

## PARENTS

### *Family, School, and Community Partnerships*

Family, school, and community partnerships are defined as parents, children, families, school personnel, and community members communicating and sharing responsibilities to ensure the success of all students. Meaningful partnerships recognize the family as the most important and enduring resource in a student's life. It is especially important for families of students with disabilities to be involved in the educational process which includes planning and reviewing the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

This manual will assist parents, students, teachers, and other educational decision makers in understanding the special education process. Special education is not a place, but a supportive service for students to progress in the *general* education curriculum.

### *What is Family Engagement?*

While *parent involvement* is often talked about, in recent years the term *family engagement* has been used more often. Engagement in a student's education goes further than the parent volunteering at the school building. Although volunteering is very important, many parents cannot be involved in traditional volunteering because of work schedules and other daytime commitments. The good news is that a parent's physical presence is not the only indicator of student success. Research shows the most important family contributor to student success is the attitude of the parent. When parents are supportive of the student's education, students experience positive benefits. A parent's words and actions are important. Expressing high expectations for a child, reading to or with a child regularly, ensuring homework is completed, letting a child see the parent read, and applying math skills to everyday activities, are examples of parent engagement that can greatly benefit a child's achievement.

### *Benefits of Family, School, and Community Partnerships*

The benefits of partnerships are numerous and much research exists in the area of parent engagement. Some of the positive findings are listed here.

#### **Parent engagement in a child's education results in**

- improved school attendance
- fewer antisocial behaviors
- a decrease in alcohol use and violent behavior
- greater self-confidence; a more positive attitude about school; and better performance in school
- higher grade point averages and better scores on standardized testing
- participation in more challenging school programs and more regular completion of homework
- better transitions, higher quality work, and the development of more realistic future plans for high school students
- higher graduation rates and increased participation in postsecondary educational programs

*What Are Some Ways to Promote Engagement?*

**PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships**

**Standard 1: Welcoming all families into the school community**

Families are active participants in the life of the school, and they feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.

**Standard 2: Communicating effectively**

Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.

**Standard 3: Supporting student success**

Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development, both at home and at school, and they have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to collaborate effectively.

**Standard 4: Speaking up for every child**

Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children in order to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

**Standard 5: Sharing power**

Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together they inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.

**Standard 6: Collaborating with community**

Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.

**Source: PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships**

*Parent and Student Rights (Georgia Rule 160-4-7-.09)*

Parents and children have many rights under the special education law, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It is important that parents and children understand their rights to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The term "appropriate" is based on the educational needs of the individual child that are outlined in the Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP is deemed a working document created by a team of educators and the family that establishes goals for a child to achieve in order to succeed.

It is the responsibility of the school to provide parents with notice of their rights in an understandable language. Parents also have a responsibility to participate in the education

of their children. Parents do so by participating in meetings and giving consent to allow the school to provide the supports and services that both the parents and school agree are necessary for a child to be successful. It is important that the Six National PTA Standards - for Family-School Partnerships Engagement be embedded in this process, particularly when learning at home.

#### *Definition of Parent*

School personnel must determine the appropriate person(s) to make educational decisions on behalf of the student. In most instances, this person is the child's parent. The parent receives notice, gives consent, files formal complaints, requests mediation, files due process, gives or refuses to give permission for release of records, and fulfills all other requirements. A foster parent does not always have authority to make educational decisions for a foster child in his or her care, unless he or she received training and was appointed as the educational surrogate for the foster child. The state has specific definitions for "parent," "person acting as a parent," "surrogate parent," and guardian:

- "Parent" means a parent, an adoptive parent, a person acting as a parent, a legal guardian, a surrogate parent, or a foster parent (if the foster parent was trained and appointed the surrogate parent of a child with a disability).
- "Person acting in the place of a parent" means a person such as a grandparent, a stepparent or other relative with whom the child lives, or a person other than a parent who is legally responsible for the welfare of a child.
- "Surrogate Parent" means an individual appointed by the district to make educational decisions regarding the free appropriate public education (FAPE) of a child with a disability.
- "Guardian" means a person authorized to act as the child's parent and/or to make educational decisions, but it does not mean the State if the child is a ward of the State.

