

MCAAP Monday Drop In Lunch Bunch: “Leveraging Community Services To Support Your Patients’ Learning and Developmental Needs”

Anatomy of an IEP: What a Pediatrician Needs to Know

December 11, 2023

With MCAAP President:
Mary Beth Miotto, MD, MPH

***And Special Guest:
Sarah Canale, MD***

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HOW DO I ACCESS OR SHARE PAST MONDAY DROP-IN CONTENT?

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*Find past videos and
hyperlink-powered slide decks at
<https://mcaap.org/cme/>*

Special Education Law is organized around the following six principles:

←
What are the major principles of special education laws?
←



1. Parent and Student Participation



2. Appropriate Evaluation



3. Individualized Education Program (IEP)



4. Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)



5. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)



6. Procedural Safeguards

The IEP has seven sections.

- Parent and/or Student Concerns.
- Vision Statement.
- Present Levels of Performance.
- Measurable Annual Goals.
- Service Delivery Grid.
- Schedule Modification and
- Transportation.

<https://www.masslegalhelp.org/school/special-ed/services/iep#goals>

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Talking about IEPs:

The disabilities that are deemed eligible for IEP/SPED services in the US

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/definitions.html>



STUDENT PROFILE

The student is identified as having the following disability or disabilities. Include all that apply.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Autism | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Impairment | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensory Impairment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication Impairment | <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Impairment | <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental Delay (ages 3–9) | <input type="checkbox"/> Neurological Impairment | <input type="checkbox"/> Vision |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional Impairment | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Impairment | <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf-Blind |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Specific Learning Disability |

English Learner

Has the student been identified as an English learner?

- Yes No

If yes, describe the student's English Learner Education program, English as a Second Language services, and progress toward English language proficiency benchmarks:

Identify any language needs and consider how they relate to the student's IEP:

Assistive Technology

Does the student require assistive technology devices or services?

- Yes No

If yes, this need will be addressed in the following section(s) of the IEP:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodations/Modifications | <input type="checkbox"/> Services Delivery Grid |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goals/Objectives | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Information |

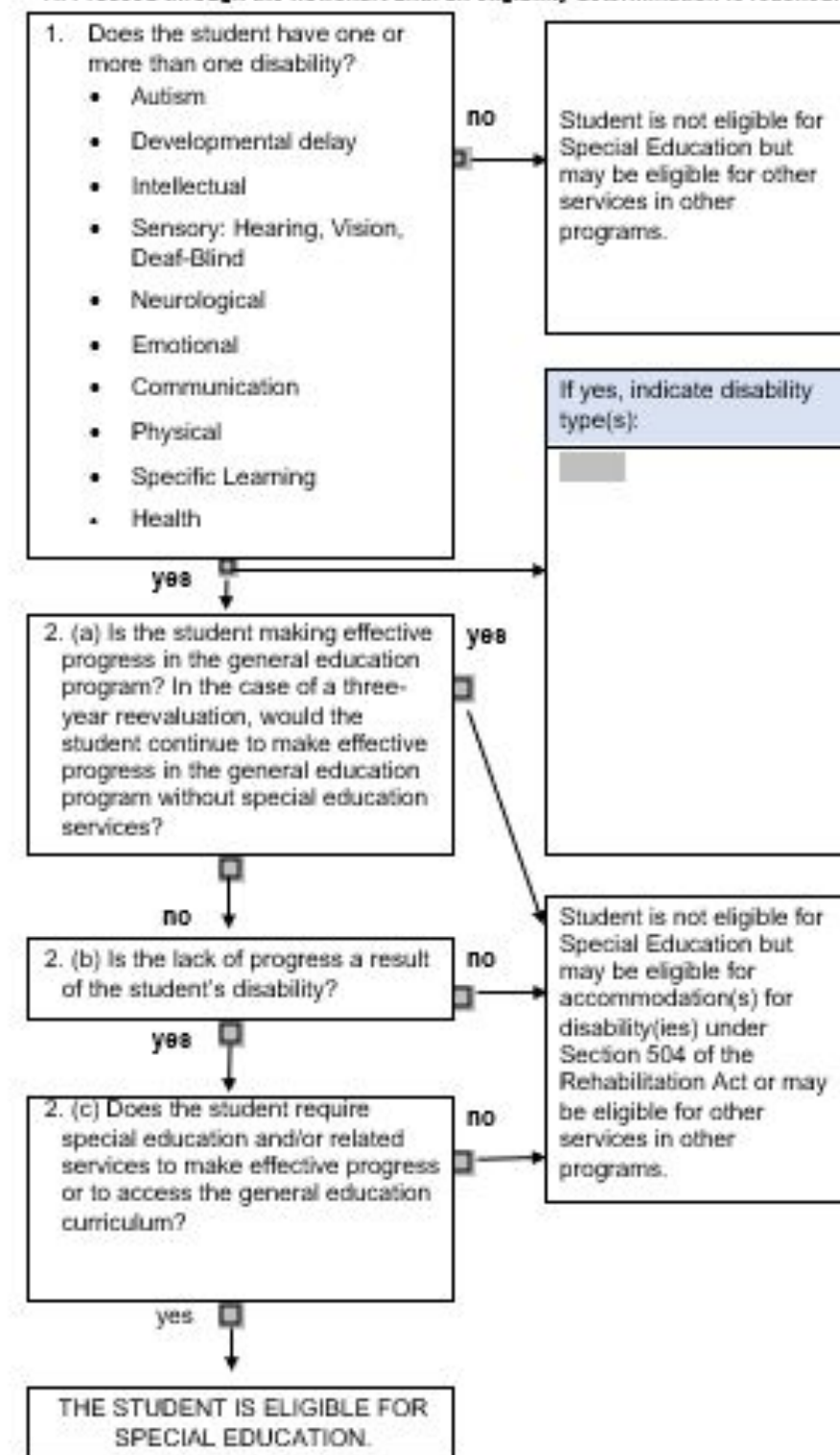
The Massachusetts Special Education Eligibility Determination Process Map

