
Transition to Preschool

For children who are at least 3 years old



Once a child who is deaf or hard of hearing turns 3, he or she may be eligible to receive special services when they attend school. Under federal law, school districts are responsible for providing services needed for school-aged children. All children are entitled to a free, appropriate, and public education (FAPE). The term “free” means that there is no cost to the child or parent for the child to be educated. An “appropriate” education means that the state has complied with procedures set forth in IDEA, and that an individualized education program has been reasonably calculated to enable the child to receive educational benefits.

Although the law does not directly state that the child is entitled to the best education possible, but rather one that is appropriately suited to meet his or her needs, families can be instrumental in deciding what is best for their child. The education is “public” as it is provided within the public school district. A public school district, however, is required to pay for a private education for a child when it is determined that the public school district cannot provide the education to which the student is entitled.

Finally, an “education,” is not medically related, but may include health care services related to the child’s special needs. However, a child who has been receiving Early Intervention Services is

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not automatically entitled to receive services once they reach the age of three. The child must first be evaluated by the school district through the Child Find process.

When your child reaches the age of three, and with your permission, the Service Coordinator will call a transition meeting with your IFSP team and your child's school district representative. Your child will then be referred to your school district's Child Find Team. The Child Find Team will review existing information and assessments provided by the IFSP team and will determine what, if any, additional assessments might be needed. If your child has not participated in the birth-to-three early intervention program, contact your home public school to begin the preschool placement process.

Parental consent is needed before the child is evaluated, and the evaluation must be completed within 60 days of parental consent. The evaluation may encompass all possible areas related to the suspected disability or identified diagnosis as in the case of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing. It is important to note that hearing loss, in and of itself, may not qualify a child for special education services. A child must have an educational need as a result of the hearing loss that will require special accommodations. This will be considered during the evaluation, and interpretations of this definition vary from school district to school district.

If the parents disagree with the evaluation, then it is their right to take their child for an Independent Educational Evaluation, and ask the school district to pay for the cost of this second evaluation. The child's eligibility for special services is then decided upon by a group of qualified professionals and the child's parents. If the parents are not satisfied with the eligibility decision, then they may request a hearing to challenge that decision.

Another law that covers your child's right to a public education is Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Please see the following figure for an explanation of how Section 504 and IDEA work together to better assist your child's education team in making the most appropriate decision for your child's educational success.

Individual Education Plans (IEP) and 504 Plans

As a parent, you are your child's greatest advocate, supporter, and cheerleader. By becoming knowledgeable regarding educational laws as well as services and programs available within your community, you can ensure that your child receives a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). There are two primary laws that cover your child's rights to a public education:

1. Individuals with Disability Education Improvement Act (IDEA)
2. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Understanding how Section 504 and IDEA work with each other and complement each other allows you as the parent to better assist your child's educational team in ensuring your child's right to a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) is provided allowing for maximum educational success.

What is an IEP?

An IEP is an individual education plan, which is part of the special education laws of the IDEA 97 laws or educational benefit laws. IDEA allows for additional services and protections for disabled children not offered to other children such as accommodations, modifications, related and special education services to allow the child to be successful in school.

What is a 504 plan?

Section 504, of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Section 504 ensures that a child with a disability has equal access to an education. The child may receive accommodations and modifications even if he or she does not qualify for special education. Any school or program receiving federal funds must follow this law.

What are the similarities between the two plans?

Both plans can provide the student with certain accommodations and modifications to allow a disabled child to be more successful in school. Related services can be provided for students on either plan, such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech and language therapy. Neither plan requires the student to have a change of placement. The child may stay in a regular classroom.

What are the main differences between the two?

A student receiving Special Education (SPED) through an IEP is protected under all Section 504 laws. The opposite is not true. Section 504 does require the school to come up with a system of safeguards such as:

- Parental notice of evaluation or placement decision
- Parental review of records
- Impartial hearing for appeals.

