

Fort Bend ISD Parent Handbook

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Introduction

The Fort Bend Independent School District (FBISD) provides educational opportunities to all students. Included in those opportunities are special education services for students identified with specific learning needs. The Special Education Department strives to provide excellent customer service to the students and parents in FBISD.

FBISD Special Education Department Mission:

In support of the FBISD mission and vision, the Special Education Department strives to provide students, parents, teachers and administrators with programs and services that will promote student success and achievement.

As a department, we believe...

- That clear and consistent communication between school and home is essential to a successful experience for students.
- That students can achieve their own personal best.
- That students can become contributing members of society.
- That on-going professional development is essential to provide staff with necessary skills to meet the unique learning needs of students.
- That all students can learn.

Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC)

The Special Education Department sponsors this parent council which is focused on providing parent support, education, and information to parents as they navigate the special education process. Each campus in Fort Bend ISD has a parent representative to support their campus.

SEPAC Mission

The mission of the Fort Bend ISD Special Education Parent Advisory Committee is to advocate for the support, respect, and understanding of all children with disabilities in Fort Bend ISD. To that end, we work to:

- Advocate for an innovative and inclusive educational environment where children with disabilities are provided with the resources necessary to reach their optimum potential.
- Advise Fort Bend ISD on the operation and development of special education programs, parent and teacher training needs, and help develop policy.
- Create a network of parents and caregivers of children with special needs to provide support and facilitate effective communication between parents, students, and the school district.

How to Use This Parent Handbook

This handbook is a general guide to assist you as a member of your child's educational team. For more comprehensive information, please refer to the Notice of Procedural Safeguards and the Special Education Rules and Regulations referenced in this handbook.

An electronic version of this handbook can be found on our website on the [SEPAC page](#).

Welcome to Holland
by
Emily Perl Kingsley

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability - to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this.....

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip - to Italy. You buy a bunch of guidebooks and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum. The Michelangelo David. The gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."

"Holland?!?" you say. "What do you mean Holland?? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."

But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay.

The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine, and disease. It's just a different place.

So, you must go out and buy new guidebooks. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around.... and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills....and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy... and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

And the pain of that will never, ever, ever, ever go away... because the loss of that dream is a very very significant loss.

But... if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things ... about Holland.

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Letter to Parents

Welcome to a community of moms, dads, guardians, and grandparents who are walking this journey with you, may have walked a bit ahead of you, and some who are coming up behind you. You are not alone. Let's be honest, your journey through the education system with your child with special needs, may look different than some of the parents around you. There are different goals. There are extra meetings, preparations, evaluations, and accommodations. It can feel like there is a whole different language to learn with all the terms and abbreviations. It can seem like a completely different world sometimes.

But I assure you, you can do it. There may be hard days ahead but there are also days full of joy and pride watching your child meet goals and accomplishments specific and unique to them. Your child deserves and is worthy of an excellent education that will help them reach their fullest potential.

This handbook was created in collaboration with SEPAC and the FBISD special education department because we want you to feel equipped and ready for this journey. We want to give you the resources to empower you to continue advocating for your child. We believe in you; we believe in your child and we hope you both find belonging and support here in the FBISD community.

Sincerely,

Carly Durham
SEPAC President

Acronyms Commonly Used in Special Education

AI	Auditory Impairment
APE	Adaptive Physical Education
ARD	Admission, Review, and Dismissal Committee
AT	Assistive Technology
AU	Autism
AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress
BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan
DB	Deaf-Blindness
ECI	Early Childhood Intervention
ECSE	Early Childhood Special Education
ED	Emotional Disturbance
ESY	Extended School Year
FAPE	Free and Appropriate Public Education
FBA	Functional Behavioral Assessment
FIE	Full and Individual Evaluation
ID	Intellectual Disability
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEE	Independent Educational Evaluation
IEP	Individualized Education Program
LEA	Local Education Agency
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
MD	Multiple Disabilities
MDR	Manifestation Determination Review
MT	Music Therapy
NCEC	Non-Categorical Early Childhood
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
OHI	Other Health Impairment
OI	Orthopedic Impairment
OT	Occupational Therapy
PPCD	Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities
PT	Physical Therapy
REED	Review of Existing Evaluation Data
RtI	Response to Intervention
SEBSS	Social Emotional Behavior Support Services
SI	Speech or Language Impairment
SLC	Structured Learning Classroom
SLD	Specific Learning Disability
STAAR	State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness
STAAR-Alt 2	State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness – Alternate
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
TEA	Texas Education Agency
TEKS	Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills
VI	Visual Impairment

Types of Disabilities

Information regarding the 13 disabilities under IDEA 2004 is as follows:

Auditory Impairment (AI):

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.