School District Name:	<input type="text"/>
School District Address:	<input type="text"/>
School District Contact Person/Phone #:	<input type="text"/>

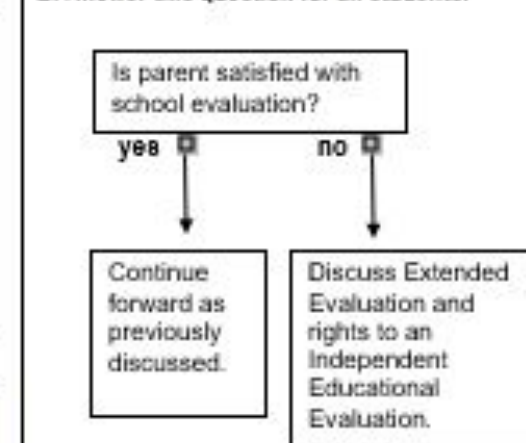
Special Education Eligibility/Initial and Reevaluation Determination

Student Name:	<input type="text"/>	DOB:	<input type="text"/>	ID#:	<input type="text"/>	Date:	<input type="text"/>
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A. Proceed through the flowchart until an eligibility determination is reached.



B. Answer this question for all students.



KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS AND/OR NEXT STEPS

Individualized Education Program

IEP Dates: from _____ to _____

Student Name: _____ DOB: _____ ID#: _____

Service Delivery

What are the total service delivery needs of this student?

Include services, related services, program modifications and supports (including positive behavioral supports, school personnel and/or parent training/supports). Services should assist the student in reaching IEP goals, to be involved and progress in the general curriculum, to participate in extracurricular/nonacademic activities and to allow the student to participate with nondisabled students while working towards IEP goals.

School District Cycle: 5 day cycle 6 day cycle 10 day cycle other: _____

A. Consultation (Indirect Services to School Personnel and Parents)

Focus on Goal #	Type of Service	Type of Personnel	Frequency and Duration/Per Cycle	Start Date	End Date

B. Special Education and Related Services in General Education Classroom (Direct Service)

Focus on Goal #	Type of Service	Type of Personnel	Frequency and Duration/Per Cycle	Start Date	End Date

C. Special Education and Related Services in Other Settings (Direct Service)

Focus on Goal #	Type of Service	Type of Personnel	Frequency and Duration/Per Cycle	Start Date	End Date

Use multiple copies of this form as needed.

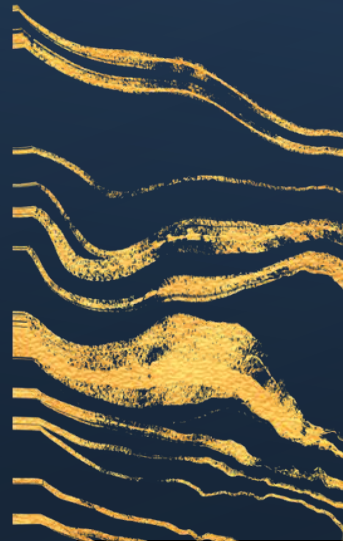
IEP 5

IEP Service Delivery Grid

A- Consultation: not direct services

B- Direct services in the general education classroom

C- Direct Services outside of the General education classroom



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Placement Consent Form -- School aged PL1: Aged 5 (enrolled in kindergarten) and aged 6 through 21

IEP Dates _____

Special Education Team - Educational Placements	Corresponding Placement
The team identified that IEP services are provided outside the general education classroom less than 21% of the time (80% inclusion).	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Inclusion Program
The team identified that IEP services are provided outside the general education classroom at least 21% of the time, but no more than 60% of the time.	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Inclusion Program
The team identified that IEP services are provided outside the general education classroom for more than 60% of the time.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substantially Separate Classroom
The team identified that all IEP services should be provided outside the general education classroom and in a public or private separate school that only serves students with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Separate Day School <input type="checkbox"/> Public or <input type="checkbox"/> Private
The team identified that IEP services require a 24-hour special education program.	<input type="checkbox"/> Residential school
The team has identified a mix of IEP services that are not provided in primarily school-based settings but are in a neutral or community-based setting.	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:

Least restrictive



Most restrictive

Individualized Education Program

IEP Dates: from _____ to _____

Student Name: _____ DOB: _____ ID#: _____

Nonparticipation Justification

Is the student removed from the general education classroom at any time? (Refer to IEP 5—Service Delivery, Section C.)

No Yes If yes, why is removal considered critical to the student's program?

IDEA 2004 Regulation 20 U.S.C. §812 (a) (5) 550: "... removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs **only when** the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily." (Emphasis added.)

Schedule Modification

Shorter: Does this student require a shorter school day or shorter school year?

No Yes — shorter day Yes — shorter year If yes, answer the questions below.

Longer: Does this student require a longer school day or a longer school year to prevent substantial loss of previously learned skills and / or substantial difficulty in relearning skills?

No Yes — longer day Yes — longer year If yes, answer the questions below.

How will the student's schedule be modified? Why is this schedule modification being recommended?

If a longer day or year is recommended, how will the school district coordinate services across program components?

