

HAMILTON SCHOOL
DISTRICT #3



Preschool Manual

2016-2017

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Hamilton School District #3 offers preschool services to students ages 3-5. Preschool services are offered to those students meeting the eligibility criteria for an Individualized Education Program in one or more of the following categories:

Developmental Delay

Autism

Cognitive Delay

Deaf-Blindness

Deafness

Emotional Disturbance

Hearing Impairment

Orthopedic Impairment

Other Health Impairment

Specific Learning Disability

Preschool services are also offered to typically developing students. Preschool eligibility for typically developing students will be offered based on the following criteria:

- Age 4 by September 10
- Completely toilet trained
- Independent self-help skills
- Initiates play and conversation with others
- Follow the classroom routine
- Age appropriate communication skills
- Follows simple directions
- Separates easily from parents
- Attends to adult guided activity

Typically developing peers' progress is monitored by the Preschool Coordinator and Preschool Teachers to ensure development is appropriate for Little Broncs Preschool. Parents are notified of the students' progress.

It is the intent of Hamilton School District #3 to offer a one-to-one ratio in the classroom of students with Individual Education Plan and typically developing peers.

Preschool follows the Hamilton School District #3 school calendar.

Glossary of Terms

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is the federal law governing special education for public school districts. Under the IDEA, K-12 public school districts are provided funding in return for making available to all eligible children with disabilities a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment appropriate to their individual needs. In Montana, a school district is responsible for the provision of special education services for eligible students with disabilities beginning at age 3 and through 18 (or until the student reaches the age of 19 on or before September 10th of a school year) unless the district has a policy whereby students are educated up to age 21. The IDEA also requires school districts to implement specific procedural safeguards. The IDEA was formally known as the Education for all Handicapped Children Act. The IDEA was initially passed in 1990 and has been reauthorized twice in 1997 and 2004. K-12 districts are subject Part B of the IDEA. Part C of IDEA requires certain Early Intervention Program agencies, i.e., CDC, to provide services to eligible children with disabilities prior to age 3.

Achievement in Montana System (AIM): online special education student information system module maintained by OPI. AIM must be used to create and maintain special education documentation for each student referred for an evaluation.

Assistive Technology Devices: any item, piece of equipment, or product system (software) used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a student with disabilities.

Aversive Treatment:

- the physical restraint (restriction of movement by holding or applying physical pressure), except as otherwise permitted by Montana law under MCA 20-4-32, when determined by the IEP Team that the frequency, intensity, or duration of the restraint is aversive treatment; or
- an isolation time-out in which a student is removed to an isolation room where:
 - the student is alone in the isolation room during the period of isolation;
 - the student is prevented from exiting the isolation room during the period of isolation;
 - the door to the isolation rooms remains closed during the period of isolation; and
 - The student is prohibited from participating the activities occurring outside the isolation room and from interacting with other students during the period of isolation.

Consent: means that the parent- (1) has been fully informed of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought, in his or her native language, or through another mode of communication; (2) understands and agrees in writing to the carrying out of the activity for which his or her consent is sought, and the consent describes that activity and lists the records (if any) that will be released and to whom; and (3) understands that the granting of consent is voluntary on the part of the parent and may be revoked at any time.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): a special education and related services provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, without charge, which meet the standards of the state education agency and include an appropriate preschool, elementary or secondary school education provided in conformity the with IEP.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP): A written document that describes the special education and related services that make up a free, appropriate public education for a child with disabilities; the program is designed to meet the individual special education and related services needs of an eligible child (special education).

IEP Team: The IEP team is makeup of the child’s parent, special education teacher, a general education teacher, and a representative of the school district. Other team members may include related service providers, professionals who evaluated the child and others with knowledge or special expertise regarding the child. The members of the team develop the initial IEP and meet subsequently to review progress and make changes in the written plan. Parents must be included as members of this team.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities, including student in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with students who are not disabled. Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of students with disabilities from the regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Local Education Agency (LEA): Local education agency or LEA mean a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State, or for a combination or school districts or counties as are recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools. The Hamilton School District is a LEA.