Autism (AU):

Means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, which 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 (DB):

Means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, 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

Emotional Disturbance (ED):

Means 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; and
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

Emotional disturbance includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance as defined in this section.

Learning Disability (LD):

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 an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. This category does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, or emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

Intellectual Disability (ID):

Means significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Multiple Impairments (MI):

Means concomitant impairments, the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. Multiple impairments does not include deaf-blindness.

In order to meet the definition of Multiple Impairment,

1. the student's disability is expected to continue indefinitely; and
2. the disabilities severely impair performance in two or more of the following areas:
 - psychomotor skills;
 - self-care skills;
 - communication;
 - social and emotional development; or
 - cognition.

Orthopedic Impairment (OI):

Means a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by a congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease, and impairments from other causes

Other Health Impairment (OHI):

Means having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the learning environment that is due to chronic or acute health problems and adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Speech Impairment (SI):

Means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment, or a voice impairment, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI):

Means an 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 child's educational performance.

Traumatic brain injury does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries by birth trauma.

Visual Impairment (VI):

Means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

Noncategorical Early Childhood (NCEC):

Means a student between the ages of three through five who is evaluated as having mental retardation, emotional disturbance, a specific learning disability, or autism may be described as noncategorical early childhood. The student must meet all of the eligibility criteria for the appropriate handicapping condition, MR, ED, LD, or AU in order to consider the use of NCEC.

FBISD Special Education Process

Step 1: Referral

All students from birth through age 21 who are suspected of having a disability may be referred for a special education evaluation. School personnel, parents or guardians, physician, community agencies, or other appropriate individuals may initiate a referral for special education evaluation. Referral of students for possible special education services is part of the Districts' overall regular education referral and screening system.

If a parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for special education services to the director of special education services or an administrative employee of the school district or open enrollment charter school, the district or charter school must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. At that time, the district or charter school must give the parent a prior written notice of whether it agrees to or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*. If the school district or charter school agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

Please note that a request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally and does not need to be in writing. Districts and charter schools must still comply with all federal prior written notice and procedural safeguard requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district or charter school to respond within the 15-school-day timeline.

If the district or charter school decides to evaluate the student, it must complete the student's initial evaluation and evaluation report no later than 45 school days from the day it receives a parent's written consent to evaluate the student. However, if the student is absent from school during the evaluation period for three or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days that the student is absent.

There is an exception to the 45-school-day timeline. If a district or charter school receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30th due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

Step 2: Notice of Evaluation:

Before conducting an evaluation, the District will provide the student's parent or guardian with Prior Written Notice (Notice of Proposed Evaluation) that describes the areas of evaluation that have been proposed and descriptions of any evaluation procedures that the District proposes to conduct; explains why the District wants to conduct the evaluation; the options considered and why rejected; a description of each evaluation procedure, assessment, record, or report the district used as a basis for

proposing to evaluate; other options to an evaluation that were considered and why those options were rejected; other factors relevant to the decision to evaluate.

- informs the parent or guardian of her or his right to refuse consent for the evaluation, together with a copy of the TEA's Notice of Procedural Safeguards;
- is written in a form that the general public can understand. It must also be provided in the parent or guardian's native language (or the language that they normally use, like Braille or large print type-face) unless it is clearly not feasible to do so. If the parent's or guardian's native language or other mode of communication is not a written language, the District will take steps to ensure—
- that the notice is translated orally or via other means to the parent or guardian in her or his native language or other mode of communication;
- that the parent or guardian understands the contents of the District's Notice of Proposed Evaluation, and
- that there is written evidence of the District's efforts to ensure these two steps have been taken. 34 C.F.R. § 300.503; Tex. Ed. Code § 29.0041

The District's Notice of Proposed Evaluation should specify that the District plans to evaluate in each area of suspected disability. Requests by parents or guardians to limit the scope of the evaluation (such as when based on the parent or guardian's preferences for seeking or avoiding consideration of specific eligibility categories) may not be honored when the parent or guardian's limits on the scope of evaluation might prevent the District from completing an evaluation that complies with these Operating Procedures.

Step 3: Full and Individual Evaluation

The evaluation shall be conducted using procedures that are appropriate for the student's most proficient method of communication when possible.

Determination of Eligibility

- Additional Requirements (in Evaluation, Eligibility Determination section)
- Evaluations and other evaluation materials used to assess a child under this section:
- Are selected and administered so as not to be discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis.
- Are provided and administered in the language and form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is not feasible to provide or administer.
- It is recommended that a staffing be held prior to the ARD/IEP meeting to review the Full Individual Evaluation, draft IEP goals/objectives, and prepare for the Initial ARD meeting.
- The campus should send the draft IEP goals/objectives to the parent at least 5 days prior to the ARD meeting to gather input or parent input can be gathered during the ARD process.
- For Initial Evaluations, the Program Manager or Lead Diag/LSSP/SLP notifies the person who completed the evaluation along with the campus that the Full Individual Evaluation is complete.