Transportation Services

Does the student require transportation as a result of the disability(ies)?

No Regular transportation will be provided in the same manner as it would be provided for students without disabilities. If the child is placed away from the local school, transportation will be provided.

Yes Special transportation will be provided in the following manner:

on a regular transportation vehicle with the following modifications and/or specialized equipment and precautions:

on a special transportation vehicle with the following modifications and/or specialized equipment and precautions:

After the team makes a transportation decision and after a placement decision has been made, a parent may choose to provide transportation and may be eligible for reimbursement under certain circumstances. Any parent who plans to transport their child to school should notify the school district contact person.

IEP 6

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Student Name: [REDACTED]

IEP Dates: from 09/20/2022 to 09/19/2023

DOB: [REDACTED] Student ID#: [REDACTED]

Service Delivery

What are the total service delivery needs of this student?

Include services, related services, program modifications and supports (including positive behavioral supports, school personnel and/or parent training/supports). Services should assist the student in reaching IEP goals, to be involved and progress in the general curriculum, to participate in extracurricular/nonacademic activities and to allow the student to participate with nondisabled students while working towards IEP goals.

School District Cycle: The [REDACTED] Elementary School is on a 5-day cycle.

A. Consultation (Indirect Services to School Personnel and Parents)

Focus on Goal #	Type of Service	Type of Personnel	Frequency and Duration per Cycle	Start Date	End Date
-----------------	-----------------	-------------------	----------------------------------	------------	----------

No services in this grid

B. Special Education and Related Services in General Education Classroom (Direct Services)

Focus on Goal #	Type of Service	Type of Personnel	Frequency and Duration per Cycle	Start Date	End Date
-----------------	-----------------	-------------------	----------------------------------	------------	----------

No services in this grid

C. Special Education and Related Services in Other Locations (Direct Services)

Focus on Goal #	Type of Service	Type of Personnel	Frequency and Duration per Cycle	Start Date	End Date
3	Math Skills	Special Ed Teacher	5 Session (s) of 80 minute(s) each per 5-day cycle	09/20/2022	09/19/2023
3	Math Skills	Special Ed Teacher	5 Session (s) of 80 minute(s) each per 5-day cycle	07/10/2023	08/11/2023
4	Reading/Writing Skills	Special Ed Teacher	5 Session (s) of 80 minute(s) each per 5-day cycle	09/20/2022	09/19/2023
5	Self Regulation Skills	Special Ed Teacher	5 Session (s) of 80 minute(s) each per 5-day cycle	09/20/2022	09/19/2023
4	Reading/Writing Skills	Special Ed Teacher	5 Session (s) of 80 minute(s) each per 5-day cycle	07/10/2023	08/11/2023
5	Self Regulation Skills	Special Ed Teacher	5 Session (s) of 80 minute(s) each per 5-day cycle	07/10/2023	08/11/2023
1	Speech and Language Services	SLP	2 Session (s) of 30 minute(s) each per 5-day cycle	09/20/2022	09/19/2023
2	Occupational Therapy	Occupational Therapist	2 Session (s) of 30 minute(s) each per 5-day cycle	09/20/2022	09/19/2023
1	Speech and Language Services	SLP	1 Session of 30 minute(s) per 5-day cycle	07/10/2023	08/11/2023

Working examples of Service Delivery Grid, Transportation, etc

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Student Name: [REDACTED]

IEP Dates: from 09/20/2022 to 09/19/2023

DOB: [REDACTED] Student ID#: [REDACTED]

Nonparticipation Justification

Is the student removed from the general education classroom at any time? (refer to IEP 5 service delivery, section C.)

Yes No If yes, why is removal considered critical to the student's program?

[REDACTED] is removed from the general education setting in order to receive intensive speech and language and occupational therapy in order to address a developmental delay disability.

IDEA 2004 Regulation 20 U.S.C. §612 (a) (5)350: "... removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs **only when** the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily." (Emphasis added.)

Schedule Modification

Shorter: Does this student require a shorter school day or shorter school year?

No Yes - Shorter Day Shorter year If yes, answer the questions below

Longer: Does this student require a longer school day or longer school year to prevent substantial loss of previously learned skills and/or substantial difficulty in relearning skills?

No Yes - Longer Day Longer year If yes, answer the questions below

How will the student's schedule be modified? Why is this schedule modification being recommended? If a longer day or year is recommended, how will the school district coordinate services across program components?

[REDACTED] will attend school for a standard school day.

Because of [REDACTED] special needs, she is enrolled in the Extended School Year program. An explanation is given below.

The team is proposing Boston Public Schools Extended Year Program due to regression of skills. Parent will be notified at a later date of proposed Extended Year Program school site, dates and hours.

Transportation Services

Does the student require transportation as a result of the disability(ies)?

- No Regular transportation will be provided in the same manner as it would be provided for students without disabilities. If the child is placed away from the local school, transportation will be provided.
- Yes Special Transportation will be provided in the following manner:
 - on a regular transportation vehicle with the following modifications and/or specialized equipment and precautions:
 - on a special transportation vehicle with the following modifications and/or specialized equipment and precautions: Door to Door



Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Student Name: [REDACTED]

IEP Dates: from 09/20/2022 to 09/19/2023

DOB: [REDACTED] Student ID#: [REDACTED]

State or District-Wide Assessment

Fill out the table below. Consider any state or districtwide assessment to be administered during the time span covered by this IEP. For each content area, identify the student's assessment participation status by putting an X in the corresponding box for column 1, 2, or 3. District Writing Assessment, MCAS

Content Areas	1. Assessment Participation: Student participates in on-demand testing under routine conditions in this content area.	2. Assessment Participation: Student participates in on-demand testing with accommodations in this content area. (see below)	3. Assessment Participation: Student participates in alternate assessment in this content area. (see below)
English Language Arts			X
History and Social Sciences			
Mathematics			X
Science and Technology			
Reading			

Accommodations for State or District-Wide Assessments:

Alternate Assessment Justification

The nature and complexity of the student's cognitive disability presents significant barriers or challenges to standardized testing.

