

# Leon County Special Education Cooperative

## Our Services

**Special Education** is a student-centered educational process added to the regular school program to meet the needs of students who have been identified as having a disability and having an educational need for services. The comprehensive educational program offered by **Leon County Special Education Cooperative**, provides appropriate services for all students identified as having a disability.

The term "students with disabilities" refers to students who have been evaluated and found to be eligible in accordance with federal and state regulations and laws.

These include students with:

- auditory impairment
- autism
- deaf-blindness
- emotional disturbance
- learning disabilities
- mental retardation
- multiple disabilities
- non-categorical early childhood
- other health impairment
- orthopedic impairment
- speech impairment
- traumatic brain injury
- visual impairment

Because of these impairments, students need special educational and related services in order to benefit from the educational process.

## The Student-Centered Process Includes:

1. **Referral** – Referrals may be made by the parent, community, agencies, school personnel, individual, groups or organizations. A referral should be made to the school principal.

Referrals are processed by a committee who will consider all alternative programs. This committee reports its decision in writing, and if the decision is for a referral to special education, the parent is notified. At this time, the parent and student's rights are explained and they receive a copy of "Procedural Safeguards."

2. **Parental Consent** – Parents must give their consent before any tests are given.
3. **Assessment** – Information is collected and studied about an individual student to determine if he/she has a need or is eligible for special education services.

Assessment for related services shall include a written report demonstrating that the student meets the criteria for eligibility for the related services and establishing that the service is necessary for the student to benefit from instruction. The report must include recommendations concerning the specific services to be provided.

4. **Placement and Planning**

- Parents are notified in writing before an ARD committee meeting and are invited to be a member of the team.
- Placement of a student referred for special education is determined by the ARD committee.
- The committee makes its decisions based upon review of test results and parental consent.
- The ARD committee develops an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).

## **A Disability May Be:**

- mild or severe
- temporary or permanent
- physical, intellectual or emotional
- a condition that interferes with learning

Different types of special education programs are available because students with disabilities have a wide range of individual needs. These may include one or more of the following:

- Inclusion in the general education classroom
- Combination of instruction in both special education and general education classrooms.
- Self-contained instructional classroom
- Vocational classes
- Home or hospital instruction

## **Definition of Terms:**

### **ARD - Admission, Review and Dismissal**

The ARD committee is made up of specially trained school personnel and parents to determine the student's eligibility for admission to special education, review the student's progress (at least once per year) or to dismiss the student from special education services.

### **Individual Assessment**

Individual testing is conducted by professional staff to find strengths and weaknesses of each student. This includes observation, physical examination (if needed), developmental history, and intellectual and academic testing.

### **IEP - Individual Education Plan**

If a student qualifies for special education, the ARD committee writes a special instructional plan for the student. It is reviewed annually, as needed or by request.

### **L.I.F.E - Learning In Functional Environments**

The LIFE instructional program is designed to prepare individuals with severe disabilities to function optimally in their everyday environment. This functional skill approach insures instruction in domestic, vocational, community and recreation or leisure skills.

## **Our Philosophy**

### **"Helping Schools Help Kids"**

Leon County Special Education Cooperative is committed to providing quality delivery of required special education and related services to eligible students with disabilities.

Leon County Special Education Cooperative shares the mission of each member district and is dedicated to the support of their goals for all students.