Parent: (1) a natural, adoptive or foster parent of a child; (2) a guardian; (3) a surrogate parent; or (4) an individual acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent, including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative with whom the child lives. It does not include employees of a state agency responsible for the welfare of the child. Unless there is a court order restricting the rights of the natural parent or adoptive parent or they are unable to be located, the natural or adoptive parent is the “parent.”

Prior Written Notice:

- A description of the action proposed or refused by the district.
- An explanation of why the district proposes or refuses to take action.
- A description of each evaluation procedure, assessment, record, or report the district used as a basis for the proposed or refused action.
- A statement that the parents have protection under Part B's procedural safeguards, and, if the notice is not an initial referral for evaluation, the means by which a copy of a description of the procedural safeguards can be obtained.
- Sources for parents to contact to obtain assistance in understanding the provisions of Part B.
- A description of other options that the IEP team considered and the reasons why those options were rejected.
- A description of other factors relevant to the district's proposal or refusal.

Procedural Safeguards: Parents of children who receive special education have certain rights that are guaranteed by federal law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These rights include the right to participate in meetings dealing with identification, evaluation, and educational placement of their child and the provision of a free appropriate public education to their child. One of their rights is to be informed of all the rights available to them in writing, in their native language (unless it is clearly not feasible to do so), and at a level understandable to the general public. They are entitled to a copy of these procedural safeguards and lease (1) one time per year, and: (1) upon initial referral or parental request for evaluation; (2) upon the initial filing of a complaint; (3) upon request by a parent. Procedural Safeguards booklets must be obtained from OPI.

Referral: A referral begins the process through which the Evaluation Team conducts a comprehensive education evaluation. Each public school will have an established referral method for collecting information to determine whether comprehensive education evaluation is necessary and the types of evaluations needed. Each public school will have a referral or multiple forms to collect this required information.

Related Services: means transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education, and includes speech-language pathology and audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, including therapeutic recreation, early identification and assessment of disabilities in child, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling, orientation and mobility services, medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes, school health services and school nurse services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training.

Special Education: Specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability, including instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other setting and instruction in physical education. The term includes speech language pathology services and may include other related services, travel training, and vocational education, if they meet the definition of special education. These services may be provided in a variety of education settings, but are required by IDEA to be delivered in the least restrictive environment.

Specially Designed Instruction: Adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an IDEA-eligible child, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of that child that result from the child's disability and to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards within school district that apply to all children.

State Education Agency (SEA): The Montana Office of Public Instruction or other agency responsible for the state supervision of public elementary and secondary schools.

PART 1: PRESCHOOL SERVICES

PRESCHOOL HOURS

Preschool runs Monday-Friday from 9:00-3:00. The District calendar is followed.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

The doors will automatically unlock for school entrance from 9:00-9:15 and 3:00-3:15.

Parents are asked to wait in the school foyer when picking up their children at the conclusion of the day. Children will only be released to those people designated in writing by the parent.

ENROLLMENT

Preschool enrollment is open to children residing in the Hamilton School District.

TYPICALLY DEVELOPING PEERS

The District preschool strives to use a one-to-one ratio for children with an identified disability receiving special education services and typically developing peers. The number of students in each preschool class shall not exceed 20 students.

Typically developing peers enrolled in the District's preschool must exhibit the follow skills:

- Age 3 by September 10th 2013
- Completely toilet trained
- Independent self-help skills
- Initiates play and conversation with other children
- Follows the classroom routine with minimal adult prompting
- Age appropriate communication skills
- Able to follow simple directions
- Separates easily from parents
- Attends to adult guided activity

When class enrollment exceeds 20 students, parents wishing to enroll their child in preschool have the option of being placed on the waiting list. Parents must complete the enrollment paperwork and submit it to the school to be placed on the waiting list. The Preschool Coordinator will notify parents when there are preschool openings.