SPED has a more elaborate system of safeguards to protect the parent and child, such as:

- Prior Written Notice of all evaluations, changes to IEP and placement changes
- Right to an independent evaluation at the public school's expense
- Arbitration or mediation if the parent and school do not agree on the plan
- Administrative Complaint Process
- Due Process Hearing

A 504 plan includes only accommodations, modification, and related services as needed. It does not allow for direct or indirect services with the student, or consultation services regarding the student between the special education teacher and regular education teachers. IEP does provide for services through special education teachers with the student and consultation with the regular classroom teachers.

Qualifying for Special Education and an IEP

Special education allows a child to have an individual education plan (IEP) when the child's disability interferes with the student's education and performance. Special Education is available for all children that qualify from age 3 through age 21 or upon graduation from high school, whichever comes first. If a parent feels their child requires special education, the first step is to contact the school the child is attending and explain what how you feel your child's disability will affect education. The next step is the evaluation, which will include:

- a letter or form from the physician explaining the child's specific medical concern
- interview with parents
- interview with teachers
- information from parents
- specific testing, including all areas related to suspected disability

If the child is qualified as "other health impaired" it does not require that testing be performed to show a learning disability. However, this does require proof, from your physician, of a medical disability that affects the child's education.

After the evaluation is completed, the team will meet. The team consists of the parent, the student (if he/she is at least 14 years old), regular education teacher, a Local Educational Agency (LEA) representative (usually the principal) and a representative from any area that the child was tested in (i.e. speech pathologist, audiologist, psychologist). The parent may bring an advocate, such as a more experienced parent, to this and all team meetings. At the team meeting, all findings will be reviewed, including the teacher's observations, the physician's information, and any testing that has been completed. The parent may share any literature they have on the child's disability and how it will affect him or her in school at this time. After discussing the findings, the team will make a decision on eligibility.

Qualifying for a 504 Plan

Eligibility for a 504 plan requires a physical or mental disability, which substantially limits at least one major life activity (i.e. walking, writing, speaking, etc.) If the child qualifies for an IEP the parent cannot legally choose to use a 504 plan instead.

The first step is to contact the school the student is attending. Most schools will evaluate a student to see if the student will qualify for special education first. If the child does not meet eligibility criteria for special education, the school will evaluate for a 504 plan. The team will get information from the parents, classroom teachers, attending physician, and more, depending on the impairment. A 504 plan allows for many accommodations and modifications depending on the exact disability. Depending on various factors, an audiologist may recommend various accommodations and modifications for students with hearing loss, which may include any of the following listed on the next page. As needed, 504 plans also allow for related services such as speech and language therapy and/or audiology services. The final modifications and accommodations will be individualized, according to state regulations.

Reference:

1. American Partnership for Eosinophilic Disorders Website
http://www.apfed.org/downloads/IEP_and_504.pdf

THE IEP PROCESS

If it is determined that the child is eligible for special education services, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be written according to the child's needs. When IDEA was reauthorized in 1997, it included specific language for students who were deaf or hard of hearing:

In Sec.300.346 Development, review and revision of IEP:

The IEP team shall also... (iv) Consider the communication needs of the child, and in the case of a child who is deaf and hard of hearing, consider the child's language and communication needs, opportunities for direct communications with peers and professional personnel in the child's language and communication mode, academic level, and full range of needs, including opportunities for direct instruction in the child's language and communication mode; and (v) consider whether the child requires assistive technology devices and services.

An IEP team must meet to write an IEP for your child within 30 calendar days after your child is determined to be eligible for services. The meeting will be scheduled by the school district, and the parents must receive advance notice to ensure that they have ample opportunity to attend. As a parent, you have the right to request for the school district to reschedule the meeting if it is not planned for a time that you can attend. You can also invite other people (such as your Service Coordinator or other IFSP team members) to attend the meeting who have special knowledge about the child. Typically, the following people will attend an IEP meeting (although some people may perform more than one role):

- Parent(s)
- School administrator- A member of the school district who knows about the general education curriculum and the resources available at the school. This person must also be qualified to provide or supervise special education services.
- General education teacher (if your child is participating in, or will be participating in, a general education class)
- Special education teacher- At least one special education teacher or provider who works with, or will work with, your child

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- Evaluation personnel- Someone who knows the child's evaluation results and what these results mean for instruction. This person could be a school psychologist, an administrator, or the child's teacher.
- Child- It is usually up to the parent to decide if the child will attend, but an older child must be invited to the transition meeting for life after high school.

