

## Definitions

**Child:** As referred to in this document, a child is an individual between the ages of 3 years and 21 years, inclusive; with the added notation that under certain conditions an individual may continue to receive special education and related services until the end of the school year during which they turn 21 and, thus, may turn 22 before the end of their eligibility.

**Due Process Hearing:** A legal process in which an impartial hearing officer, appointed by the Bureau of Special Education (BSE) at the Connecticut State Department of Education (Due Process Unit), decides the resolution of a disagreement between parents and the school district. The parents or the school district may request a due process hearing.

**Evaluation:** The summative results of the evaluation procedures, including a review of information, used to determine whether a student is a student with a disability requiring special education and related services and the nature and extent of the special education and related services that the student needs. Parental *consent* is required for this type of evaluation.

**Evaluation procedures:** The use of a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the student, including information provided by the parent that may assist in determining whether the student is a student with a disability and, if so, the content of the student's Individualized Education Program.

**Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE):** An evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the school district responsible for the education of the child in question.

**IEE Criteria:** The school district has the right to set standards which the outside examiner must meet in order to conduct an evaluation for the student at public expense, including the location of the evaluation and the qualifications of the examiner. These qualifications, however, must be the same as the criteria the school district would use when it initiates an evaluation, to the extent those criteria are consistent with a parent's right to an IEE at public expense.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP):** A program developed to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives specialized instruction and related services.

**Mediation:** A voluntary process that allows the parents and the school district to resolve their dispute. The Due Process Unit within the BSE assigns a trained mediator who will assist the parents and the school district in reaching a mutually satisfactory agreement.

**Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP):** A division of the U.S. Department of Education dedicated to improving results for children with disabilities ages birth through 21, by providing leadership and financial support to assist states and local districts. OSEP administers the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA).

**Parent:** A biological or adoptive parent, guardian, or surrogate parent as defined in section 10-94h of the Connecticut General Statutes or an individual acting in the place of a biological parent or adoptive parent (including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative) with whom the child lives or an individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare.

**Planning and Placement Team (PPT):** A group comprised of the parents and school professionals who represent general education teachers, special educators, and administrators who are equal participants in the decision making process to determine the specific educational needs of the child and develop, review and revise a child's IEP. A planning and placement team reviews referrals to special education, determines if the child needs to be evaluated, decides what evaluations will be given to the child, and determines whether the child is eligible for special education services.

**Procedural Safeguards:** The IDEA requires schools to provide the parent with a notice containing a full explanation of the procedural safeguards available under the IDEA and the implementing regulations. These safeguards are designed to protect the rights of parents and students and also give parents and school districts several options by which to resolve their disputes.

**Public Expense:** The school district either pays for the full cost of the evaluation or ensures that the evaluation is otherwise provided at no cost to the parent.

**Special Education Complaint Resolution Process:** A mechanism whereby a parent or other interested party or parties may file a written complaint with the Bureau of Special Education alleging that the local school district has violated a requirement of federal or state law concerning special education.

**The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA):** The federal law concerning the education of students with disabilities.

**The Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (RCSA):** The state regulations concerning the education of students with disabilities