Students are grouped in classes based upon the following factors:

- Age
- Gender
- Disability category

GRADING

It is the responsibility of the Preschool Teacher to conduct student assessments, keep accurate records and complete student report cards. Report cards are issued following the District's trimester schedule.

It is the responsibility of the Preschool Case Manager to conduct assessments related to the students with Individual Educational Plans. The Preschool Case Manager will complete student progress reports following the District's trimester schedule.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent/Teacher conferences are held in the fall and spring following the District's schedule. The Preschool Teacher will conduct parent/teacher conferences for all students. The Preschool Case manager will participate in the conferences for the students with an Individualized Education Plan.

RECESS

Outside play is a critical part of a child's development. Outside play helps children develop motor skills, social skills and self-esteem. Recess will be held for 15 minutes per day weather permitting. Recess will be held in temperatures of 10 degrees and above.

The Preschool Coordinator will determine the recess supervision schedule. There will be an 8:1 ratio of students to teachers on the playground. The specific needs of the students, such as one-on-one paraprofessional support will be taken into consideration when supervising the playground.

PRESCHOOL BUS

The preschool bus is offered to all families with children enrolled in preschool free of charge. Majestic Bus Service is responsible for all student discipline while the children are on the bus.

Majestic Bus Service will determine the route and give parents an estimated time of student pick up and drop off. All students are to be harnessed into their seats while on the bus.

A paraprofessional from preschool will be assigned to ride the bus with the students. The paraprofessional will harness the students in and walk them to the parent after exiting the bus.

FEES

The District is required by *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* to offer preschool services free of charge for children requiring an Individualized Education Plan. The following fee schedule applies for typically developing peers:

Tuition \$300/mo.

Due on the 1st of each month

\$2.00 per day fee if paid after the 15th of the month.

Yearly total \$2,700

If paid in full by September 1, 2016, 20% discount Total \$2,160/year

Total for each trimester=\$900

If paid before the following dates 10% discount \$810

- August 24, 2016
- December 1, 2016
- March 9, 2017

Failure to pay or late payment after 30 days may result in enrollment at Little Broncs being terminated. Contact the Preschool Coordinator if difficulty is experienced making payments in full.

LATE START/SCHOOL CLOSURE

Hamilton School District uses an automated calling system to notify both staff and parent of school delays and/or closures as well as other pertinent information throughout the year. In the event of a two hour delay, preschool will begin at 11:00.

PARAPROFESSIONAL DUTIES

Paraprofessionals may be assigned to work one-on-one with a student or with the entire class. Paraprofessional duties also may include:

- Diapering

- Assisting with bathroom needs
- Riding the bus
- Data collection
- Classroom/recess supervision
- Teaching small groups
- Classroom support
- Attend field trips
- Lead instructional groups
- Ability to read stories to individuals/groups of students
- Independently supervise students
- Assess student's learning
- Assist Preschool Coordinator in preparation of instruction
- Manage student behavior
- Written communication between staff members
- Usage of technology for planning and instructional purposes (computers, iPads, Smart Projectors etc.)

Paraprofessionals should report *to the Preschool Coordinator/Case Manager* when assistance or guidance is needed.

Only the Preschool Case Manager will discuss a student's educational plan, changes, or concerns with a parent. It is the District's policy that paraprofessionals DO NOT have contact with families of the students they work with about the student outside of school.

MEALS

Little Broncs Preschool offers breakfast and lunch each day at no additional cost. Any specific dietary needs should be discussed with the Preschool Coordinator. The Preschool Coordinator will communicate dietary needs with the District. The District prepares the meals and delivers them to the preschool. The District also picks up all dishes and serving items to be washed.

MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPLORATORY

Hamilton Middle School students have the option of applying to assist in preschool. The Preschool Coordinator decides how many middle school students are needed each quarter and gives the information to the Middle School Assistant Principal. The middle school assistant principal determines which students will assist in preschool. Middle school students follow the directions/assignments given by the Preschool Coordinator and Preschool Teacher. Middle school students are graded based on a rubric at the conclusion of the quarter. The rubric is

completed by the Preschool Teacher and Preschool Coordinator. Grades are submitted to the Middle School Assistant Principal.

