Free Appropriate Public Education

Appropriate Evaluation

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Parent & Student Participation in Decision Making

Procedural Safeguards

The Super 6 Guidebook

Six Principles of IDEA

Contents Developed by:

Oklahoma State Department of Education
Special Education Services

In conjunction with the

Oklahoma Parents Center, Inc.

Dear Parents,

The Oklahoma State Department of Education - Special Education Services (OSDE-SES) along with the Oklahoma Parents Center, Inc. (OPC), Oklahoma's only Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) authorized in Part D of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), have developed ***The Super 6 Guidebook: The Six Principles of IDEA*** to help you understand your rights as the parent of a child who has been referred or identified as having a disability.

Most importantly, you are the best advocate for the lifelong needs of your child. Your child's education is an area of great interest to you. As a child with a disability, your child may be eligible for special education services in school.

Special education laws and regulations are meant to protect a student with a disability to ensure that he or she receives the services and assistance that are necessary to make meaningful progress in his or her education program. The protections, rights, and opportunities will best help students with disabilities reach their full potential when parents, families, and schools work together collaboratively.

Oklahoma is committed to providing guidance and support in order to promote excellence in education for children with disabilities and their parents. This mission is accomplished by disseminating information to families, schools, communities and agencies through meaningful resources; fostering collaborative partnerships; and providing timely and accurate technical assistance.

Parents who have questions are encouraged to contact your local school, the OSDE - Special Education Services or the Oklahoma Parents Center, Inc. You may write or call.

We look forward to working with you to help your child learn, grow, and achieve at his or her highest potential.

Oklahoma State Department of Education
c/o Special Education Services
Oliver Hodge Bldg.
2500 North Lincoln Boulevard
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
405-521-3351
http://www.ok.gov/sde/special-education

Oklahoma Parents Center, Inc.
223 North Broadway
P.O. Box 512
Holdenville, OK 74848
Toll-free at 877-553-4332
405-379-6015
http://oklahomaparentscenter.org/

IDEAs that Work
U.S. Office of Special Education Programs

The contents of this guidebook were developed, in part, under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, #H328M100005. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Greg Knollman.

This guidebook is funded, in part, by a contract with the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE).

OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHAMPION EXCELLENCE

The Super 6

Six Principles of IDEA - Part B

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to eligible infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities.

Congress said this: "Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities."

How did it all begin? On November 29, 1975, the passage of the *Education for All Handicapped Children Act*, now known as the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (*IDEA*), guaranteed access to a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) to every child with a disability.

The current, reauthorized **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** was signed into law on December 3, 2004, by President George W. Bush.

Infants and toddlers with disabilities (birth - age 2) and their families receive early intervention services under IDEA Part C. Children and youth (ages 3 - 21) receive special education and related services under IDEA Part B.

Part A of IDEA: Lays out the basic foundation for the rest of the Act.

Part B of IDEA: Lays out the educational guidelines for school children 3-21 years of age. IDEA provides financial support for state and local school districts. To receive funding, school districts must comply with 6 main principles set out by IDEA:

1) Every child with a disability is entitled to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).
2) Children are entitled to an evaluation in all areas related to the suspected disability.
3) An Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed.
4) Educational services must be provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE).
5) Input of the child and their parents must be taken into account in the education process.
6) Parents have the right under IDEA to question their child's program plan (due process).

Part C of IDEA: Provides guidelines concerning the funding and services to be provided to children from birth through 3 years of age.

Part D of IDEA: Describes national activities to improve the education of children with disabilities. These activities include grants to improve the education and transitional services provided to students with disabilities. In addition, this section provides resources to support programs, projects and activities which contribute positive results for children with disabilities (IDEA, 1997).

IDEA has four distinct sections: Sections A, B, C and D.

This guide will focus on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) - Part B: the educational guidelines for school children ages 3 - 21.

Early Intervention Services (Part C)

Early intervention is a system of services that helps babies and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities. Early intervention focuses on helping eligible babies and toddlers learn the basic and brand-new skills that typically develop during the first three years of life, such as:

- physical (reaching, rolling, crawling, and walking);
- cognitive (thinking, learning, solving problems);
- communication (talking, listening, understanding);
- social/emotional (playing, feeling secure and happy); and
- self-help (eating, dressing).