Fort Bend ISD's philosophy regarding full and individual evaluations is to ensure all students receive a comprehensive and integrated evaluation delineating the strengths and weaknesses of a student's profile. The analysis derived in these evaluations should inform instruction and ultimately determine whether the child is a child with a disability and specify the educational needs of the child.

Evaluations will provide information to determine present levels of academic achievement, social and emotional performance, and related educational needs. No single evaluation tool may be used as the sole criterion for determining eligibility. Rather, a variety of assessments (both formal and informal assessments), including information provided by parents, guardians, classroom teachers, and observations of the student classroom performance, work samples/portfolios, interviews, and review of the records used.

When conducting a student's full individual and initial evaluation, the District will—

- use a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the student to assist in determining the student's eligibility and developing the content of the student's IEP.
- not use any single measure or assessment as the sole criterion for its eligibility determination.
- use technically sound instruments that may assess the relative contribution of cognitive, behavioral, physical or developmental factors; 34 C.F.R. § 300.304(b)
- select and administer assessments, particularly to a student with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills, that will best ensure those assessments accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement level (or whatever other factors the test purports to measure), rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills (unless those skills are the targets of the test).

The student will be evaluated in all areas related to the student's suspected disabilities in order to assess the student's eligibility for special education and related services, including, if appropriate health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities. Consequently, the assessments and evaluative instruments should be tailored to the student's suspected disabilities and conducted in all areas related to the student's suspected disabilities. However, the District will ensure that the evaluation is sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the student's special education and related services needs, whether or not the assessments used are commonly linked to the student's suspected disability categories.

Additionally, the District will ensure that the assessments and other evaluation materials used to conduct a full individual and initial evaluation—

- are selected and administered in a way that is not racially or culturally discriminatory.
- are provided and administered in the student's native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information on what the student knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to so provide or administer;
- are used for the purposes for which the assessments or measures are valid and reliable.

- are administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel; and are administered in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessment.

Step 4: Scheduling an ARD meeting

- The evaluation specialist notifies the campus that the Full Individual Evaluation is complete.
- The campus schedules the ARD/IEP meeting, sends the Notice of ARD/IEP Meeting to the parent, and notifies other required participants.
- It is recommended that a staffing be held prior to the ARD/IEP meeting to review the Full Individual Evaluation, draft IEP goals/objectives to the parent at least 5 days prior to the ARD meeting to gather input or parent input can be gathered during the ARD process.
- For initial evaluations, the program manager or Lead Diag/LSSP/SLP notifies the person completing the evaluation along with the campus that the Full Individual Evaluation is complete.

Timeline for ARD Meeting

1. Within 30 calendar days of the completion of the student's full initial and individual evaluation report, the student's ARD committee will meet to determine whether the student is eligible for special education and related services and, if the student is determined to be eligible, the ARD committee shall develop the student's individualized education program (IEP). However, if the 30th calendar day falls during the summer and school is not in session, the ARD committee may wait until the first day of the following school year to finalize any decision regarding the student's initial eligibility, IEP and/or educational placement, unless the student's initial evaluation indicates that he or she will need extended school year services during the intervening summer. § 89.1011(d); 34 C.F.R. § 300.306

If a school district receives written consent signed by a student's parent or legal guardian less than 35 school days before the last instructional day of the school year or if the district receives the written consent at least 35 but fewer than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year but the student is absent from school during that period for three or more days, a written report of a full individual and initial evaluation shall be completed no later than the 45 th school day following the date on which the school district receives signed, parental consent and except that the timeframe can be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days during that period that the student was absent. In addition, the Initial ARD meeting must be held within 30 calendar days from the date of the completed report.

Continuum of Services

The Fort Bend ISD provides a continuum of special education services and placement options for students with disabilities in order to meet their individual needs. This continuum includes services such as external support, accommodations, and modifications, in-class support, co-teaching, specialized support, home instruction and instruction in hospitals and institutions.

The following descriptions explain the instructional arrangements which may be considered for students with disabilities:

1. Inclusion is an instructional arrangement provided for special education supports to a student in the general classroom in accordance with the student's IEP. Special education personnel (including paraprofessionals) provide direct or indirect services to the student as determined by the IEP.
2. Mainstream is an instructional arrangement that occurs when special education supports such as accommodations, modifications & related services are provided within the general education classroom during the instructional day
3. Speech Therapy is an instructional arrangement for providing speech therapy services. Students who have a speech impairment and receive only speech therapy are not eligible to be counted for any other instructional arrangement.
4. Resource is an instructional arrangement for providing special education instruction and related services in a setting other than the general education classroom.
5. Self-contained, mild/moderate/severe, regular campus is an instructional arrangement for providing special education instruction and related services for 50 percent or more of the school day on a regular school campus.
6. Homebound is an instructional arrangement for providing special education instruction to eligible students with disabilities who are medically unable to attend school at the campus site.
7. Non-public day school is an instructional arrangement for providing special education instruction to students through a contractual arrangement with an approved non-public school for special education services.
8. Vocational Adjustment Class is an instructional arrangement for high school students providing special education, academic, or job-related instruction to students who are placed on a job with regular supervision by the Transition teacher.
9. Residential is an instructional arrangement for providing special education instruction to students with a contractual arrangement with an approved residential non-public school.