The Assessment Requirements and Additional Information

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Student Name: [REDACTED]

IEP Dates: from 09/20/2022 to 09/19/2023

DOB: [REDACTED] Student ID#: [REDACTED]

Additional Information

- Include the following transition information: the anticipated graduation date; a statement of interagency responsibilities or needed linkages; the discussion of transfer of rights at least one year before age of majority; and a recommendation for Chapter 688 Referral.
- Document efforts to obtain participation if a parent and if student did not attend meeting or provide input.
- Record other relevant IEP information not previously stated.

As per the Massachusetts Bullying Prevention and Intervention Law, M.G.L., c. 71, 370, the Team discussed the student's disability as it relates to social interactions and determined that the student:

- is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing either as a target or an aggressor. This determination was considered with the development of this IEP.
- is not vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing either as a target or an aggressor. However, if, at any point in the future, such concerns arise, the IEP Team will reconvene to discuss and to address skills needed to avoid and respond to bullying in the IEP. The whole school bullying prevention curriculum is provided to all students.

Augmentative and Alternative Communication: Are there any significant concerns about the student's access to his/her current curriculum given the accommodations and services that were discussed at the Team meeting?

Please select one of the following choices for Augmentative and Alternative Communication:

- 1. No Concerns
 - The listed communication supports and accommodations are being used to increase language skills and communication for functional access to the curriculum.
 - The student has the communication skills necessary to access the curriculum.
- 2. Yes, to address these concerns an Augmentative and Alternative Communication consultation/evaluation will be requested.

The following concerns were expressed during the meeting:

Assistive Technology: Are there any significant concerns about the student's access to his/her current curriculum given the accommodations and services that were discussed at the Team meeting?

Please select one of the following choices for Assistive Technology:

- 1. No Concerns
 - Please refer to the listed UDL tools and instructional strategies/supports noted in PLEP A and B being used to increase student's functional access to the curriculum.
 - 2. Yes, to address these concerns an assistive technology consultation/evaluation will be requested.
- The following concerns were expressed during the meeting:

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PARTICIPATION IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION SETTING

Can the student's educational needs be met in the general education setting, with or without the use of supplementary aids and services?

Yes No

If no, provide an explanation of the extent to which the student will not participate in general education. Include a description of the specific supplementary aids and services considered before determining that the student would be removed from a general education class or activity.

SERVICE DELIVERY

Include specially designed instruction, related services, and supports based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable (including, if applicable, positive behavioral supports and support/training for school personnel and/or parent[s]). Consider providing services in general education settings before considering other options.

Goal Number(s)	Type of Service	Provided by List job title	Location	Frequency/Duration __ x __ minutes per __- day cycle	Start Date	End Date
A. Consultation (Indirect Services to School Personnel and Parents)						
B. Special Education and Related Services in General Education Classrooms (Direct Service)						
C. Special Education and Related Services in Other Settings (Direct Service)						

Starting in 2023 the format has changed

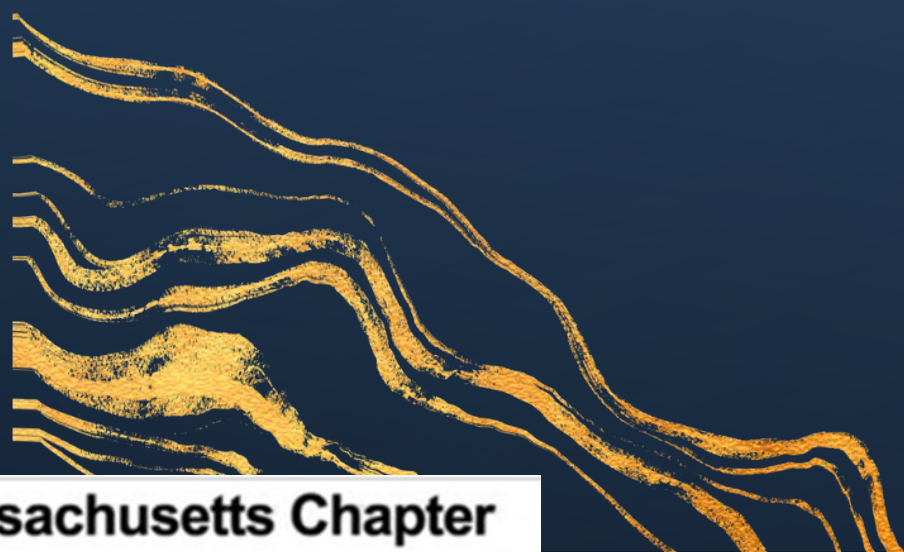
SERVICE DELIVERY FOR EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR SERVICES

Describe the specially designed instruction, related services, and supports that the student needs to avoid substantial regression during summer break and to continue to make effective progress.