Early intervention is intended for infants and toddlers who have a **developmental delay** or **disability**. Eligibility is determined by evaluating the child (with parents' consent) to see if the little one does, in fact, have a delay in development or a disability. Eligible children can receive early intervention services from birth through the third birthday.

In 1989, Oklahoma established the Oklahoma Early Intervention Act to provide further guidance for early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. As a result of the Oklahoma Early Intervention Act, the **SoonerStart Early Intervention Program (SoonerStart)** was created to provide services to children ages birth to 36 months.

SoonerStart uses the Operations Manual to provide SoonerStart staff and families with information and instruction regarding IDEA, Part C requirements as well as to establish standardized operating procedures for the SoonerStart program. This document, as well as many others, can be found at http://ok.gov/sde/soonerstart-families.

For More Information

Parents who have questions about a topic regarding Early Intervention in Oklahoma are encouraged to contact SoonerStart. You may write or call.

Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE)
c/o SoonerStart Early Intervention Program
Oliver Hodge Building
2500 North Lincoln Boulevard
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

405-521-3351

Special Education Services (Part B)

Special education is instruction that is specially designed to meet the unique needs of children who have disabilities. Special education and related services are provided in public schools at no cost to the parents and can include special instruction in the classroom, at home, in hospitals or institutions, or in other settings.

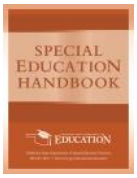
More than 5 million children ages 3 through 21 receive special education and related services each year in the United States. Each of these children receives instruction that is specially designed:

- to meet his or her unique needs (that result from having a disability); and
- to help the child learn the information and skills that other children are learning in the general education curriculum.

The Oklahoma State Department of Education - Special Education Services (OSDE-SES) provides guidance and support to families, schools, communities and agencies through meaningful resources, fostering collaborative partnerships and providing timely and accurate technical assistance.

The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) publishes two important documents to assist in providing guidance and support:

- *Special Education Policies*; and
- *Special Education Handbook*.



These documents, as well as many others, can be found on the Oklahoma State Department of Education's website at http://ok.gov/sde/documents-forms.

For More Information

Parents who have questions about a topic regarding Special Education in Oklahoma are encouraged to contact the OSDE-SES. You may write or call.

Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE)
c/o Special Education Services
Oliver Hodge Building
2500 North Lincoln Boulevard
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

405-521-3351

OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHAMPION EXCELLENCE

The following pages contain information about the **SIX MAIN PRINCIPLES** of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) - Part B, which provide the framework around which special education services are designed and provided to students with disabilities.

#1 Free Appropriate Public Education

IDEA guarantees that each child with a disability, eligible for special education, will be entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), even if the child is suspended or expelled.

F.A.P.E.

Free: requires that the education of each child with a disability must be provided at public expense. There is no cost to you, the parent. However, any incidental fees (such as membership fees for clubs) will be at the same cost for your child as for general education students.

Appropriate: means that each child with a disability is entitled to an education that is "appropriate" for his or her needs. "Appropriate education" is determined on an individual basis and may not be the same for each child with a disability. Each child with a disability will be entitled to an education that is tailored and planned to meet their needs as stated in their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Public: refers to the public school system. Children with disabilities, regardless of the nature or severity of their disabilities, have the same right to attend the public schools as their non-disabled peers. The public school system must educate students with disabilities, respond to their individual needs, and help them plan for their future.

Education: guarantees that eligible children with disabilities will receive a public education that includes special education and related services as directed by the child's Individualized Education Program (IEP), based on the child's individual needs. The education should prepare the child for the future—further education, employment, and independent living.

What a School is REQUIRED to Do Under FAPE:

- Provide special education and related services to students who need them. Services might include things like speech therapy or counseling.
- Provide these services at no charge to parents.
- Tailor an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to meet a student's needs.
- Educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE). This may mean spending most or all of the day in a general education classroom or it might mean spending that time in a special education classroom. It is based upon the needs of the student.

What a School is NOT REQUIRED to Do Under FAPE:

- Provide services superior to the services students without disabilities receive.
- Provide a specific program or adjust the school setting just because it's your preference. You can make suggestions, but the final decision isn't yours alone.
- Give a child with disabilities preferential treatment or guarantee a spot in an extracurricular activity. Schools have to provide the same treatment to all students.

#2 Appropriate Evaluation

All children with disabilities and who are in need of special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated.

WHAT IS AN EVALUATION?