The following people might also be present at your child's IEP meeting, depending on your child's needs and the situation:

- Interpreter/Translators- A person who can communicate with families or children using ASL or other language or communication mode.
- Transition personnel- A person who can ensure the continuation of services in the next stage or setting of a child's education. For example, this person might navigate the move from Early Intervention to preschool, or from preschool to elementary school).
- Others with knowledge or special expertise about your child- Any person who has knowledge of the child and may be able to contribute to the meeting (e.g. a private speech pathologist or a special care giver).

A child's first IEP meeting can be overwhelming to parents due to the large number of attendees and the sensitivity of the topics discussed when attempting to decide what is best for your child. It is highly suggested that parents discuss these issues with your Service Coordinator and/or research IEP meetings via websites or through parent-to-parent networking prior to the meeting. To further help you prepare for the first IEP meeting, please see the following suggestions.

Preparing for the IEP Helpful Hints for a Successful Meeting

Before the IEP Meeting

1. Review your child's current IEP.

What goals did your child reach? Which ones haven't been met? Are new goals needed?

Ask to review all of your child's school records.

2. Talk to your child about school.

What subjects and activities do they like or not like?

Pay attention to what seems to motivate and interest your child.

3. Visit your child's classroom(s) and other possible program options.

4. Make a list of your child's strengths and needs.

Consider academic, social, behavioral, and self-help skills for the next year and upcoming transitions.

5. Make a list of goals you would like your child to achieve.

What concerns and hopes do you have for your child now and in the future?

Share your expectations and dreams for your child.

6. Make a list of questions you have for the team.

Review samples of your child's work and progress reports to see if appropriate progress has been made.

Call your child's private therapist or doctor if you have any concerns. Take recent reports from them to the meeting.

7. Know what rights and responsibilities you and your child have for special education services.

Ask for information about IEP procedures.

Attend parent trainings, or contact a parent group for more information.

8. Be prepared to advocate for your child.

Know who will be attending the meeting.

Have someone with you for support.

Organize your thoughts and materials.

Maintain a positive attitude.

Assume that each team member has your child's best interest in mind and that everyone wants to work together.

During the Meeting

1. Get answers to your questions.

Get answers to your question(s) or ask that someone get back to you later.
Ask staff to clarify terms or programs which are unfamiliar to you.

2. Steps to take if there are disagreements.

Work as a team to explore options.
Respect each other's opinions.
Repeat your requests and concerns, stating your reason(s), to make sure the team understands your position.
Sign the IEP to show your attendance, but do not give your approval for the IEP contents if you disagree.
Ask to hold another meeting at a later date if the team can't reach consensus.
Gather more information if needed.
Avoid emotional confrontations.
Ask for and review procedural safeguards. The school will give you the name of a parent advocacy group to help address your concerns.

3. School records are important.

Request a copy of the IEP document.

After the IEP Meeting

1. The IEP meeting is over, but your involvement continues.

Keep a copy of the current IEP on hand to review periodically and monitor progress.
Ask for an IEP review meeting if issues and concerns develop and cannot be easily resolved.

2. Continue to learn more about special education procedures and self-advocacy.

Contact parent groups for resources and training,
Call the Parent Information Network for additional information at 1-800-352-4558 or 602-542-3852.

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Source: Parent Information Network, Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services

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The purpose of the meeting is to develop an IEP document that will outline the special services your child will receive in the preschool setting. Some team members might suggest IEP items, but the parents are equal members of the IEP team, and no services can be given to the child without parental consent. If you disagree with the decisions made by other members of the IEP team, you should voice your concerns and state the reasons why you feel the way you do to ensure that the others understand your position.