It is the goal of the Middle School Exploratory to provide an experience in which the Middle School Students are exposed to young child and given the opportunity to engage with the preschool students. Middle School students are not responsible for direct student supervision and should not be left alone with preschool students at any time. In addition, Middle School students may not be asked to discipline preschool students for any reason.

SCHEDULE OF PRESCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Preschool activities include both direct instruction and self-guided learning in the following areas:

- Prereading skills
- Premath skills
- Communication
- Gross motor
- Fine motor
- Social/emotional/behavioral

The daily schedule of activities will be determined collaboratively by the Preschool Coordinator.

STAFFING

Preschool follows a 8:1 child/staff ratio. Specific needs of the children may be taken into account when determining staffing.

PART II-SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

CHILD FIND

Federal and Montana state law requires the District to identify, locate, and evaluate all children who are residents of the District who may have a disability and may be in need of special education and related services. Child Find applies to:

- Children under the age of 3 attending preschool
- Children under the age of 3 not attending any preschool
- Students between the ages of 3 and 19 enrolled and attending a school within the District
- Students between the ages of 3 and 19 enrolled and attending a private school located within the District

- Children between the ages of 3 and 19 who are residents of the District

Children Under 3-Part C

Because the District is responsible for the provision of special education services once an eligible child with a disability turns 3, Child Find activities to identify and locate these children must commence prior to the child's third birthday. There are two primary means of engaging Child activities for children under the age of 3:

- Notification and transition of children from Part C Early Intervention Program Agencies
- Preschool Screening Activities

Notification and Transition of Children from Part C

Part C of the IDEA provides funding to and services by Early Intervention Program agencies for infants and toddlers (under age 3) Part C of the IDEA requires Early Intervention Program agencies to annually notify school districts of potentially eligible children. In Montana, Part C agencies provide two notifications per year (1) children who will turn 3 in the months of September through the following August (2) children who will turn 3 in the months of February through January. Some children will be listed twice in these notifications. Parents have the right to "opt out" of being part of a notification, which means not all potentially eligible may be included in the notification. The purpose of this notification is to allow for planning; however, the District may not contact the family upon receiving notice because the responsibility still remains with the Part C agency. Regardless of the time of year it is received, the District must accept and act upon a referral from a Part C agency.

Not less than 90 days before the child's third birthday, the Part C agency is required to convene a transition meeting. The Part C agency can invite the school district only upon receiving consent from the parent. If the parents refuse consent, the District has no obligation to attend nor any obligation to evaluate or provide special education services to the student until and unless the child is separately referred after turning age 3. If the parent consents, the Family Support Specialist for the Part C agency will notify the district of a transition meeting and invite a District representative to attend. This person is the Preschool Case Manager. The District must complete the meeting invite form and send a copy of procedural safeguards prior to the meeting. Regardless of the time of year it is received, the district must accept and act upon a referral from Part C.

The District is not responsible for running the meeting-a District representative (Preschool Case Manager) should attend the meeting to provide information. The purpose of the District's attendance at the transition meeting is to provide the parent of the potentially eligible child with

information about the District's special education services if the child is determined to be eligible. *This is not a meeting where the child's eligibility for K-12 services is determined.* If appropriate, the District can obtain written consent to receive the child's early intervention service records. The District can also obtain the parent's consent to a special education referral if the parent and District personnel believe appropriate. If additional information is needed to determine if a referral for a special education evaluation is appropriate, the District should obtain written consent for the student's early intervention records and review those records to determine whether preceding an evaluation is appropriate.

The evaluation report must identify a disability category. If the child is eligible for special education services, the IEP team will set a date to begin educational services. This date may be on the child's third birthday or on the first day of the following school year. An IEP must be in place by the child's third birthday. An eligible child whose third birthday falls during the summer vacation begins services in the fall.