Full-Day Services

Fort Bend ISD offers a variety of programs that provide full-day services in a special education setting. Typically, students placed in these settings require a highly structured environment and intensive instruction in specific areas. If the ARD Committee makes the determination that a student may need this type of structure for part or all of the school day, the committee will base that decision on current data. The self-contained programs available in Fort Bend ISD include:

Academic, Behavior, and Communication (ABC) Services:

Academic, Behavior, and Communication (ABC) services are designed for students who exhibit a combination of severe cognitive, communication and behavioral challenges.

Adult Transition Services (ATS):

Adult Transition Services (ATS) are designed for students who have met high school graduation requirements but require additional supports to facilitate the transition to adult life beyond the age of 18.

Behavior Support Services (BSS):

Behavior Support Services (BSS) are services designed for students who exhibit significant challenging behaviors and require social and/or behavioral support.

Communication Language and Social Skills (CLaSS) Services:

CLaSS provides social and/or behavioral services for students who are able to function academically in the lesser restrictive setting but require social and/or behavioral support in order to facilitate the development of socially appropriate behaviors.

Communication Language and Social Skills Plus (CLaSS Plus) Services:

CLaSS Plus services are designed for students who exhibit significant challenging behaviors and require social, emotional and behavioral support to facilitate the development and demonstration of appropriate behavior and functioning in the school setting.

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Services:

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Services are offered to students with identified developmental delays who are three years of age to kindergarten age.

Functional Living and School Health (FLaSH) Services:

Functional Living and School Health (FLaSH) services provides a developmentally appropriate program for students who exhibit significant, profound cognitive and communication impairments and/or multiple impairments.

Succeeding in Academic and Independent Living Skills (SAILS) Services:

Succeeding in Academic and Independent Living Skills (SAILS) services are designed to provide students with significant cognitive disabilities an educational program focusing on life skills such as personal care, pre-vocational activities, communication, functional academics and/or social skills.

Structured Therapeutic Educational Program (STEP):

STEP (Structured Therapeutic Education Program) is a full day self-contained centralized behavior program in Fort Bend ISD that provides a structured therapeutic environment while supporting students in academics, social emotional and behavior interventions. It is designed to serve special education students, who have not been successful in a specialized support service classroom, students transitioning back to the district from an out of district placement and elementary general education students that have been referred for testing that need additional behavioral support during the evaluation period.

Speech Language Pathology Services:

Certified Speech Language Pathologists provide services to students who have been identified through the evaluation process as having a disability in speech and/or language. Services are provided in both general and special education settings. In addition, the district employs two augmentative communication specialists to provide specialized consultation to staff working with students who require augmentative communication devices.

Visual Impairment/Orientation And Mobility Services For Students (VI):

Itinerant VI Certified Teachers provide services for students with visual impairments. These teachers travel to the students' assigned schools or educational settings to provide consultative services and/or direct instruction. Programming adaptations and modifications are made available in the students' learning environment. Specific skills training, unique to the visual impairment, is assured, (e.g. Braille, large print, low vision aides, tactile and recorded materials, assistive technology, and daily living skills.)

Evaluation information and recommendations from the Orientation and Mobility Specialist may be included in the IEP. Training in orientation and mobility may be provided if approved by the ARD/IEP committee.

Transportation:

The safe and comfortable transportation of the district's special education students who ride to school and job sites in buses is a priority of the Fort Bend ISD Transportation Department. Special education students receive curb to curb services. In addition to daily routes, the department provides transportation for vocational services such as Community Based Vocational Instruction, Supported Employment and the VAC Work Program.

Bus drivers and bus aides receive extensive, on-going training in the operation of adaptive equipment, and lift equipment. In addition, drivers and aides receive training on individual medical concerns of their students and behavior management training.

FBISD Transition Services

What is Transition?

Transition is a process designed to assist students with disabilities to achieve their postsecondary goals in the areas of education, employment and adult living. Through transition planning, annual goals and a coordinated set of activities focusing on both academic and functional skills are established to facilitate progress towards a student's postsecondary goals.

Federal and State Law

Federal law states that beginning no later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 16 (State law states age 14), or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP Team, and updated annually, thereafter, the IEP must include -Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills. The transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals.