It also helps to maintain a positive attitude, as your ideas are more likely to be considered if they are conveyed in a constructive manner rather than an accusatory manner. You may need to create solutions and present them to the team for consideration. If the team continues to disagree on proposed services, you as a parent must sign the IEP to show that you were in attendance, but you do not have to give agreement to the IEP contents. You may ask for another meeting to be held at a later date if a consensus is not reached. If you are still in disagreement with the IEP team, you may file a complaint with the state agency and request a due process hearing. Mediation will be provided.

Each child's IEP must include:

- The child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance
- Annual goals for the child
- How the child's progress toward each goal will be measured
- Statement of special education and related services to be provided to (or on behalf of) the child, including program modifications or support from school staff
- Explanation of the extent (if any) to which the child will not participate in the mainstreamed classroom and in school activities
- The child's communication and language mode (if an interpreter is required)
- Special modifications for student assessment procedures, including state and district-wide assessments, if needed
- Dates of services including frequency and location
- How and when the parents will be informed of the child's progress

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Once the child begins receiving services as defined by the IEP, the team must meet at least once a year, or more often if a parent or guardian requests a review of the IEP. The IEP may be revised as necessary, and parents have the right to request additional testing, independent evaluations, mediation, and a due process hearing. The child will be reevaluated at least every 3 years unless the parents and school system agree that such an evaluation is not necessary. Parents must give consent for this reevaluation.

The Arizona Department of Education (ADE), Office of Exceptional Student Services (ESS) provides information about the IEP process, and what to do if the school district and parents do not agree on the elements of the IEP.

Arizona Department of Education Exceptional Student Services

www.ade.az.gov/ess

1-602-542-4013

The Parent Education Network, within the Arizona Department of Education Exceptional Student Services, has Parent Information Network Specialists (PINS) who provide on-site and phone consultations, trainings, resources, and information to support parents of special education students, all free of charge. A free consultation is provided to help parents assess their needs and learn how to participate in the special education process including IEP meetings. However, PIN specialists cannot attend IEP meetings.

PINS has recently joined forces with the Arizona Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) at Raising Special Kids to improve the delivery of parent training and assistance in special education across the state. Other parents of students receiving special education services that have been nominated by PIN specialists or school district/charter school staff are called Partners Are Liaisons to Schools (PALS). These parents serve as contacts for families at the district or school level to educate parents and students about their special education rights and responsibilities. You can find information about PINS and PALS, as well as an extensive library of downloadable resources such as sample letter for requests for evaluations and records and information on subjects related to special education on their website.

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Arizona Department of Education Exceptional Student Services Parent Education Network

www.ade.az.gov/special-education/deputy-associate-superintendent/parent-information-network

877-230-7467

Assistance with IEP meetings is another service provided by the Pilot Parents of Southern Arizona, a group of interested parents and professionals serving families with children with special needs. Their website contains a list of services available, one of which is assistance with, and sometimes attendance at, a child's IEP meeting.

Pilot Parents of Southern Arizona

www.pilotparents.org

520-324-3150

EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENTS AND MODIFICATIONS

For every child who is three years of age or older, the IEP must specify the type of educational environment the team feels will best meet the child's needs. The IDEA specifies that all students with disabilities must be educated in the same environment as students without disabilities as much as possible. This is called the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

However, parents of a child with special needs and/or the IEP team might feel that the best placement for the child is NOT in the least restrictive environment. For example, a child who is learning to develop his or her speech and auditory skills might be best suited to attend an oral deaf preschool. The parents have the right to opt out of what would be the least restrictive environment, in this case a preschool with students without disabilities, for an educational experience that they feel would better meet their child's needs.

A child can be educated in classrooms that range from self-contained to full inclusion. A self-contained classroom is one in which the child spends 39% or less of the school day in the "regular" classroom with peers who do not have special needs. Instruction in the self-contained classroom is provided to a small class by a special education teacher.

A resource classroom is one in which the child spends 40-79% of the school day in the "regular" classroom with peers who do not have special needs. Special services are provided in both the regular classroom and the special education classroom as a "pull-out" depending on the parameters of the IEP.