Goal Number(s)	Type of Service	Provided by List job title	Location	Frequency/Duration __ x __ minutes per __- day cycle	Start Date	End Date
A. Consultation (Indirect Services to School Personnel and Parents)						
B. Special Education and Related Services in General Education Classrooms (Direct Service)						
C. Special Education and Related Services in Other Settings (Direct Service)						

Extended School Year Transportation Services

- Transportation will be provided in the same manner as it would be for students without disabilities. (Please note that if the student is placed in a program located at a school **other** than the school they would have attended if not eligible for special education, transportation will be provided.)
- The student requires transportation supports and/or services as a related service.
 - Student will be transported on a **regular** transportation vehicle with the following assistance, attendants, modifications, and/or specialized equipment and precautions:
 Specify the disability-related need(s) that require support(s) during transportation (e.g., seizures, a tendency for motion sickness, behavioral or communication difficulties):
 - Student will be transported on a **special** transportation vehicle with the following assistance, attendants, modifications, and/or specialized equipment and precautions:
 Specify the disability-related need(s) that require support(s) during transportation (e.g., seizures, a tendency for motion sickness, behavioral or communication difficulties):



Speaking of Transportation:

<https://www.massadvocates.org/bps-reimbursement>

<https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/Page/6179>

Update! Boston Public Schools (BPS) reimbursement for transportation special education services



ALL families, with or without a Social Security Number (SSN) or Tax Identification Number (TIN) can request that BPS reimburse them for transportation special education expenses. This applies if you've had to transport your student (using a car or rideshare) to or from school due to BPS not providing transportation special education services (such as door to door service or a lack of a bus monitor).

*If you do not have a social security number or tax id number, you **will not** be required to submit a W-9 when seeking reimbursement for transportation from BPS.*

The updated reimbursement process can be found below:

- Complete the following Google form:
[English](#) | [Español](#) | [العربية](#) | [Cabo-Verdiano](#) | [DZ](#) | [Français](#) | [Kreyòl Ayisyen](#) | [Português](#) | [Somali](#) | [Tigring Viti](#)
- Under "Vendor ID Status", confirm whether you have an SSN/TIN
- After confirming that you do not have an SSN/TIN, you will automatically bypass the vendor ID section of the Google Form (allowing you to continue providing additional details to submit the request)
- If you have an SSN/TIN, you must seek a vendor ID (directions provided in Google Form) and provide your vendor ID on the Google Form

If you would like BPS support completing the Google form, please reach the **BPS Helpline** at 617-635-8873. If you have contacted the BPS Helpline and have remaining questions or concerns, please contact **MAC's Helpline** at 617-357-8434.

Massachusetts Advocates
for Children

25 Kingston St, 2nd Floor
Boston, MA 02111

Phone: (617) 357-8434
Fax: (617) 357-8438

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What is an Extended Evaluation?

School District Name:
School District Address:
School District Contact Person/Phone #:

Extended Evaluation Form

Evaluation Dates: from _____ to _____

Student Name: _____ DOB: _____ GRADE: _____ CLASSROOM: _____

The Team found the student eligible for special education but recommended further assessment before developing a full IEP. The Team developed a partial IEP to be implemented during the extended evaluation period.

Important Details from State Regulation -- 800 CMR 28.02(2)(c): An extended evaluation should be used when evaluation information is insufficient and should not be used to delay programs of services determined necessary by the team. If the team has determined eligibility and some necessary supports and services, then the team should write a partial IEP and, with parent concurrence, immediately implement the partial IEP while the extended evaluation is occurring. The evaluation may extend from one to eight school weeks but no longer than eight school weeks. The team may meet at intervals during the period and should reassess before the end of the evaluation period to develop a full IEP. The extended evaluation should not be used to allow extra time to complete required assessments and to not a placement.

1. What are the current evaluation findings?	2. What additional information is needed for evaluation of the student? Identify the specific assessments to be completed.
3. Location where the extended evaluation will take place. Name of public school/district/contract approved special education program: Address: Contact person and phone number:	4. What time period (longer than one week but not to exceed eight school weeks) is needed to complete the necessary evaluation(s)?
5. Should the team meet at intervals during the extended evaluation period? If yes, please specify meeting dates, time and location.	6. What are all the team members to develop a full IEP prior to the end of the evaluation period? Please specify meeting date, time and location.

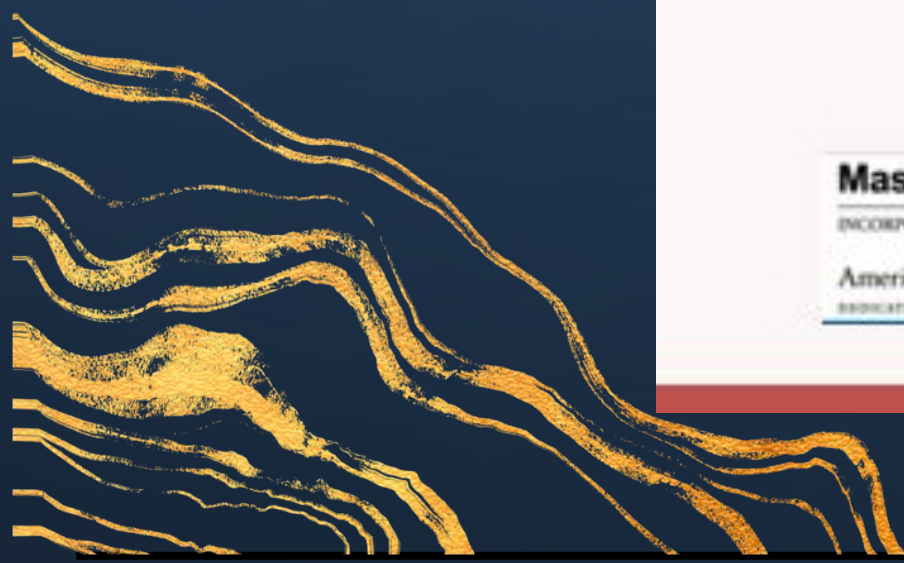
Massachusetts DOE/Extended Evaluation Form - Revised (2/2017) Page 1 of 1

If the district wants to start providing services while an extended evaluation is scheduled, this is the form they must complete.