Campus Contact Information

- Austin HS: Vacancy
- Bush HS: [Stephanie Hodge](#)
- Clements HS: [John Spelce](#)
- Dulles HS: [Debra Wingard](#)
- Elkins HS: [Marcus Ballard](#)
- Hightower HS: [Judy Phillips](#)
- Kempner HS: [Joe Lepore](#)
- Marshall HS: [Ruth Viranda](#)
- Ridge Point HS: [Jessica Treybig](#)
- Travis HS: [Kathleen Murch](#)
- Willowridge HS: [Brenda Adams](#)

Helpful Transition Resources

- [Texas Education Agency](#)
- [Texas Workforce Commission](#)
- [Texas Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired](#)
- [TEXANA Center](#)
- [Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services \(DADS\)](#)
- [Texas Project First](#)
- [Transition in Texas](#)

Postsecondary Resources

[Texas Reality Check](#)

[Think College](#)

[Workforce Solutions](#)

[Work Force](#)

[Going to College](#)

Texas Transition and Employment Guide
[Texas Transition and Employment Guide - English](#)
[Texas Transition and Employment Guide - Spanish](#)

Transition Employment Services Designee

[Alexis Greer](#)

Assistant Director, Dispute Resolution and Parent Support
138 Avenue F
Sugar Land, TX 77498
281-634-2121 Office

Transition Planning for Your Child

Age of Child	Steps to Take
ASAP	Get on Medicaid Waiver Interest List
By Age 6	Give your child tasks to do at home
10-12	Start thinking of career/job goals. People will begin asking you, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” If you are not sure, it is okay. Just begin thinking about different options.
14+	Your child’s school staff must start to include transition planning in the IEP process
	An interagency release for transition services (or Consent to Release Information) is provided to the parent or guardian to allow “outside” agency representatives to be invited to future Annual ARD/IEP meetings/transition meetings.
	Have your child participate in ARD Meetings
	By 9th grade, determine when your child will graduate, under what graduation plan, using what end of year tests.
	If planning for college, make sure student is on the graduation plan/endorsement plan that prepares him/her for college.
14-18	Look for adult medical services to replace pediatric, how to pay for adult medical services, how to have a voice in medical issues after child turns 18.
	Encourage your child to begin to speak for himself/herself with medical providers, school staff, etc.
	Find ways for your child to get vocational experience on and off campus; use school services to get a job before graduation.
17.5	Prepare to apply for SSI/Medicaid; prepare to provide proof of disability, low income
	Consider your child’s decision-making abilities and what level of assistance she will need after age 18.
18	If your child needs assistance making decisions, consider guardianship or other legal instruments that allow you to speak for or assist your child with legal, financial and medical issues, such as power of attorney or a Support Decision Making document.
	Apply for SSI (after age 18, based on child’s income, not family’s)
	Child graduates and gets diploma or walks the stage and stays in school for 18+ program (ARD Decision); may stay in school until year student turns 22.
Last Years of School	Find opportunities to link up with other students and families for social life after graduation.

	Get summary of performance from school; use to get college accommodations and as proof of disability
	Move planning group from school based to community based; develop a network of community supports.

[Texas Parent to Parent](#) (Pathways to adulthood)

Long Term Supports and Services

(adapted from the [Parent Companion](#) website)

Medicaid Waivers

HELPING CHILDREN REMAIN IN THEIR OWN HOMES

[The Texas Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](#) manages and funds long-term services and supports for people with intellectual and physical disabilities, and those who are aging.

Many children are able to remain in their own homes and communities instead of going to a nursing home or institution because of the Medicaid Waiver Programs. These programs offer a variety of services. Scroll down to find a list of the programs.

If your child needs more assistance than can be provided in your home, the next step is to go to your Local Authority (Texana) and tell them your child is at risk of an out of home placement. More supports may be available.

GET ON THE INTEREST LIST ASAP

Texas has very long interest (waiting) lists for all Medicaid Waiver Programs. It is critical to call your Local Authority (Texana) to get on the interest list. (A Local Authority offers services in the community for people with intellectual or developmental delays.)

- Put your child's name on the list **as soon as you suspect or know** your child has a disability—it can take from 3 to 10 years before you can enter a waiver program
- You don't have to know if your child is eligible for the programs to get on the list

HOT TIPS

It is very important to **keep your contact information current and respond to letters and phone calls** about the lists. **Your child may be dropped off the list** if your contact information is out of date and letters and phone calls don't get to you.

LEARN MORE ABOUT WAIVER PROGRAMS

Waiver programs waive federal requirements related to the parents' income. Instead, most programs are based on a child's income, which helps them qualify for Medicaid and receive services.

THE TEXAS HHS MEDICAID WAIVER PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

Medically Dependent Children Program (MDCP) supports families caring for a medically dependent child in their home who is younger than 21 years of age.

Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS) provides services and supports for children and adults diagnosed with a related condition. A related condition is a disability, other than an intellectual disability, that originated before age 22 that affects the ability to function in daily life.

Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD) is for people of all ages diagnosed with legal blindness; a chronic, severe hearing loss; or a condition that leads to deaf-blindness and an additional disability that results in impairment to independent functioning.

Home and Community-Based Services (HCS) provides services and supports to people of any age with a determination of an intellectual disability and certain related conditions, including Autism.

Texas Home Living (TxHmL) provides services and supports to people with an intellectual disability or a related condition who live in their own home or their family's home. You must be determined eligible for Medicaid services before enrolling in the program. **You should be aware that TxHml does consider parental income.**

Texana
(281) 239-1363
Waivers: HCS, TxHmL
www.texanacenter.com

Texas Health and Human Services
1-877-438-5658
Waivers: CLASS, MDCP, DBMD
hhs.texas.gov/services/disability

Community Support Groups

- The ARC Fort Bend County (281) 494-5959 <https://arcoffortbend.org/>
- Texana Center (281) 239-1300/(281) 342-6384 <https://www.texanacenter.com>
- Hope for Three (281) 245-0640 <https://www.hopeforthree.org/>
- Dar-us-sakina (281) 410-8929 www.dushouston.org
- Fort Bend Center for Independent Living Jackie McFarlane, Youth Specialist (281) 980-2298
- Disability Rights Texas <https://www.disabilityrightstx.org/en/home/>
- Navigate Life Texas <https://www.navigatelifetexas.org/en>
- Family to Family Network (713) 466-6304 <https://www.familytofamilynetwork.org/>
- Families Can (713) 743-5491 <https://uh.edu/education/pep/families-can/>
- Partners Resource Network (800) 866-4726
- Parent 2 Parent 866-896-6001 <https://www.txp2p.org>
- Workforce Solutions (281) 344-0279
28000 Southwest Fwy, Rosenberg, TX 77471

Medical Information

Medical Home Toolkit- A **medical home** is **not** a building, house, hospital, or home healthcare service, but rather a family-centered approach to providing comprehensive primary care. **The Medical Home Toolkit** explains what a medical home is and how to get one.

See below for the Texas Parent to Parent Medical Home Toolkit:

<https://www.txp2p.org/services/family-to-family-health-info/medical-home-toolkit>

Purpose:

- To collect pertinent medical information about your child that may be needed when discussing your child's special needs or classroom modifications.
- To gather other pertinent information about your child that may be helpful when discussing your child's developmental and educational needs and goals.

How to create an Electronic/Digital Student Notebook

A home file contains pertinent information related to your child's medical developmental and educational needs and goals that is practical and useful. The following is intended to help pull some of that information together in an organized way so that it is readily available. Some of your child's important documents may be stored on your computer in an electric/digital notebook.

TX Parent to Parent Network provides a helpful Student Notebook that can be used to identify documents needed to place in your child's electronic/digital notebook.

<https://www.txp2p.org/services/family-to-family-health-info/care-notebook>

Digital Business Cards (VCard)

We live in a world with technology at our fingertips. Technology has given us the freedom to spread, gather, research, and locate information globally by using the internet. A vcard is a new form of technology that allows you to exchange your information electronically by simply sharing your information. The creation of a business card or just your information can be a vcard. Those who are familiar to using vcards may use apps that can help keep organized vcards.

How to create a vcard? It's really simple to do and can be accomplished in many ways. The first step is to determine what information you would like to share, such as, your name, address, phone number, email address, allergies, medical information, etc. There are many options in creating a v-card, but one of the user-friendly options is using Outlook. Below is a step-by-step guide in creating a vcard. Of course, there are many different ways, so find one that you prefer.

Using Outlook:

1. Go to the View Switcher and select People.
2. Select New Contact.
3. Enter the First name, Last name, Email address, and other contact information. To display an image of the person in the vcard, select add photo.
4. Select Create to make the new vcard.

Effective ways to communicate with your child's campus

- ❑ Ask questions whenever you have a concern. Good schools want involved parents who know what's going on in their schools. They know that sound support for their effort grows out of a solid understanding of what's happening and why. Never feel like you're intruding or interrupting when you have something to ask. Make a call. Visit your school. Send an e-mail. However you do it, ask about whatever's on your mind.
- ❑ Build your child's confidence with regular communication. Ask questions about what's going well and not so well in school. Compliment good effort. Encourage questions. Make conversation about school progress an everyday ritual
- ❑ Clarify language you don't understand. Some issues are complicated. Sometimes even simple matters sound complicated, even at schools. Don't be confused by jargon or abbreviations. Ask questions until you're comfortable with what's being said. Examples: "When you say _____, what do you mean by that?" Or, "Can you give me an example of what you mean by _____."
- ❑ E-mail your child's teacher or principal. Make sure you're on the e-mail list to get school info, if your school maintains one. But use e-mail wisely. It works best for short, uncomplicated exchanges. It's not good for resolving concerns. Personal meetings still work best for more serious matters.
- ❑ Organize your thoughts and questions before attending school meetings. Make the most of meetings with teachers and others by thinking about issues before you arrive. Consider making a list of key questions for you to discuss so nothing gets overlooked. When possible, let others know in advance what you'd like to discuss, so they can do their best to answer your questions.