A mainstreamed classroom is when a child is educated in the regular classroom in the same manner and with the same requirements as peers who do not have special needs. Inclusion, on the other hand, is when a child is educated in the regular classroom and support services are provided within this setting. Assignments in the regular classroom are adapted to fit the child's individual needs.

In the state of Arizona, your child's school district of residence is responsible for providing special education services for your child. There are special education preschools available throughout the state. The Arizona Department of Education has a searchable database of schools by name, city, county, zip code, county, or district number.

Arizona Department of Education/Find A School

www.azed.gov/edd

800-352-4558

Another option for children who are deaf or hard of hearing is to attend preschool at the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (ASDB). The Arizona School for the Deaf (ASD) is in Tucson, and the Phoenix Day School for the Deaf (PDS) is in Phoenix, with five satellite sites located from Queen Creek to Avondale. Both of these schools support a philosophy that includes the acquisition of both American Sign Language (ASL) and English. The preschool classrooms typically have 4-6 children with a certified Teacher of the Deaf and an Instructional Assistant. Speech therapy, occupational therapy, audiology, and physical and vision therapy (if needed) are provided on these campuses. Attendance at the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind is funded through the child's local school district, and transportation to and from their campus will also be provided without cost to the family if specified in the IEP. ASDB also has Regional Cooperatives, a voluntary partnership between public education agencies in northern Arizona and ASDB, to provide services within the local school setting. A list of the Cooperatives and member districts in Arizona by region can be found on their website, under (programs).

Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB)

www.asdb.az.gov

520-770-3863 Tucson; 602-771-5300 Phoenix

A child might also be educated in a private school, such as the Desert Voices Pre-School Program. This Phoenix-based private, not-for-profit school's mission is to teach children who deaf or hard of hearing the oral language skills needed to speak and understand when others speak to them. The preschool is a certified Moog Center, which prepares students to enter a mainstreamed classroom setting when they are ready, and with the age appropriate speech and language skills at the academic level of their peers. The preschool program at Desert Voices is a full day program for children ages 3 to approximately first grade.

Desert Voices Pre-School Program

www.desert-voices.org

602-224-0598

Another option is for the child to attend preschool at a public charter school. Although not an option for preschool students, the Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is a public charter school located in Mesa, Arizona that serves students beginning in kindergarten. At Sequoia, students master both American Sign Language (ASL) and English so that they might succeed in both the hearing and deaf worlds.

Sequoia School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

www.sequoiadeafschool.org

480-890-4001

Special educational accommodations and modifications for children with special needs at any of these schools must be agreed upon by the IEP team, and listed in the IEP. Some of these accommodations can be found in the IEP checklist that follows:

THE IEP CHECKLIST:

RECOMMENDED ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH HEARING LOSS

Name: _____ Date: _____

Amplification Options

- Personal hearing device (hearing aid, cochlear implant, tactile device).
- Personal FM system (hearing aid + FM).
- FM system/auditory trainer (without personal hearing aid).
- Walkman-style FM system.
- Sound-field FM system.

Assistive Devices

- TDD.
- TV captioned.
- Other.

Communication Accommodations

- Specialized seating arrangements:

- Obtain student's attention prior to speaking.
- Reduce auditory distractions (background noise).
- Reduce visual distractions.
- Enhance speechreading conditions (avoid hands in front of face, mustaches well-trimmed, no gum chewing).
- Present information in simple structured, sequential manner.
- Clearly enunciate speech. Allow extra time for processing information.
- Repeat or rephrase information when necessary.
- Frequently check for understanding.
- Educational interpreter (ASL, signed English, cued speech, oral).

Physical Environment Accommodations

- Noise reduction (carpet & other sound absorption materials).
- Specialized lighting.
- Room design modifications.
- Flashing fire alarm.

Instructional Accommodations

- Use of visual supplements (overheads, chalkboard, charts, vocabulary lists, lecture outlines).
- Captioning or scripts for television, videos, movies, filmstrips.
- Buddy system for notes, extra explanations/directions.
- Check for understanding of information.
- Down time / break from listening.
- Extra time to complete assignments.
- Step-by-step directions.
- Tutor.
- Note taker.