"The Team found the student eligible for special education but recommended further assessment before developing a full IEP. The Team developed a partial IEP to be implemented during the extended evaluation period."

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/iep/forms/english/e1-2.docx>





We can teach ourselves about special education law ---but we are not special education experts. Learn from the IEPs you read and from parent experiences but also counsel parents on “how to look for the helpers” . .

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Parent Self-Education and Self-Advocacy...it's a marathon



From Needs to Services: Parent Homework Worksheet

Connecting Your Child's Evaluation Summary Report and Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Is your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) tailored to meet their needs? This exercise will give you the tools to help you decide. Once you have completed the Parent Homework Worksheet (located on page four of this document), you will have specific information that will help you make the best decisions for your child's education.

You will need copies of your child's current Evaluation Summary Report (ESR), which was completed by the school, and your child's current IEP. If you don't have copies, you may request them from your child's IEP case manager. A copy of the worksheet is attached to this handout. You may find an online copy at https://www.pacer.org/parent/iep/iep_services_check.

Begin the process by writing down each of your areas of concern for your child currently or for the future. Write down your top areas of concern for the upcoming year and for the IEP. To help you organize your thoughts, you may want to use the following categories:

- Intellectual functioning (cognitive impairment, needs related to processing speed or working memory)
- Executive functioning (difficulty with organization, planning & prioritizing, task initiation, and completion)
- Speech, language, communication
- Health
- Sensory regulation (significantly higher or lower tolerance for specific sensory experiences or environments)
- Social, emotional, behavioral
- Assistive technology
- Sensory needs related to vision or hearing
- Gross motor (large muscle movements such as difficulty climbing stairs, catching a ball, pedaling a bike)
- Fine motor (small muscle movements such as difficulty cutting with scissors, holding a pencil to write, zipping a jacket)
- Activities of daily living (difficulty eating, dressing, toileting, transferring from a chair to standing)
- For students in 9th grade and above:
 - Transition to post-secondary education and training
 - Transition to employment
 - Transition to independent living
- Strengths, interests, and preferences

Set this aside while you complete the Parent Homework Worksheet on page four.

Read through your child's Evaluation Summary Report.

- Underline all your child's educational needs listed in the Evaluation Summary Report
- Your child's IEP has a section called Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) that may also have useful information. Underline any needs listed there also.
- Write down all of the items you underlined in column one of the Parent Homework Worksheet. They do not need to be put in order. For example:



Student Needs (From Evaluation Summary Report or Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance)	Services/Supports (from IEP)
Teacher can't understand written work of the student. Occupational Therapist recommends help with fine motor skills. (Page 4- ESR)	

Completing column one of the Parent Homework Worksheet will help you break the Evaluation Summary Report down into manageable sections.

Now look at the list you made at the beginning of the process to help you answer these questions:

- Do I agree that the Evaluation Summary Report is a complete list of my child's special education needs?
- Do I have any concerns that aren't mentioned?
- Do I agree that the report is accurate? Do I agree that my child performs at the levels listed?
- Does the report give a clear picture of my child? Does it give the school an accurate picture of my child?
- If I used additional information from the Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance, is it complete and accurate?
- Are there any needs missing that I think should be listed?

Next read through your child's IEP. Read through your child's IEP to locate the services and supports. Services and supports are what the school uses to help your child accomplish their special education goals and objectives, as well as make education accessible given their special education needs. It is important for you to keep IEP goals in mind when you are reviewing the services and supports. Underline all the services or supports that are listed.

- Great places to look include:
 - Adaptations section (accommodations or modifications); these may include assistive technology, transportation, positive behavior plan, other related services
 - Services chart
 - Transition services for students 9th grade and above
- List the service or support on the second column directly next to the need listed in the first column. For example:

Student Needs (From Evaluation Summary Report or Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance)	Services/Supports (from IEP)
Teacher cannot understand written work of the student. Occupational Therapist recommends help with fine motor skills. (Page 4- ESR)	Will receive Occupational Therapy services 2 times per week for 30 minutes. (Goal 2 and page 9 of services chart - IEP)
Trouble writing class notes. (Page 4- ESR)	Will receive a copy of lecture notes from teacher or designated peer. (Page 10)
Struggles with transitions. (Page 4- ESR)	No supports found.

Once you have completed the services in column two of the Parent Homework Worksheet, ask yourself:

- For each need listed, is there a service item to meet it?
- Do the services in column two sound like they will meet each of my child's needs in column one?

Congratulations! You have completed an IEP Worksheet! Now, take a moment to think about the process:

- What did you learn about your child's educational needs from this exercise?
- Do you have any questions or any areas where more information is needed that might be found through additional or different tests for your child?
- Did you have any questions or any areas where more information is needed from a school psychologist or special educator?

These observations will help you ask the IEP team for more information. For example:

- On page ___ of the evaluation report it says my child has a need in the area of _____. I don't see a current service to meet that need. What service is being provided to meet that need or what service would be appropriate?
- On page ___ of the evaluation report it talks about my child's needs in the area of _____. I feel that my child has more needs in this area than the ones you have listed. What additional testing could we consider?
- On page ___ of the IEP it says the school is providing _____ service. Has my child shown any progress in this need area?

