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**SACRAMENTO COUNTY**

**Special Education Local Plan Area**

**(“SELPA”)**

**Identification, Location and Evaluation**

**(Child Find)**

**March 2017**

**(Adopted by Superintendents’ Coordinating Council March 17, 2017)**

# **SACRAMENTO COUNTY SPECIAL EDUCATION LOCAL PLAN AREA (SELPA)**

## **IDENTIFICATION, LOCATION AND EVALUATION**

### **POLICY:**

It is the policy of the Sacramento County SELPA that all children with disabilities (including children with disabilities attending private schools) regardless of the severity of their disability, and who are in need of special education and related services are identified, located and evaluated in compliance with federal and California law.

### **PROCEDURES:**

#### **1. CHILD FIND**

Child find activities are the combined responsibility of each LEA, the County Office, and the SELPA and occur prior to a referral for special education services. These activities are designed to locate individuals, birth through 21 years of age, who may be eligible for and in need of special education and related services, regardless of the severity of their disability, including but not limited to:

- Children not enrolled in public school programs;
- Children who are homeless or wards of the state ;
- Children with disabilities attending private school programs;
- Children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education, even though they are advancing from grade to grade; and
- Highly mobile children, including migrant children.

Child find activities also foster awareness and understanding on the part of educators, parent(s)/guardians and other community members of the referral procedures for special education, the eligibility criteria, and the continuum of special education programs and services available.

Examples of child find activities include but are not limited to:

- Media announcements regarding availability of special education services, as well as feature articles regarding special education programs and opportunities;
- Annual Parent Conferences hosted by the SELPA and Community Advisory Committee;

- Development of Interagency Agreements that clearly define child find responsibilities of participating agencies (e.g. Head Start and Alta California Regional Center);
- Annual forum hosted by SELPA for local private school administrators and staff;
- LEAs provide annual orientation/review for general education staff, provided by special education staff, regarding the referral procedures for special education, the eligibility criteria, and the continuum of special education programs and services available;
- Information posted by county office staff, LEAs and individual school sites in parent-focused newsletters and publications;
- Disability/awareness activities provided to both general education staff and students; and
- Information regarding the referral process for special education included in the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards* which is distributed to parents in accordance with federal and state law.

## **2. PRE-REFERRAL ACTIVITIES**

A student shall be referred for special education and related services only after the resources of the general education program have been considered, and when appropriate, utilized. Pre-referral activities ensure that all appropriate general education resources have been attempted prior to referral. It is not mandatory, however, for a student to go through pre-referral activities before being referred to special education if pre-referral interventions have been attempted and can be documented. Although specialists, such as school psychologists, speech/language pathologists, and special education teachers, may be involved in pre-referral activities, these are not a special education function and as such are not subject to the associated restrictions and timelines. The function of pre-referral activities is to ensure and document that all appropriate general education resources have been exhausted before referring a student to special education.

Examples of general education interventions prior to referral include but are not limited to:

- Consultation with specialists and/or other staff;
- Modification of the general program and/or accommodations for the student to access the core curriculum;
- Utilization of general program resources (e.g. counselors, MTSS/Response to Intervention, Title I resource programs, tutorials, English Language development programs, migrant programs, reading intervention programs, 504 accommodation plans, summer school);
- Parent conferencing; and/or
- Referral to appropriate community agencies.

## **3. SOURCES OF REFERRAL**

The referral of a student for special education and related services may be initiated or submitted by, or as a result of:

- School screening programs, such as vision, hearing, and speech and language screenings;
- Student study teams or other pre-referral activities;
- Direct referrals from agencies or individuals having knowledge of an individual with exceptional needs; or
- Direct referral from parent(s)/guardians. [Note: parent(s)/guardians shall be given a copy of their *Notice of Procedural Safeguards* upon initial referral for assessment].

#### **4. WRITTEN REFERRAL FOR EVALUATION**

All referrals for special education and related services must be documented. When a parent/guardian makes a verbal request, appropriate staff shall offer assistance to the parent(s)/guardian to put the request in writing (this can include email correspondence). Upon receipt of a written request, the LEA will acknowledge the request and provide the parent(s)/guardian with information about the referral and assessment process.

All school-based referrals should also be documented in writing, and should include a brief reason for the referral, documentation of the resources of the general education program that have been considered and/or utilized, and the results of the interventions attempted. LEAs should track all referrals in order to ensure compliance with timelines.

In the event that the referral is being made by someone other than the parent(s)/guardian, staff will provide **Prior Written Notice** to the parent(s)/guardian of the intent to conduct an assessment. Such Prior Written Notice shall include the following:

- A description of the action proposed by district;
- An explanation of why the district proposed to take the action;
- A description of the information that was used as a basis for the decision;
- A statement that the parents have protection under the procedural safeguards and how parents can obtain a copy;
- Sources for parents to contact to obtain assistance in understanding these provisions;
- A description of other options the district considered and reasons why those options were rejected; and
- A description of other factors relevant to the district's proposal.

It is recommended that each individual LEA determine specific processes for school site referrals, including reviewing parent referrals, maintaining timelines, and tracking parent contacts.

#### **5. INAPPROPRIATE REFERRALS FOR EVALUATION**

Prior to conducting an initial assessment, the administrator and assessment team must determine that an assessment is appropriate, and if so, obtain parental consent. If, after

reviewing all relevant information, the administrator and assessment team consider the referral inappropriate, staff will provide **Prior Written Notice** to the parent(s)/guardians of the refusal to conduct an assessment. Such Prior Written Notice shall include:

- A description of the action refused by district;
- An explanation of why the district refused to take the action;
- A description of the information that was used as a basis for the decision;
- A statement that the parents have protection under the procedural safeguards and how parents can obtain a copy;
- Sources for parents to contact to obtain assistance in understanding these provisions;
- A description of other options the district considered and reasons why those options were rejected; and
- A description of other factors relevant to the district's refusal.

#### Federal Statutes & Regulations

34 Code of Federal Regulations §300.111

34 Code of Federal Regulations §300.503(b)

#### California Statutes & Regulations

Education Code §§56300 and 56301

Education Code §56303

5 California Code of Regulations §3021

***Operations Council Review – February 21, 2017***

***Superintendents' Coordinating Council Adoption – March 17, 2017***