Curricular Modifications

- Modify reading assignments (shorten length, adapt or eliminate phonics assignments).
- Modify written assignments (shorten length, adjust evaluation criteria).
- Pre-tutor vocabulary.
- Provide supplemental materials to reinforce concepts.
- Provide extra practice .
- Alternative curriculum.

Evaluation Modifications

- Reduce quantity of tests.
- Use alternative tests.
- Provide reading assistance with tests.
- Allow extra time.
- Other modifications: _____

Other Needs? Considerations.

- Supplemental instruction (speech, language, pragmatic skills, auditory, speechreading skills).
- Counseling.
- Sign language instruction.
- Vocational services.
- Family supports.
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing role models.
- Recreational/Social opportunities.
- Financial assistance.
- Transition services.

Source: Johnson, Benson, & Seaton. (1997). *Educational Audiology Handbook*. Appendix 11-A, p.448. Singular publishing Group, Inc.

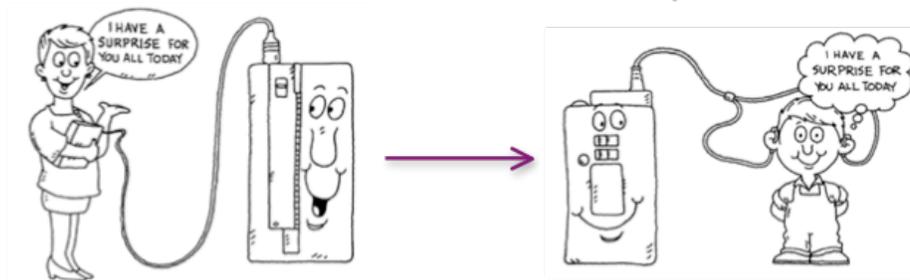
Although today's advanced hearing aids can improve the quality, audibility, and clarity of the speech signal, they cannot remove all obstacles to speech understanding. FM devices are an effective way to improve speech understanding in difficult listening situations. FM systems can be used with or without hearing aids to make hearing easier—reducing stress and fatigue.

What is an FM system?

FM systems work in tandem with the child's hearing aids by adding a special, remote microphone that can be placed much closer to the speaker. An FM system transmits sounds via radio waves, just like a miniature radio station. They operate on special radio frequencies assigned by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). An FM device transmits the speech signal directly to the ear, thereby limiting the influence from noise, distance, or reverberation. Simply put, in poor listening conditions, FM systems can improve the *quality* of the sound reaching the student.

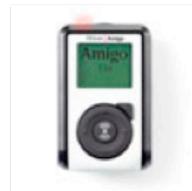
The teacher wears a small microphone and FM transmitter.

The student wears an FM receiver that is usually connected directly to their hearing aids, or the receiver can be an independent device. The FM transmitter relays the signal from the teacher's microphone directly to the FM receiver via radio signal.



There are a number of different makes and models of FM systems with different features and controls. The FM transmitters and receivers are small enough to allow for mobility for both the teacher and the student, and the FM system can be connected to devices such as television, radio, or CD player.

Transmitters:



Receivers:



- A. Classroom sound field receiver**
- B. Personal/portable sound field receiver**
- C. Direct Audio Input** (connected by a lead directly to the hearing aid via an audio shoe)
- D. Integrated FM receiver** (FM receiver built into the hearing aid)
- E. iSense®** (Specifically designed for children who experience speech comprehension problems, especially in noisy environments (e.g. children with auditory processing disorder))

References:

1. FM Systems: What Are They and What Do They Do? Australian Hearing Website. http://www.hearing.com.au/digitalAssets/4715_1173929641136_FM%20systems.pdf
2. Oticon USA Website: <http://www.oticonusa.com/Oticon/Consumers/Pediatrics/Amigo.html>
3. Phonak USA Website: http://www.phonak.com/us/b2c/en/products/fm/what_is_fm.html

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There are other services not listed on the previous checklist that might be necessary for a child with hearing loss to succeed in school. Some of these are listed below.