It's a good idea to make a copy of your completed worksheet for each member of the IEP team if you plan to use it at the IEP meeting. If you are unable to make copies, you may want to ask your child's IEP case manager to make copies for everyone and add it to the agenda. It will help the IEP team focus on needs, services, and your highest priorities for your child.

KEY TERMS:

Evaluation Summary Report (ESR): Summarizes the findings of the special education evaluation conducted by your child's public school.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): The written statement developed for special education students that spells out what special education and related services your child will receive.

Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP): The IEP team develops the PLAAFP to describe your child's present level of academic and functional performance.

Parent Homework Worksheet

Student Needs (From Evaluation Summary Report or Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance)	Services/Supports (from IEP)

<https://www.pacer.org/parent/php/php-c210.pdf>





Browse some of the district SPEDPAC/SEPAC websites in MA for more resources that can help parents and YOU:

1. <https://www.concordspedpac.org/>
2. <https://newtonpac.org/resources/>
3. <https://www.spedchildmass.com/>
4. <https://www.lowell.k12.ma.us/spedpac>
5. <https://worcesterschools.org/current-families/family-involvement/special-education-parent-advisory-council/>
6. <https://northamptonschools.org/special-education-parent-advisory-council/>
7. <https://www.bostonspedpac.org/>

WHAT IS A SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVOCATE?



An **advocate** is someone who helps a parent or family to understand the special education process.

Advocates can provide information about special education options and requirements, and can help you to seek a specific service or program for your child.

An **advocate** can help you carefully read your child's school records, testing information, and Individualized Education Program (IEP). If you wish, an advocate may attend Team meetings with you.

A **skillful advocate** who knows local schools and resources can often see solutions not immediately obvious to other people.

An **advocate**, most importantly, can help you to become a better advocate for your own child.

For more information or to locate an advocate in your area, please contact the Federation for Children with Special Needs, and ask for an Information Specialist.

Federation for Children with Special Needs
The Schrafft Center
529 Main Street, Suite 1102
Boston, MA 02129
(617) 236-7210 (Voice and TTY)
(800) 331-0688 (Toll free in MA)
(617) 241-0330 (Fax)
info@fcsn.org (Information)
www.fcsn.org

Visit us on the web



Developed cooperatively by the
Federation for Children with Special Needs
and the
Massachusetts Department of
Elementary and Secondary Education



FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



*A Parent's Guide to
Selecting a Special
Education Advocate
in Massachusetts*

*Finding the right advocate for your family means asking the right questions.
Try to interview at least three advocates before hiring one.*

A GOOD ADVOCATE...

IS WELL-TRAINED AND KNOWS THE LAW

- Ask what kind of training the advocate has received. When? From what organization(s)? How much experience does he/she have?
- Consider asking the advocate specific questions about special education laws and regulations. Does the advocate give clear explanations?

UNDERSTANDS SCHOOLS

- Discuss what the advocate knows about teaching methods. Ask the advocate to explain how to measure your child's progress in school, and to show how this information can be helpful in developing the IEP.
- Find out how the advocate plans to obtain positive results for your child, while maintaining a productive working relationship with your child's school.

TAKES TIME TO KNOW YOUR CHILD

- If possible, arrange for the advocate to meet and spend time with your child. Your child's education must be individualized to meet his unique needs; an advocate should get to know your child as an individual.
- Make sure the advocate understands the facts of your child's situation. If you would like the advocate to see your child's school records, the school will require you to sign a release form.



EMPOWERS YOU

- Find out how the advocate will try to educate and empower you to become a better advocate for your child.
- Find out when the advocate is available, and how much time he or she will be able to spend with you. Is the advocate willing to attend meetings at your child's school?

UNDERSTANDS DISABILITIES

- Find out what the advocate knows about your child's specific disability.
- Ask if the advocate has experience with other children who have the same type of disability, and consider if that is important to you in obtaining an advocate.

ACTS PROFESSIONALLY

- Ask the advocate to explain how he or she was able to work out a solution with and for other families in the past.
- Consider asking for references from the advocate's previous clients.
- Consider drawing up a written agreement of what the advocate will do for you.
- If the advocate charges a fee, make sure you know what the advocate's fee and/or the retainer amount will be. Agree to these specifics up front and in writing.
- Decide when or if the advocate can speak to the school without your permission.
- Ask that the advocate return all materials when you are finished working together.

It's important to know that there is no formal certification or licensing process for advocates. Most advocates are not trained as lawyers. A well-trained advocate will help you know when you need advice from a lawyer.

ADVOCATING FOR YOUR CHILD

Effective advocacy starts with educating yourself. Make sure you understand your child's disability and learning style. Become knowledgeable about your child's school program, and learn about your rights and responsibilities under the law. As a key member of your child's Team, your goal is to work collaboratively with teachers and other professionals.



Begin to inform yourself by looking at the Federation for Children with Special Needs website at www.fcsn.org, or contact us at 1-800-331-0688 to find out about our workshops and trainings. Other great resources are the National Dissemination Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities at www.nichcy.org, or disability-specific organizations such as the National Center for Learning Disabilities, www.nclld.org, the National Down Syndrome Congress, www.ndsccenter.org, or the Autism Society of America, www.autism-society.org.

If you are concerned about your child's progress in school, talk with your child's teacher, principal, or IEP Team leader. It is also helpful to speak with other parents, especially the members of your town's special education Parent Advisory Council (PAC). At the Federation for Children with Special Needs, information specialists can also answer your questions. If you have a specific question about laws or regulations, or if you believe the school is doing something they should not do, you can call the Program Quality Assurance office of the Massachusetts Department of Education (1-781-338-3700).