#### *Surrogate Parents:*

All children with disabilities are entitled to FAPE under state regulations and federal special education laws. Included in these laws is a mandate that the parents of children with disabilities have the opportunity to participate actively in the educational decision-making process. Unfortunately, some children with disabilities do not have parents who can fulfill this very important role, thus leaving their educational planning solely to representatives from their school district or from other agencies. Federal law; the IDEA; and Georgia rules,

regulations, and minimum standards require that an individual must be appointed by the district as a surrogate parent to make decisions regarding the free appropriate public education of a child with a disability.

A surrogate parent is needed when

- no parent (as defined by the IDEA) can be identified;
- the public agency, after reasonable efforts, cannot locate a parent;
- the child is a ward of the State; or
- the child is an unaccompanied, homeless youth as defined by the McKinney-Veto Homeless Assistance Act.

For a child who is a ward of the State, a judge overseeing the child's case may appoint a surrogate parent. The surrogate parent has no financial responsibility or other responsibility for the day-to-day care of the student. The surrogate parent must

- protect the child's rights in the educational and decision-making processes, including the identification, evaluation, and placement of the student;
- follow confidentiality requirements of Georgia Rules and federal law;
- use discretion in the sharing of information;
- participate in developing the student's IEP;
- exercise other rights given to parents under the IDEA and Georgia Rules;
- not be an employee of the State, \* the district, or any other agency that is involved in the education or care of the child;
- have no interest that conflicts with the child he or she represents; and
- have the knowledge and skills that ensure adequate representation of the child.

\* A person assigned as a surrogate parent who receives compensation for these services would not necessarily be considered an employee of the State under the IDEA.

Districts must have a method for determining whether a child needs a surrogate parent and a method for assigning surrogate parents.

### *Frequently Asked Questions*

#### **Is it necessary to retrain our surrogates?**

IDEA and state rules have changed so some retraining of surrogate parents will be necessary to ensure their understanding of all their educational responsibilities.

#### **Do all foster parents need surrogates?**

The IDEA and Georgia Special Education Rules definition of parent allows flexibility when determining who needs a surrogate parent and who can be one. Many foster parents can act as the parent and do not require a surrogate. Usually, short-term or temporary foster parents would need a surrogate.

#### *Parent Participation (160-4-7-.04, 160-4-7-.05, 160-4-7-06)*

Parents are to be included as members of any decision-making team for their child. Parent participation includes decisions about eligibility, initial evaluation, reevaluation, development of the IEP, the provision of a FAPE, and educational placement. This requirement does not include informal or unscheduled meetings involving district personnel or meetings on issues such as teaching methods, lesson plans, or coordination of service provision, as long as those issues are not addressed in the child's IEP. Nor does it include meetings involving the preparation of a proposal or response to a parent proposal that will be discussed at a later meeting. If neither parent can be present in a meeting concerning educational decisions for a child, the district must use other methods to ensure parent participation. These methods could include individual/conference telephone calls or video conferencing. If the district cannot reach the parent, after several documented attempts to include the parent in the meeting, the meeting can be held without the parent. The district must make and document reasonable efforts to ensure the parent's involvement. Such efforts are defined as: detailed records of phone calls made or attempted and the results of those calls; copies of correspondence sent to the parents and any responses received; and detailed records of visits made to a parent's home or place of employment and the results of those visits. A best practice would be to document at least two attempts by two methods to reach the parent.

The involvement of parents in all decisions about their child will help result in individualized services that meet the unique needs of children as well as in the development of a closer, more collaborative relationship with districts. The contributions that parents make to the process are important because they help ensure the educational progress of the student.

*Parent Rights Document (160-4-7-.09)*

The *Parent Rights in Special Education* (Parent Rights) notice provides the foundation for ensuring that a child with a disability has access to FAPE. The Parent Rights notice provides parents with the opportunity to understand their rights, the rights of their child, and the procedures for resolving differences. This document should also help facilitate communication between parents and district personnel. The Parent Rights notice outlines all of the rights and safeguards available to parents of children with disabilities and children who are decision makers. A copy of the Parent Rights must be given to the parents at least once in a school year. Additionally, a copy of the Parent Rights notification must also be given upon

initial referral or parental request for evaluation;  
receipt of the first state complaint;  
receipt of the first due process hearing request;  
notification by the school district to the parent of a disciplinary;  
removal of a student from school that would constitute a change  
of placement; and  
upon parental request.

