents who wish to learn more about to the Committee on Special Education will benefit from reading "Special Education in New York State for Children Ages 3-21, A Parent's Guide", available at- www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed. This site also links parents to a variety of State and Federal resources.

Procedural Safeguards-

Parents of children with disabilities may benefit from information concerning procedural safeguards that are their legal rights under Federal and State law in "Procedural Safeguards Notice", available at:

www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/PSGN109.pdf

or a Spanish version at:

www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/spanishpsgn807.doc

Non-public school students-

Parents of students with disabilities or of students suspected to have disabilities may wish to review the information on special education for students who are parentally placed in non-public schools in New York State at:

www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/nonpublicparent.htm

Homeschooled students-

Parents of students with disabilities or of students suspected to have disabilities who home school may wish to review the most current information on the coordination of special education services to homeschoolers at:

www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/homeinstructed708.htm

Mediation of disputes-

Parents of students with disabilities may request special education mediation to assist parents and school districts to resolve disagreements. Learn more about special education mediation at:

www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/mediationbook.htm

Preschool Services

The Taconic Hills Central School District collaborates with the Columbia County Early Intervention Program to reach out to families even before students are of school age.

The Early Intervention and Preschool Services Program of Columbia County seeks to identify children ages **birth to three years** of age who are at risk of developmental delays. The program provides developmental screening and therapeutic and support services for children with special needs up to three years of age. Families and primary care providers are encouraged to make referrals to this program if they have concerns about the development of children in their care. Evaluations and services are available to eligible children at no expense to families. The Early Intervention and Preschool Services Program can be reached at 828-4278.

The Committee on Preschool Special Education is a cooperative venture between the Taconic Hills Central School District and the Columbia County Department of Health to serve students with special needs from **three years of age to school- age**. If parents notice that their preschool child does not develop skills such as walking, talking or playing like other young children, they should discuss their concerns with their family doctor. The doctor may reassure parents that children develop at different rates and that the child is within the range of typical development. However, if the doctor is concerned or the parents believe a disability to be present, a referral may be made to the Committee on Preschool Special Education. Parents may contact the CSE office at #325-2850 to ask questions about the Committee on Preschool Special Education or to initiate a referral.