- Audiology- A child with a hearing impairment will need someone working at, or in conjunction with, the school district to meet any needs the child might have with hearing testing, assessment of classroom acoustics, and monitoring of hearing and/or assistive listening devices.
- Teacher of the Hearing Impaired- Many school districts have in-house teachers who work with children who are deaf or hard of hearing in their schools, or they contract for their services with Co-Ops such as the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind. These teachers can also help to teach other educators working with your child about his or her learning needs.
- Speech therapists- These professionals are trained to provide language and communication support for children who have hearing impairments.
- Educational Interpreter/Translator- This person could be a sign language interpreter who interprets spoken language into ASL for a child who uses sign language, or a language facilitator who facilitates communication between a child with hearing loss and others in the educational setting. Parents must make a clear case that their child will not be able to follow what is being communicated in the classroom without this resource in order for it to be included in an IEP. Although sign language interpreters who work in Arizona classrooms are exempt from needing to be licensed, state law does require minimum qualifications. See the Arizona Administrative Code, Title 7, Education, Chapter 2 State Board of Education, Article 6, Certification R7-2-620 which specifies the requirements for Professional, Non-teaching School Personnel. However, parents can request a Licensed/Certified Interpreter. You can also find an interpreter in Arizona who is a member of the Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf (RID), a national membership organization representing professionals who facilitate communication between people who are deaf or hard of hearing and people who can hear, by searching their website.

You can directly access the Standard Practice Paper for K-12 Educational Interpreting at:
[www.rid.org/UserFiles/File/pdfs/Standard Practice Papers/K-12 Ed SPP.pdf](http://www.rid.org/UserFiles/File/pdfs/Standard_Practice_Papers/K-12_Ed_SPP.pdf)

Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf

www.rid.org/content/index.cfm/AID/131

703-838-0030

Classroominterpreting.org was developed with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs and is maintained by Boys Town National Research Hospital. The website offers resources and information pertaining to classroom interpreting to administrators, teachers, parents, students, and interpreters.

Classroom Interpreting

www.classroominterpreting.org

402-452-5039

- Transportation- A child with special needs can be provided with free transportation to and from the school he or she attends if documented in the IEP.
- Training or Counseling for Parents- An IEP can also specify that the parent of a child with special needs be given training or counseling that will help their child benefit from his or her education. This can include, for example, instruction in sign language. This training or counseling is listed on the IEP under “Related Services.”

Classroom teachers vary on their experience and comfort levels in working with children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Some teachers are extremely knowledgeable about how to work with these children. Others are adaptable and willing to learn. Yet others have no experience and may be uncomfortable with this new role.

HELPING STUDENTS WITH HEARING LOSS IN THE CLASSROOM

The following list was created to give suggestions to classroom teachers in how they might maximize the learning experiences for students in their classroom who are deaf or hard of hearing.

- Teach your child to be their own advocate when it comes to telling the teacher if they can hear and/or understand what they need to in the classroom. Develop a hand signal—such as pointing to their ear—that can be used to tell the teacher if they missed something or would like the teacher to repeat information.
- Tell your child’s teacher that having the child repeat instructions to make sure s/he understands what was said is much more effective than simply asking the child if s/he can hear or understand.
- If an educational interpreter or translator is present in the classroom, instruct the teacher to speak directly to the child with hearing loss, rather than communicating with the interpreter.
- If hearing devices are worn by the child, have the child be in charge of his or her own equipment. Students can be taught to change their own hearing aid batteries (it is advisable to always have extra batteries on hand), charge their FM system, and remind the teacher when to use and turn off the FM system.
- If the child utilizes an FM system, request that the teacher take the time to understand all the functions of the FM system before the school year begins. The school audiologist or teacher of the deaf can help with this learning process, or the teacher could watch an FM system simulation (such as those that can be found on YouTube. See www.youtube.com/watch?v=1l37lzLIgQU).
- Encourage the teacher to use visual aids to assist in the learning process (such as overheads, charts, outlines, etc.)
- Ask the teacher to seat a child with hearing loss close to the teacher, although it is preferable that they also have children seated in front of them so that they might watch those children and pick up on signals from them as well.