The Parent Rights notice should be written in language understandable to the general public and provided in the native language of the parent or other mode of communication (e.g., braille or sign language) used by the parent. If necessary, the district will translate the notice orally or by other means so that the parent understands the content of the notice. The Parent Rights notice may be provided by electronic mail (e-mail) and may be posted for access on the GaDOE and/or local school district web site(s). If parents would like a more detailed explanation of these rights, they can contact the principal at their child's school, a teacher or administrator, the local special education director, and/or the Georgia Department of Education, Division for Special Education Services and Supports at 404-656-3963 or <http://public.doe.k12.ga.us>. Parents may also check to see whether the district has a Parent Mentor on staff. Parent Mentors are parents of a child with a disability who work for the district as a connection between schools and families. More information may be obtained through Parent to Parent of Georgia at 800-229-2038.

### *Parent Rights Summary*

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The following is a summary of the content of the Parent Rights document.

For more details see the Georgia Department of Education website and direct link to Family Engagement Information and Resources: [http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/ci\\_exceptional.aspx](http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/ci_exceptional.aspx).

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### *Access/Opportunity to Examine Records*

Districts must maintain the confidentiality of information in children's educational records. The district can assume that both parents of a child have authority to inspect and review the child's records unless the district is notified in writing that a parent's rights to see the records have been terminated by a court order.

Parents of a child with a disability must be allowed an opportunity to inspect and review all education records with respect to

<b>Identification</b>	Process to determine eligibility
<b>Evaluation</b>	Nature and scope of assessment procedures
<b>Placement</b>	Educational placement of the child
<b>FAPE</b>	Provision of a free appropriate public education

More information about FERPA can be found at  
<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

### *Confidentiality (160-4-7-.08)*

Confidentiality is one of the rights afforded to parents in the Parent Rights document (procedural safeguards). Confidentiality of educational records is a basic right shared by all children in public schools and their parents. These fundamental rights are described in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, which applies to all students, not just those with disabilities.

All district personnel (including contracted employees) are governed by confidentiality requirements and should receive training and information regarding the law. Written and dated parental consent must be obtained before personally identifiable information can be disclosed to unauthorized individuals, organizations, or agencies (unless otherwise authorized to do so under FERPA).

Personally identifiable information includes the following:

- the name of the student, the student's parent, or other family member;
- the student's address;

- any personal identifier such as the student's social security number or student number; and
- any personal characteristics or other information that would make it possible to identify the student.

FERPA allows parents to inspect and review all educational records of their child maintained by an educational agency that receives federal funds. This includes all public schools and most private schools. The school must comply with a request to inspect records within a reasonable amount of time, and in no case more than 45 days after the request has been made.

*Prior Written Notice by the District*

Districts inform the parents of actions being proposed or refused regarding their child by giving written notice before the district proposes or refuses to initiate or change the following:

- identification (process to determine eligibility),
- evaluation (nature and scope of assessment procedures),
- educational placement (educational placement of children including graduation), or
- FAPE (the provision of a free appropriate public education to children).

Prior Written Notice is often contained within the IEP document if the discussion occurred during an IEP meeting. At other times, the parent will request and the district will respond in writing. The prior written notice will contain

- a description of the action refused or proposed by the district;
- an explanation of why the district refuses or proposes to take the action;
- a description of the evaluation procedure, assessment, records, or report used as a basis for the proposed or refused action;
- a statement that the parents have the protections of the procedural safeguards;
- the sources for the parents to contact to understand the procedural safeguards;
- a description of other options the IEP team considered and the reasons why those options were rejected; and
- a description of other factors that are relevant to the district's proposal or refusal.

### *Independent Educational Evaluation*

Parents disagreeing with the district's evaluation of their child can request an independent educational evaluation (an evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner not employed by the district responsible for the education of the child). If the parent requests an independent educational evaluation of the child at public expense, the district must either (a) file a due process hearing request to show that its evaluation of the child is appropriate; or (b) provide an independent educational evaluation at public expense, unless the district demonstrates in a hearing that the existing evaluation of the child is appropriate. Public expense means that the district either pays for the full cost of the evaluation or ensures that the evaluation is provided at no cost to the parent.