An evaluation is the process for determining whether or not a child has a disability and needs special education and related services. The term evaluation is the process - not just one test. The IDEA requires that a child must receive a comprehensive evaluation before special education services are provided by the local education agency (LEA), also known as "your school district". It's the first step in getting detailed information on helping the child learn.

IDEA REQUIRES THAT EACH CHILD SUSPECTED OF HAVING A DISABILITY RECEIVE AN APPROPRIATE EVALUATION.

A group of people, including the parent, will evaluate the child. The group will begin by looking at what is already known about the child. Then, the group will determine what information is still needed, and the team will work together to collect that information.

If the team determines, based on the evaluation results, that a child is eligible for special education and related services, the next step is to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to meet the child's needs.

EVALUATION "MUSTS":

1. The evaluation must be conducted in the child's native language or other means of communication. (For example, Spanish, sign language, Braille, etc.)
2. Tests must be given in a way that does not discriminate against the child based on disability, racial heritage, cultural background, or gender.
3. The people who test the child must be qualified examiner(s). They must give each test according to the instructions that are specific to that test.
4. Evaluation results must be used to decide if a child is a "child with a disability" and to determine what kind of educational program the child needs. These decisions cannot be made based on only one procedure (such as only one test).
5. The child must be evaluated in all areas of each suspected disability category.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

1. **How do you request an evaluation?**

   If the parent is requesting the evaluation, they need to request in writing (email, fax, or write) to the school that their child be evaluated. The school must respond to the parent's request within a reasonable amount of time.

   If the school is requesting the evaluation, they must notify parents in writing (called prior written notice) that they would like to evaluate the child.

2. **How long does it take to get an evaluation?**

   The initial evaluation must be done within 45 school days from when the parent signs consent. This timeline can change if the parent repeatedly does not show or refuses the evaluation.

3. **How are evaluation results used?**

   After the child's evaluation is complete, the parent will meet with the school and evaluators. They will discuss all the test results and determine whether the child has a disability under IDEA. The school must provide the parent with a copy of the evaluation report and a written determination of eligibility.

4. **When is a child reevaluated?**

   A child receiving special education services must be evaluated at least once every three (3) years, but no more than once every year, unless the parent and the school both agree that a reevaluation is needed to make educational decisions.

5. **What if the parent disagrees with the school's evaluation?**

   The parent has the right to request an independent educational evaluation (IEE) at public expense after the school's evaluation. An IEE is conducted by qualified examiners not employed by the school. The school must provide parents with a list of names of possible examiners and provide the evaluation at no cost to the parent.

   If the school district refuses a parent's request for an IEE at public expense, the district must initiate a due process hearing to show that its evaluation was appropriate.

THE SCHOOL MUST ASK THE PARENT FOR WRITTEN PERMISSION BEFORE EVALUATING A CHILD.

#3 Individualized Education Program (IEP)

An individualized education program is developed, reviewed, and revised for each child with a disability.

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written statement of the educational program designed to meet a child's unique individual needs. **The key word is INDIVIDUALIZED.** In order to ensure that students with disabilities receive an appropriate and individualized education, IDEA requires that, after looking at current evaluation information, the team develop the IEP. The whole IEP process is a way for the parents and school staff to talk about the student's needs and to create a program to meet those needs.

The IEP has two general purposes:

1. **to establish measurable annual goals for the child; and**
2. **to identify and state the special education, related services, and supplementary aids and services that the school will provide for the child.**

An IEP lays the groundwork for what the school day of a child (with a disability) will look like, including what services the school will use to help the student be successful in achieving meaningful IEP goals. That's why the process of developing this vital document is of great interest and importance to educators, administrators, and families alike.

Special Education is NOT a Place. It is a Service!

Special Education services are designed without regard to where they will be done. The educational program (what services are needed) is decided first; the placement or setting (where the services will be provided) is decided second.

IDEA contains clear language about:

- Who develops the IEP
  and
- The information the IEP must contain.

Who develops the IEP?

IDEA describes the IEP team as including:

— the **parents**. This might include a grandparent, a step parent or other relatives with whom the child lives or an individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare.

— at least one **regular education teacher**. The regular education teacher knows the curriculum for a child's grade level and what children in regular education classes are typically expected to do.

— at least one **special education teacher.** This teacher has more training with such issues as providing the supplementary aids and services needed, providing special accommodations, and other aspects of individualizing instruction to meet the child's unique needs. The special education teacher has responsibility for working with or for the child to implement the IEP.

