

Notice of Special Education Services

The Cocalico School District provides special education and related services to resident children with disabilities who are ages three through twenty-one. The purpose of this notice is to describe (1) the types of disabilities that might qualify the child for such programs and services, (2) the special education programs and related services that are available, (3) the process by which the Cocalico School District screens and evaluates such students to determine eligibility, and (4) the special rights that pertain to such children and their parents or legal guardians.

What types of disability might qualify a child for special education and related services?

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, commonly referred to as the "IDEA," children qualify for special education and related services if they have one or more of the following disabilities and, as a result, demonstrate a need for special education and related services: (1) intellectual disability, (2) hearing impairments, including deafness, (3) speech or language impairments, (4) visual impairments, including blindness, (5) emotional disturbance, (6) orthopedic impairments, (7) autism, including pervasive developmental disorders; (8) traumatic brain injury, (9) other health impairment, (10) specific learning disabilities. If a child has more than one of the above-mentioned disabilities, the child could qualify for special education and related services as having multiple disabilities. Children ages three through five years old may also be eligible if they have developmental delays and, as a result, need special education and related services.

The legal definitions of these disabilities, which the public schools are required to apply under the IDEA, may differ from those used in medical or clinical practice. Moreover, the IDEA definitions could apply to children with disabilities that have very different medical or clinical disorders. A child with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, for example, could qualify for special education and related services as a child with "other health impairments," "emotional disturbance," or "specific learning disabilities" if the child meets the eligibility criteria under one or more of these disability categories and if the child needs special education and related services as a result.

Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, some school age children with disabilities who do not meet the eligibility criteria under the IDEA might nevertheless be eligible for special protections and for adaptations and accommodations in instruction, facilities, and activities. Children are entitled to such protections, adaptations, and accommodations if they have a mental or physical disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program.

Children age three through the age of admission to first grade are also eligible if they have developmental delays and as a result, need Special Education and related services. Developmental delay is defined as a child who is less than the age of beginners, and at least 3 years of age and is considered to have a developmental delay when one of the following exists: (i) The child's score, on a developmental assessment device, on an assessment instrument which yields a score in months, indicates that the child is delayed by 25% of the child's chronological age in one or more developmental areas; or (ii) the child is delayed in one or more of the developmental areas, as documented by test performance of 1.5 standard deviations below the mean on a standardized test. Developmental areas include cognitive, communication, physical, social/emotional, and self-help. For additional information, you may contact the Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13 at 717-606-1600.

All information gathered about your child by the public school is subject to confidentiality provisions contained in federal and state law.

What programs and services are available for children with disabilities?

The Cocalico School District must ensure that children with disabilities are educated to the maximum extent appropriate with their non-disabled peers, commonly referred to as the least restrictive environment. For more specific details about the programs and services available for children with disabilities, please go to www.cocalico.org and select “Special Services” under the Support Programs tab.

Please contact the Special Services Office of the Cocalico School District at 336-1461 for additional information regarding special education services.