Parents are not entitled to an independent educational evaluation at public expense before they allow the district to conduct its own evaluation. Once the district evaluation occurs, and the parents disagree with the results of the evaluation, they can request one at public expense. If granted by the district, the district will provide the parents with a list of qualified examiners from which to choose for the independent educational evaluation. Many times the district will work with the parents to find a mutually agreeable evaluator. Usually a parent will make all the arrangements and provide the transportation. Parents are entitled to only one independent evaluation, at public expense, each time the district conducts an evaluation with which the parents disagree.

If a parent obtains an independent educational evaluation at his or her expense, the results of the evaluation that meet state and district criteria shall be considered by the district in any decision made with respect to the provision of FAPE for the child.

### *Evaluations*

Parents have the right to request that their child receive a full and complete evaluation to determine whether he/she has a disability and is in need of special education and/or related services. The Parent Rights also state that parents have the right, when an initial evaluation for determination is being conducted, for their child to receive a full and complete evaluation. This includes having the child assessed in all areas of the suspected disability (including but not limited to behavior, academics, communication, social skills, and daily living skills).

This evaluation can consist of several sources of information, including more than one test. These tests must be given in the language that the child normally uses (native language), unless it is not possible to do so.

In addition, parents have the right for their child to be given appropriate tests by qualified examiners. The initial evaluation must be completed within 60 calendar days from the date

the parents sign permission for the evaluation. When permission is given for the initial evaluation and less than 30 days of school are left in the school year, the school still has 60 days to complete the evaluation. The 60 day count stops when the teachers finish for the school year and starts again when they return for the new school year. It is important to note that when school is closed for more than 5 days for holidays or other breaks, those days and the weekends before and after do not count in the 60 days allowed for the initial evaluation.

Parents have the right for their child to have a reevaluation at least every three years. The parents or the teacher can make a request for reevaluation in less than three years if needed. Reevaluations shall not occur more frequently than one time per year unless the parents and the school agree one is needed.

Finally, parents have the right to be involved in the decision about their child's eligibility and the programs and services the child needs as part of the first evaluation and the reevaluation.

#### *Parent Consent*

The district is required to obtain informed written consent for any action requested. Parental consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time. Consent is required for the following actions:

- to conduct an initial evaluation;
- to conduct a reevaluation;
- for the initial provision of special education and related services on the IEP;
- to make a substantial change in special education and related services; and
- before disclosure of personally identifiable information that is subject to confidentiality.

If a parent questions any proposed actions or changes to the IEP, it is recommended that he or she discuss the concern with the teacher or administrator. Consent for the initial evaluation does not provide consent for initial placement.

A parent may revoke consent for the receipt of special education and related services once the child is initially provided special education and related services. This revocation of consent must be made in writing and is for all special education and related services, not for individual services.

### *Least Restrictive Environment*

To the greatest extent appropriate, a parent has the right to have his or her child placed in general education classrooms. Also, a parent has the right for his or her child to participate in all school programs and activities with other children without disabilities. To the greatest extent appropriate

- school district personnel must make accommodations (supports) and modifications (changes) so the child can participate in all school programs and activities;
- the parent has the right for his or her child to participate in non-classroom and extracurricular activities (such as lunch, recess, counseling, sports and clubs) to the same extent as a non-disabled child;
- the parent has the right for the IEP team to consider a variety of different special education services to meet the needs of his or her child in the least restrictive environment;
- the parent has the right to have supplementary aides and services (extra support) provided to allow his or her child to remain in regular classes as much as appropriate before considering whether to remove the child from the general education classroom; and
- the parent has the right to have his or her child placed in the neighborhood school unless the IEP Team determines otherwise.

### *Complaint Process (160-4-7-.12)*

Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher and, if necessary, building level administrators when a concern arises. If concerns cannot be satisfactorily addressed at the school level, parents should contact the district's special education director. Please refer to the Dispute Resolution section of this manual for additional information.

Parents may file a formal complaint with the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) when a violation of the IDEA occurs. A formal complaint investigation is a procedure to determine whether the district is complying with federal or Georgia laws and/or regulations regarding the provision of special education and related services to children with disabilities.

This investigation is conducted by the GaDOE.