— a **representative of the public agency**. The administrative representative is generally a principal or superintendent. This person must have the power to commit the resources needed so that services can be provided as described in the IEP and will ensure those services will actually be provided.

— an individual who can **interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results**. They explain the evaluation results to the IEP team and describe how they can use the results to provide appropriate instruction to the student. He or she may already be a member of the team, such as a special education teacher, or may be someone else entirely, such as a school psychologist.

— other individuals who have **knowledge or special expertise regarding the child**. The parent and/or school system can invite anyone they feel may have knowledge or special expertise about the child, such as a neighbor, babysitter, grandparent, advocate, etc.

— the **child** with a disability (when appropriate). IDEA requires that the child be invited to the IEP meeting if transition goals and services are going to be discussed. Parents decide when it is appropriate for a child to attend meetings.

Each IEP team member is an equal partner in developing the IEP.

What information is required in the IEP?

1) What the child can currently do. These are called **present levels**. This is both academic and functional information.
2) **Measurable annual goals** measure how much improvement the team expects over the course of the year. Goals must be meaningful and measurable.
3) How the student's **progress toward meeting the goals** will be measured and when reports will be issued to parents. This is more than a grade or report card. This must be given at least as often as peers are given reports on their grades.
4) The **special education and related services** to be provided and program modifications or supports for school staff. Related services are helpful tools for students that the school should identify in the IEP on the Related Services Page. Related Services include but are not limited to Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Counseling Services, or others - the list is non-exhaustive.
5) If the student is not in the general education classroom, the school needs to provide a detailed explanation of why he or she is not included.
6) A list of any **accommodations** that are needed on statewide assessments. If the student is taking an alternate assessment, the IEP must state why this option was chosen.
7) The **start date, how often, where, and how long** the student will receive services and accommodations.
8) At the IEP meeting just before the student reaches age 16 or enters 9th grade (younger if appropriate), **transition goals**, course of study, other agencies involved, and coordinated activities to assist the student in meeting his or her transition. In some instances, transition services start earlier.

How often should the IEP team meet?

The IEP team should meet at least once a year to take a look at the child's IEP and how the child is progressing towards his or her goals set in the IEP. This is called an Annual Meeting. At this meeting, the IEP team will talk about the child's present levels of educational performance, review last year's goals and progress, and add new goals and measurements for the coming year.

Just remember that the IEP team CAN MEET any time before an Annual Meeting if the parent or school has a concern about the child's educational plan.

The parent will also get information every THREE years about whether or not additional evaluations are needed. Again, the parent or school can ask for more evaluations before the three-year reevaluation mark if any IEP team member believes more data is needed to support the child.

What should parents do during the IEP meeting?

- **Stay focused:** Use notes to keep the team on track. Keep the focus on the child's needs.
- **Ask questions:** If anything is not clear, ask for an explanation. Also, if there is a disagreement, ask for documentation that supports each member's point of view.
- **Be thorough:** Do not move away from one area until it fully addresses the child's needs. If an agreement cannot be made, add it to the parent list of concerns.
- **Keep emotions under control:** Remember, the purpose of the meeting is to outline the child's educational needs by developing an IEP that is appropriate.

An IEP is the road map for how the school will educate the child!

#4 Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Children with disabilities must be educated with their nondisabled peers as much as is appropriate using supplementary aids and services.

WHAT DOES LRE REALLY MEAN?

To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are to be educated with children who are not disabled. However, it may be decided that the student cannot be educated satisfactorily in the general classroom, even with the provision of supplementary aids and services. The team must then consider other placements outside of the general classroom in order to provide FAPE for the child.

IDEA also requires that the child's placement:

1. Is determined at least annually;
2. Is based on the child's IEP; and
3. Is as close as possible to the child's home.

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT IS BASED ON THE CHILD'S UNIQUE, INDIVIDUAL NEEDS.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) means that:

- Any placement outside the general education classroom and why that placement is needed is justified by the child's individual disability-related need(s);
- Students must have meaningful access to same-age peers without disabilities;
- Schools must provide supplementary aids and services in the general education classroom;
- Supplementary aids and services can also support involvement in extracurricular and other activities to meet the disability needs of the student;
- Funding CANNOT be the sole reason for a more or less restrictive placement.

WHO DECIDES WHAT PLACEMENT IS APPROPRIATE?