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- Advise the teacher to obtain the child's attention prior to speaking to and/or giving the child directions.
- Encourage the teacher to reduce distractions or background noise as much as possible. Simple things like closing the classroom door and adding carpet or tennis balls to the legs of chairs can help a child who uses a hearing device tremendously.
- Some teachers may not realize that simply talking louder does not always help a student with hearing loss as much as speaking more clearly and precisely. Ask the teacher to make the effort to enunciate properly and/or rephrase statements for the child if needed.
- Encourage the teacher to maintain eye contact when speaking, as a student with hearing loss may depend on lip reading or facial cues to understand spoken language. This is especially important when the child uses an educational interpreter or translator. The child must be able to see both the teacher and the interpreter at all times.
- Teach the teacher (and possibly the entire class) some sign language for enhanced communication options. Show the teacher and class some signs that you use at home and many of these signs can be used for all students in the classroom (ie. yes/no, help, thank you).
- Consider having your child talk to the class about his or her hearing loss. Students typically respond well if they understand why an interpreter is needed or why a child needs to have hearing aids or a cochlear implant. Most children with hearing loss would rather this be discussed directly with the class rather than having to explain things to children who ask questions individually and/or make assumptions that might not be helpful.
- Ask the teacher to assign your child a buddy to assist him or her with tasks that might be overwhelming to a child with hearing loss, such as riding a bus before or after school, and during an activity that prohibits the use of hearing devices (such as water play).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

There are several additional resources available for parents who need assistance, advice, or clarification on policies related to students with special needs. For example, if parents think that their child's school district needs to be supported and/or more educated about how to address the needs of their child, the parent could suggest that the district's Special Education Director make a request for SUPPORT Cadre Services. The SUPPORT Cadre offers experienced professionals who provide technical assistance to special education personnel when they lack the infrastructure to support their staff. Requests for SUPPORT Cadre Services can only be made by the Special Education Director by completing a Request for Service form and submitting it by fax to 602-364-1115. More information is available by calling 602-542-4831.

If a parent feels that the rights of a student with special needs are being violated, there are organizations to consult for help, both in and outside the state of Arizona. The Arizona Center for Disability Law advocates for the legal rights of people with disabilities to be free from abuse, neglect and discrimination and to gain access to services, maximizing independence and achieving equality. Their website contains a wealth of information on disability law and offers self-advocacy materials, trainings, and newsletters.

Arizona Center for Disability Law

www.acdl.com

520-327-9547 Tucson; 602-274-6287 Phoenix

Parents can also learn more about special education law and how to advocate for their child on the Wrightslaw website. This site was created for giving information about special education law, education law, and advocacy for children with disabilities. It includes both advocacy and law libraries on a wide range of special education topics, as well as the Wrightslaw Yellow Pages for Kids, a listing by state of educational consultants, advocates, health care specialists, academic tutors, educators, and attorneys.

Wrightslaw

www.wrightslaw.com

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The Council for Exceptional Children is an international professional organization dedicated to improving the educational success of individuals with disabilities. It advocates for appropriate governmental policies and for individuals with exceptionalities. There is a lot of information on their website, but much of it is restricted to their members.

Council for Exceptional Children: International

www.ccc.sped.org

888-232-7733

There are also a few national centers that provide information and technical assistance on issues related to children with disabilities. The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities provides information, programs, services, and research-based information on effective practices for children with disabilities. This center also has a state specific link for locating organizations and agencies within your state that address disability-related issues.

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities

www.nichcy.org

800-695-0285

More specific to children from birth to five years of age, the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center's mission is to strengthen service systems to ensure that all young children with disabilities and their families receive and benefit from high quality, culturally appropriate, and family-centered supports and services. This center is supported by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and their website gives contact information for agencies and responsible parties.

Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

www.ectacenter.org

919-962-2001