You can also hire a special education advocate to assist you. Successful advocates get good results for students by working cooperatively and openly with parents and schools. The Federation for Children with Special Needs provides training for special education advocates called the Parent Consultant Training Institute. The Federation maintains contact information for all persons who have successfully completed their training.

• <https://fcsn.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/08/Selecting-an-Advocate-English.pdf>

There are professionals and volunteers who do this work ...we can help by directing parents to advocates

Take Home Pearls from the last few months:

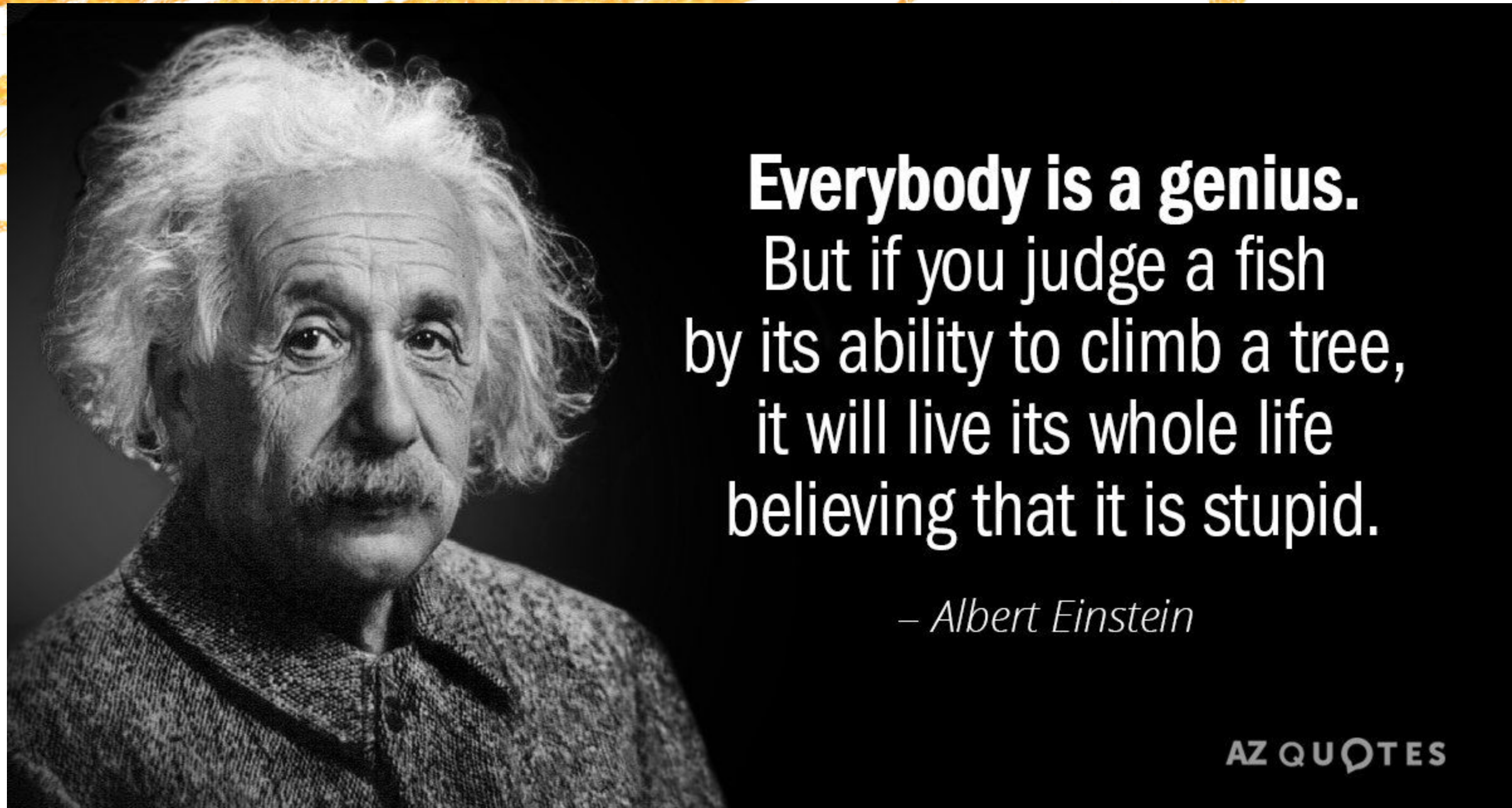


1. The special education process is a challenging journey. Parents will appreciate your support and whatever guidance you offer.
2. You'll learn from parents and from reading assessment reports & IEPs. Just be curious.
3. Picking up the phone and calling a teacher is worth its weight in gold for your patient and for your learning!
4. Use follow-up visits and telehealth to reasonably accommodate parents' needs. Bill accordingly.
5. Pediatricians are not experts in special education, but we can learn some street signs along the road and lead families to experts who are ready to help. It takes a "medical village".
6. Prepare the parents that this is a marathon, not a sprint. Impress on them the value of self-care.
7. Encourage parents to locate other parents within their district or outside their district who have had similar educational journeys.
8. "Phone a friend". Most likely you know someone who knows something or someone.

Thank you to Dr. Sarah Canale and to all today's attendees.

Our next "Monday drop in" will be after the holidays on January 8th, 2024.

Please reach out to MCAAP at chaggerty@mcaap.org with program ideas or questions.



Everybody is a genius.
But if you judge a fish
by its ability to climb a tree,
it will live its whole life
believing that it is stupid.

– Albert Einstein

AZ QUOTES

Massachusetts Chapter

INCORPORATED IN MASSACHUSETTS

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