The child's parents, personnel who know the placement options, and individuals who understand the data used to create the IEP decide the appropriate placement. Generally, this decision is made by the IEP team during the IEP meeting.

WHAT PLACEMENT OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE?

Placement is not the same as location. Regardless of placement, the child will be given appropriate access to the general education curriculum, as determined by the IEP team.

Here are some examples of placement options:

- Full-time general classroom with support services;
- Part-time special education/general education classroom;
- Full-time special education classroom;
- Special school (public or private);
- Home instruction;
- Instruction in hospitals;
- Instruction in institutions or residential facilities (correctional facility).

WHAT ARE SUPPLEMENTARY AIDS AND SUPPORT SERVICES?

The team is required to explore all aids needed to ensure that the student can receive a satisfactory education in the general education classroom. There is no specific list of supplementary aids and support services to choose from.

Below are **EXAMPLES** of the kinds of things that could be done to support the child, but if there are other supports not on this list that are a better fit for the child, then they can and should be used.

- Adapted and modified classwork and assignments;
- Assistive technology, such as a text reader;
- Extended time to complete an assignment or test;
- Special seating in the classroom; and
- Differentiated instruction.

DOES LRE ONLY APPLY TO SCHOOL WORK?

NO!!! Students with disabilities are to be given equal opportunity to participate in nonacademic social and extracurricular activities that are appropriate for them such as: **lunch and recess; dances; sports (competitive and non-competitive); performing arts such as band and choral groups; and student clubs and committees.**

Disability Never Drives Placement!!!

#5 Parent & Student Participation in Decision Making

IDEA requires that parents (and students, as appropriate) have the opportunity to participate in each step of the Special Education process.

One of IDEA's foundational principles is the right of parents to participate in educational decision making regarding their child with a disability. The law is very specific about what school systems must do to ensure that parents have the opportunity to participate, if they so choose. This principle reinforces the belief that the education of children with disabilities is made more effective by strengthening the role of parents in the special education process. **Parents know their children better than anyone else.**

IDEA guarantees that parents are given the opportunity to participate. The rest—whether to participate, how much to participate—is up to each parent. Parents vary in the amounts and ways in which they become involved in their child's education.

Parental rights of participation can be summarized as follows:

1) Parents have the right to participate in meetings related to the evaluation, identification, and educational placement of their child.
2) Parents have the right to participate in meetings related to the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to their child.
3) Parents are entitled to be members of any group that decides whether their child is a "child with a disability" and meets eligibility criteria for special education and related services.
4) Parents are entitled to be members of the team that develops, reviews, and revises the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for their child.
5) Parents are entitled to be members of any group that makes placement decisions for their child.

If neither parent can attend a meeting, the school must use other methods to ensure their participation, including individual or conference calls, or video conferencing.

How does IDEA define the word "PARENT"?

1) A biological or adoptive parent of a child;
2) A foster parent;
3) A guardian;
4) An individual acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent (including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative) with whom the child lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare;
5) A surrogate parent who has been appointed; or
6) If a judicial decree or order identifies a specific person or persons to act as the "parent" of a child or to make educational decisions on behalf of a child, then such person or persons shall be determined to be the "parent" for purposes of this section.

Students must be invited to any IEP meetings if transition services are to be discussed.

When considering transition goals and services, IDEA requires that the child be invited to the meeting. Students are encouraged to advocate for themselves, and IDEA promotes this by stating that they are members of the IEP team, when appropriate. Parents decide when it is appropriate for a child to attend meetings.

#6 Procedural Safeguards

These are special rules that ensure the rights of children with disabilities and their parents are protected and understood.

The IDEA 2004 includes a section called Procedural Safeguards designed to protect the rights of parents and their children with a disability and, at the same time, give families and school systems several mechanisms by which to resolve their disputes.

These are not the only procedural safeguards under IDEA, but they are the most relevant to the majority of parents.