Source: National School Public Relations Association, 15948 Derwood Road, Rockville MD 20855; (301) 519-0496; www.nspra.org; E-mail: nspra@nspra.org

Special Olympics Information

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide sports training and athletic competition opportunities to persons eight years of age and older with an intellectual disability or a closely related developmental disability.

Special Olympics Texas provides an opportunity

- for families to share in the accomplishments of their children.
- to share the Special Olympics joy with other families.
- to allow the extended family the opportunity to be part of a year-round sports training and competition program.

Families are Special Olympics Texas' most powerful resource. Families help coach, transport, fundraise, officiate, chaperone and train other volunteers. Families are Special Olympics' most highly-motivated and enthusiastic goodwill ambassadors.

There are currently 140 countries worldwide participating in Special Olympics with nearly 1 million athletes worldwide. The Fort Bend ISD Falcons participate in a variety of sports including basketball, volleyball, softball, bowling, soccer and track.

All athletes must have a completed medical release on file before they can participate in practices or competitions. This medical release form can be obtained from the Special Olympics coach or downloaded below. Also, all athletes must have an emergency contact form on file. This form can also be obtained from a coach or downloaded below and turned in to the coach. There are other forms which require your signature as parent/guardian, and one for your athlete. See below.

- **[Athlete Enrollment/Medical Release Form](#)**
- **[Emergency Contact Form](#)**
- **[Travel Release Form](#)**
- **[Athlete Code of Conduct Agreement](#)**
- **[Family/Guardian Code of Conduct Agreement](#)**

For more information on Special Olympics please contact a **[coach](#)**.

Become a volunteer

How Do I Register?

The volunteer registration process is different for Class A and Class B volunteers.

Class B Volunteers typically pre-register with the area office for a particular event, and then fill out the Class B paperwork upon arrival at the venue to volunteer. Please check with your area office about their specific registration process. Please be prepared to show a photo ID when registering.

Class A Volunteers must fulfill each of the following steps:

- 1) Complete and submit the **Class A Volunteer Application**.
- 2) View **General Orientation slideshow** and submit its quiz.
- 3) View **Protective Behaviors slideshow** and submit its quiz.
- 4) a. Adults: Pass SOTX criminal background check.
b. Minors: Complete and submit the **Minor Reference Form** in addition to the Class A Volunteer Application.

Parent Support

If you, as a parent or caregiver, need support in the area of your child's learning environment or if you have any other concerns, we encourage you to reach out to your campus and speak with your student's Case Manager or designated Principal. You may also reach out directly to your student's Program Manager or Specialist. At any point, if you would like to contact the Special Education Administration office directly, please complete the [**Fort Bend ISD Special Education Support Request Form**](#). A member of our leadership team will reach out and assist you to ensure your concerns are addressed.

For a list of contacts in the special education department, please use the link below:

[**FBISD Special Education Department Contacts**](#)

Glossary (Words to Know)

Educators sometimes use language that is difficult to understand. If, at any time, you see or hear words (e.g. "assessment") or acronyms (e.g. "ESY") that you do not understand, immediately ask school staff to explain them. As an equal partner in planning, you must understand all the information you receive in writing or hear in a meeting so you can decide what is best for your child. Some words commonly used in educational planning are:

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 is expected to know. Common examples of accommodations are: extensions of time for a student who writes slowly or seating close to the teacher.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): Under the accountability provisions of No Child Left Behind, all schools, school districts, and states are required to show progress in reading/language arts, math, and either graduation rates or attendance rates.

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 of the student by the court.

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. In Texas, the meetings of these committees are called "ARD meetings."

Assessment: Assessments are tests given to all students (including general education students and special education students) in the district or state to evaluate learning. The most common statewide assessment in Texas is the STAAR (State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness). Students receiving special education take the same state and district-wide assessments given to all students, unless their ARD committee determines a particular test is not appropriate. In that situation, the student will take another state-developed test.

Assistive Technology (AT): The IDEA defines "assistive technology device" as "any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability." The term does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted or the replacement of such a device.

The ARD Committee must "consider whether the child needs [AT] devices and services" as part of the program development process. The IDEA requires each public agency to ensure that AT devices and services are made available to each child with a disability if required as part of the child's special education, related services, or supplementary aids and services.