**Complaints should be signed and addressed in writing to**

*Director*

*Division for Special Education Services and Supports*

*1870 Twin Towers East*

*Atlanta, Georgia 30334-5010*

**or faxed to**

*404-651-6457*

In addition to filing a complaint with the GaDOE, the party filing the complaint must forward a copy of the complaint to the district serving the child. The party filing the complaint will address the complaint with the district in writing and will request a response from the district within 10 business days. The parent who filed the complaint will have an opportunity to engage voluntarily in mediation with the district to resolve the dispute.

*Voluntary Mediation (160-4-7-.12)*

Mediation is a way to discuss and resolve disagreements between the parent and the district with the help of a trained, impartial third person. Mediation should be offered to either party to resolve disputes. Although this process is voluntary for each party, both parties must agree to mediation. Discussions during the mediation process are confidential and may not be used as evidence in any due process hearings or civil proceedings. The GaDOE contracts with a number of qualified mediators and will assign a mediator when mediation is requested. If an agreement is reached during mediation, the agreement is legally binding in a State or District Court. The failure to carry out an agreement may also be the subject of a State complaint.

*Impartial Due Process Hearing (160-4-7-.12)*

Parents or the district may request a due process hearing regarding any matter related to the identification, evaluation, placement, or the provision of special education and related services to the child.

A resolution can be reached through several ways in a dispute with a district over the rights and services afforded to students with disabilities and their families. The quickest and most efficient method is to contact the special education administration in the district.

The special education director can often assist a family in working out the differences with minimal time and conflict.

When a resolution cannot be worked out locally, specific processes are guaranteed to families of students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

(IDEA). These include: (1) formal complaints, (2) mediation, and/or (3) a due process hearing. Please refer to the Dispute Resolution Chapter in this Manual for a full description of the Dispute Resolution process.

*Change of Placement for Disciplinary Removals for Children with Disabilities (160-4-7-.10)*

Georgia rules and federal laws have provisions that control what happens if the child violates a school rule, uses or sells illegal drugs or weapons, or does something that causes serious bodily injury to him/herself or someone else. These provisions clarify what action the district can take and what rights are afforded the child's parent. The possible actions by the district and the parental/student rights in these matters are explained in the discipline chapter of this manual. A student with an IEP, even when suspended or expelled for more than 10 days, always maintains the right to services that allow the opportunity to make progress in the general curriculum and the right to receive IEP services.

*Placement of Children by Parent in Private Schools (160-4-7-.13)*

The district is not required to pay for the cost of education, including special education and related services for the child parentally placed at a private school, if the district made FAPE available for the child.

Private school placement may occur in three circumstances:

1. First, when the public school determines that it cannot provide Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), the public school must identify and pay for a private school to provide services. This is at no cost to the parent.
2. Second, a parent may remove the child from public school at any time and enroll the child in private school. Under certain circumstances the parent may request reimbursement from the school district to pay for the private placement.
  - The parents must tell the IEP team they disagree with the proposed IEP and placement and want the school district to reimburse them.
  - The parents may also notify the school district in writing, at least 10 days prior to removing the child from public school, that they disagree with the IEP and placement and want the school district to reimburse them for the private school tuition.

If the public school asks to evaluate the child during the 10 day period and the parents refuse, then reimbursement may be denied.

- If the parents want to be reimbursed for all the costs of private school and the district does not agree to it, the parties must go before a due process hearing officer to determine whether the public school provided FAPE.
3. Third, the parent may choose to use a private school instead of public school at the parent's expense, in which case, FAPE is not an issue.
    - When the student is in private school by parent choice, the student and the parent lose their individual rights to special education services.
    - When students are placed in private or home school, the school district may consider some services. The special education director of the local district has more information.

Georgia offers a Special Needs Scholarship Program that allows *eligible* students to transfer to another public school or to use a state-funded scholarship to attend an approved private school. To learn more about eligibility and requirements go to:

<http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/sb10.aspx>.

#### *Discipline Procedures and Rights*

Students with disabilities may be suspended out of school for less than 10 days in any school year, and no services are required to be provided. When a child is suspended or expelled out of school for more than 10 days, the school district must continue to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for that child even though the child is not attending school. The location or place where the services are provided will change. If the student possesses or sells illegal drugs or weapons or causes serious bodily injury, the school may change the placement for up to 45 calendar days without consent of the parent.