1) **Access to Educational Records** - parents have the right to see, request copies of, and get an explanation of any and everything that is in their child's educational records.
2) **Procedural Safeguards Notice** - the school must provide parents with a written explanation of all the procedural safeguards under federal and state laws. For a copy of the Oklahoma Parents Rights in Special Education: Notice of Procedural Safeguards, visit ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/SpecEd-ParentsRights-English.pdf.
3) **Prior Written Notice** - the messages parents receive from the school system to inform them about any actions they are proposing to take or refusing to take. This also includes notifying parents of upcoming meetings far enough in advance to ensure they can attend and scheduling meetings at a mutually agreed-on time and place.
4) **Understandable Language** - the written notices that parents receive must be understandable to the general public and must be in the native language or other mode of communication used by the parent (including Braille, Sign Language, Spanish, etc.).
5) **Confidentiality of Information** - the school must protect the child's confidentiality. This includes name, address, social security number, etc. There are some exceptions under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act located at familypolicy.ed.gov/?src=fpco-faqs.
6) **"Stay Put" Rights** - this provision allows the child to stay in the current placement while the parents and school resolve a dispute via due process.
7) **Resolving a Dispute** - IDEA includes specific and formal ways to resolve conflicts.
   - **Mediation** - parents and schools can communicate openly and respectfully about their differences as they try to reach an agreement with a skilled and impartial mediator. This process is free and completely voluntary. **The decision-making power resides with the participants in mediation.** For Frequently Asked Questions about mediation, visit ok.gov/sde/faqs/special-education-mediation.
   - **Filing a State Complaint** - a formal written letter or state complaint form to the Oklahoma State Department of Education - Special Education Services (OSDE-SES) to report a violation or problem with a school. A state complaint can be completed by a parent, organization, or individual, it must describe what requirement of IDEA the school has violated, among other specific things, and it must be signed. **The decision-making power resides with the OSDE-SES.** For State Complaint Form, visit ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/SpecEd-ComplaintReqState%20%28revised%29.pdf.
   - **Due Process** - this is the most formal way of resolving disagreements between parents and schools. A parent or school must write a written complaint to begin this process. The complaint can involve any aspect of how the parent believes the school is violating IDEA. **The decision-making power resides with the hearing officer.** For Due Process Complaint Form, visit ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/SpecEd-DueProcess-Parent.pdf.

     Parents and schools will attend a due process hearing. The hearing is like a courtroom trial. Parents and the school will present arguments, witnesses, and evidence to a hearing officer. Parties may represent themselves or be represented by attorneys at their own expense. There are circumstances where parents and/or the school would be responsible to pay the attorneys' fees for the other side. **Any fees awarded are determined by a court of law - not the hearing officer.** For Frequently Asked Questions about due process, visit ok.gov/abletech/Special_Education_Resolution_Center/DueprocessFAQ.html.

     If a party is unhappy with the decision from the due process hearing, they can file an appeal to the Oklahoma State Department of Education. An impartial Appeal Officer will be assigned to review the case.

The surveys are a collaborative effort of the Oklahoma State Department of Education - Special Education Services (OSDE-SES) and the Oklahoma Parents Center. The responses are collected in alignment with federal regulations and are reported collectively to districts, SoonerStart offices, and the U.S. Dept. of Education. Districts and SoonerStart sites can use this information to improve parent and family engagement in service design and provision.

The survey consists of less than 15 questions and should take you about 10 minutes to complete. Your responses are entirely anonymous, unless you choose to share your contact information. None of the information that could be linked to you will ever be shared with SoonerStart, district or school personnel. Your participation is voluntary, and you can stop the survey at any time (though we really appreciate complete surveys!).

How can you take the Survey?

Take the Survey Online!

Visit our website
and follow the Survey Link
at
www.OklahomaParentsCenter.org

Answer the Survey over the telephone!

Call the OPC to answer the Survey to the staff during business hours at
877- 553 - 4332

Have the Survey mailed!

To request a Survey be mailed to you call our toll-free line at
877- 553 - 4332

What is the Oklahoma Parents Center?

The Oklahoma Parents Center (OPC) is Oklahoma's only federally funded Parent Training and Information Center. We are funded through the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE). We have been providing services to Oklahoma families of children with disabilities, their teachers and other professionals since 2000. Our PTI staff is here to help you navigate the Special Education maze and provide you with the information and tools you need to be an informed and active participant in your child's education.

What services are offered by the OPC?

The OPC offers the following to parents, professionals, and consumers in Oklahoma:

- Toll Free "Parent Info Line" at 877-553-4332 for individual support;
- Parent Education Workshops on a variety of topics related to Special Education;
- An electronic monthly newsletter;
- Lending Library; and
- Services and Support to Spanish-speaking parents.

For more information or to schedule a workshop:

Call toll free 877- 553 - 4332

Email us:

info@oklahomaparentscenter.org