Although the need for Assistive Technology (AT) must be considered for every student within the Full Individual Evaluation and during every ARD/IEP meeting, this does not mean that the Assistive Technology Team needs to be involved in a formal evaluation for every special education student.

Fort Bend ISD has categorized Assistive Technology into three levels: Level One – No Tech/Low Tech; Level Two – Mid Tech; and, Level Three – High Tech.

Decisions regarding the need for assistive technology devices and services are made based on a student's ability to access the curriculum and/or the student's IEP goals and objectives. The ARD committee determines the student's curriculum tasks and then considers whether assistive technology devices and/or services are *required* for the student to accomplish those tasks.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP): A Behavior Intervention Plan, which is part of the IEP, identifies supports and services that will be provided to decrease inappropriate behaviors and provide positive behavioral support to increase desired replacement behaviors.

Continuum of Services: The range of instructional settings which must be available to students with disabilities of a school district so that they may be served in the least restrictive environment.

Early Intervening Services: IDEA 2004 allows schools to use up to 15% of IDEA funds for support services for students not identified as having a disability, but who need additional academic and behavioral supports to succeed in a general education classroom.

ECI (Early Childhood Intervention): A statewide program for children from birth to age three who have developmental delays. ECI must make services available for every eligible child. Early intervention programs are required by Part C of the IDEA. ECI services are not the responsibility of Fort Bend ISD.

Education Service Centers (ESCs): Education Service Centers are located in each of twenty geographic regions covering the state. Their main function is to provide training and technical assistance to the school districts located in their region. ESCs may also provide parent resources and training.

ESY (Extended School Year): Special education and related services provided beyond the normal school year to students with disabilities at no cost to their parents. The ARD Committee decides if your child requires ESY services, after considering whether, in one or more critical areas addressed in your child's current IEP, your child has exhibited, or reasonably may be expected to exhibit, severe or substantial regression that cannot be regained within a reasonable period of time. The term "severe or substantial regression" means that the child has been, or will be, unable to maintain one or more acquired critical skills in the absence of ESY services.

FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education): 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 (IDEA).

FIE (Full and Individual Evaluation): An evaluation conducted pursuant to the IDEA to determine whether a child is, or continues to be, a child with a disability, and the educational needs of the child.

IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act): The federal law requiring school districts to provide students with disabilities who require special education and related services with a free appropriate public education.

IEP (Individualized Education Program): The program that details the special education and related services that must be provided to each student who receives special education. The IEP must be reviewed, and revised if needed, at least every year in an ARD/ IEP meeting.

LRE (Least Restrictive Environment): The term used in the IDEA to refer to a student's right to be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with students who do not have disabilities.

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

Modifications: Modifications, unlike accommodations, change the level of instruction provided or tested. Modifications create a different standard for the student receiving them. Modifications are documented in the student's IEP.

Parent: Under the IDEA the definition of parent includes: biological, adoptive or foster parents; guardians (unless the child is a ward of the state); individuals acting in the place of natural or adoptive parents such as grandparents, stepparents, other relatives with whom the child lives; individuals responsible for the child's welfare; and assigned surrogates.

Person First Language: Person first language puts the person before the disability, and describes what disability a person has, not who a person is. It recognizes that individuals with disabilities are first and foremost people. It emphasizes each person's value, individuality, dignity, and capabilities.

PPCD (Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities): Public school services for children between the ages of three and five who qualify for special education services. Students ages 3-5 also receive services in the least restrictive environment, which may include settings such as a regular preschool in the community, a Head Start program, a pre-kindergarten class, or a self-contained class for children with disabilities.

REED_(Review of Existing Evaluation Data): A review of existing evaluations and other information to determine what additional data is needed to decide if a child has or continues to have a disability; needs or continues to need special education; and the educational needs of the child.

Response to Intervention (RtI): The federal No Child Left behind Act of 2001 and IDEA direct schools to focus more on helping all children learn by addressing problems early. Both laws stress the importance of providing high quality, scientific, research-based instruction and interventions, and holding schools accountable for the progress of all children in terms of

meeting grade-level standards. The goal of the RtI process is to identify children who are at risk for not meeting grade-level standards and to intervene early.

Section 504: The common name for the federal law that prohibits discrimination against students with disabilities. Section 504 (of Public Law 93-112, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) applies to any agency (including a school district) that receives federal money.

Supplementary Aids and Services: The term used in IDEA to describe those aids, services, and other supports provided in regular education classes, extracurricular activities, and/or non-academic settings, to enable a student with a disability to be educated with students who do not have disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate.

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

Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills (TEKS) Curriculum: The state-mandated curriculum for each grade level in Texas public schools. TEKS should be considered the "general education curriculum" referenced in the IDEA.