Once a student has been suspended for 10 or more days in a school year, a manifestation determination must be held to decide whether the behavior was caused by the disability and/or whether the IEP was followed.

- If the team determines the behavior was caused by the disability and/or the IEP was not followed, then the student must return to the original setting unless it is a case of illegal drugs, weapons, or serious bodily injury.
  - A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) must either be conducted or reviewed and revised when the behavior is a manifestation.
- If the team determines that the behaviors were not caused by the disability and that the IEP was followed, then the student may be disciplined according to school policy.

- The student must continue to receive FAPE. The IEP team will determine how the services can be provided. An FBA/BIP may be developed or reviewed and revised to prevent further behavior problems.
- If the parent disagrees with the decision of the manifestation determination, he or she may appeal by requesting a due process hearing. An expedited hearing must occur within 20 school days. The child will remain in the setting decided by the discipline process until the hearing occurs.

Under special situations, if the behavior that causes a child to get into trouble and be suspended is not related to the child's previous behavior that resulted in discipline or to that child's disability, the school district may review the incidents and determine that a new suspension that results in more than 10 cumulative days of suspension for this school year is not a change in placement and, therefore, does not require services to continue.

If the child is moved to another setting due to discipline, that child must continue to participate in the general curriculum and to meet the goals and objectives in his/her IEP.

When the school district had knowledge that the child might be a child with a disability prior to the behavior occurring, the child will have the same protections of discipline as a child with an IEP. A school district has knowledge when

- the parent expressed concern in writing to the school; or
- the parent requested an evaluation for special education; or
- the child's teacher or other school district staff expressed concerns about a pattern of behavior.

Any evaluations that have been requested for a student being disciplined must be completed quickly.

A free and appropriate public education, even though it is in a different location, shall be provided to all children with disabilities who have been suspended out of school or expelled so that the child can continue to make progress toward meeting the goals and objectives of his or her IEP and make progress in the curriculum.

### *Transfer of Rights*

At age 18, students become their own educational decision makers, unless a court decides they are not able to make these decisions. On or before a student's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday, the district is to inform the parents and the student that, at age 18, the student attains the age

of majority in Georgia and will become his or her own educational decision maker. Districts may also inform parents of other options or about where to get more information about guardianships, powers of attorney, and any other options. For example, it may be that for some students, a guardianship or a more limited form of transfer of rights would be necessary. Beginning at age 18, the district is to send all notices to both the parent and the student, but the student will provide informed written consent for any action requested by the district. When the student turns 18, he or she becomes the educational decision maker, but the parents retain the rights to all notices of meetings, notices of changes in program or placement, and notices of evaluations, while the student is eligible under the IDEA.

#### *Resources*

**Parent Rights** [http://www.gadoe.org/ci\\_exceptional.aspx?PageReq=CIEXCParentsRights](http://www.gadoe.org/ci_exceptional.aspx?PageReq=CIEXCParentsRights)

**Fact Sheets** [http://www.gadoe.org/ci\\_exceptional.aspx?PageReq=CIEXCPartner](http://www.gadoe.org/ci_exceptional.aspx?PageReq=CIEXCPartner)

- Discipline
- IEPs
- Evaluations
- Reevaluations and Independent Evaluations
- Transitions from Early Intervention
- Transition to Life After High School

**Parent Mentors** [www.parentmentors.org](http://www.parentmentors.org)

For more information call the local District Special Education Office or a Parent Mentor if the district has one on staff. The Parent Mentor website lists districts with parent mentors.

**Parent to Parent** [www.p2pga.org](http://www.p2pga.org) or call 800-229-2038

Valuable information and answers to questions can be obtained from Parent to Parent of Georgia (P2P), which is the state's Parent Information Training Center (PTI) under IDEA. Assistance is also available for parents who speak Spanish.

This manual is meant to serve as a practical guide for implementing IDEA and its regulations. It is not intended to state new law or supplant any federal or state laws, regulations, or requirements. Nothing in this manual should be seen as having the force of law. This manual should not be cited as law or as imposing any additional requirements or obligations outside the requirements of existing law. Districts, schools, and parents are not required to adhere to this manual, but only to the requirements of IDEA as codified in 20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq.*, its regulations promulgated in 34 C.F.R. Parts 300 and 301, and the rules of the State of Georgia promulgated by the State Board of Education.