HEAD START

With parent permission, the District may obtain preschool screening and developmental information from Head Start. Head Start staff may *recommend* students to be considered for special education evaluation. However, Head Start staff may not *refer* students for evaluation. Referrals for evaluation for students at Head Start may be requested by the child's parents or guardians.

PRESCHOOL SCREENING

The District should coordinate with Head Start's screening for preschool. Once the child is going to turn 3, the District and not Head Start is responsible for completing the evaluation of the child. The District can also provide its own screening activities for children ages 3-5 for developmental problems in speech and language, vision, hearing, coordination, social and intellectual development, and general progress. The purpose of the screening is to determine whether a child needs further assessment or refusal for a special education evaluation.

Screening does not require written parental consent.

The District must give notice of screening opportunities in local newspapers, other media, and through its website.

REFERRAL

A child must be referred for a comprehensive special education evaluation when (1) staff members know or have reason to suspect the student may have a qualifying disability; AND (2)

staff members know or have reason to suspect the student may be in need of special education and related services.

A student must be referred for a special education evaluation where:

1. The District has reason to believe the student may have a disability and be in need of special education services as a result of a Part C agency referral.
2. The District has reason to believe the student may have a disability and be in need of special education services as a result of a preschool screening.
3. Staff members can show that interventions, if implemented, would be insufficient to address concerns and there is reason to believe that the student may have a disability and be in need of special education services (i.e., student has significant orthopedic impairments and developmental disabilities).
4. Staff members have maintained data to show that interventions implemented as part of a pre-referral have been ineffective and the student may have a disability and be in need of special education services.
5. Staff members are aware that a student has engaged in high risk behavior and they suspect the student may have a disability and be in need of special education services.
6. Based upon objective information, staff members suspect the student may have a disability and be in need of special education services.
7. A parent of a student requests (verbally or in writing) that his or her child be evaluated for special education *unless* the District believes there is no reason to evaluate the student for special education and provide prior written notice to the parent explaining the basis for the refusal to evaluate. The District may not delay a parent request for an evaluation to conduct additional interventions or assessments. It must respond by either referring the student for an evaluation or denying the request through prior written notice.

A referral is created by the preschool case manager or the speech pathologist. A referral is accomplished by completing a *Referral for Comprehensive Educational Evaluation* form on the AIM system. The referral must also contain:

- Statement of the reason of referral
- Documentation of the general education interventions tried and the results of such attempts; and
- The signature of the person making the referral (this includes if the parent makes the referral for the evaluation)

The District must provide a copy of the Procedural Safeguards to the parent at the time the referral is completed.

This information assists the Evaluation Team in determining the types of assessments necessary for a comprehensive evaluation. A representative of the District must fill out the form-if a District staff member is making the referral that staff member should complete and sign the form. If the parent is making the referral, a designate District staff member should obtain the information to complete the form and have the parent sign the completed form.

Once a referral is completed (unless the District has refused to conduct an evaluation based upon a parent referral and provides prior written notice of such refusal), the District must seek consent from the parent to conduct the comprehensive evaluation plan.

EVALUATIONS

The District must conduct a comprehensive evaluation to determine if a student is eligible for special education and related services under the IDEA. Until and unless a student is determined to be eligible under the IDEA, he or she is not entitled to FAPE. The Evaluation (and associated assessments) must be provided at no cost to the parent.

The purpose of an evaluation is to: (1) collect information on a child's ability and achievement, and (2) carefully interpret the information that is collected. The Evaluation is used to determine not only if the student has a qualifying disability but also the nature and extent of the special education that child needs. If the student is determined to be eligible, the evaluation assists in the development of the student's IEP.

The Evaluation is conducted using a team approach, which allows for examination of the student's strengths and weaknesses from various perspectives. An evaluation enables the team to determine the specific instructional and related service needs of the student.

After the referral is completed, District personnel must complete and Evaluation Plan on the AIM system. The purpose of the Evaluation Plan is to notify the parent of assessments the District intends to conduct, and to obtain the parent's informed consent for those assessments. For an initial evaluation, the evaluation plan provides written notice to the parent that the district suspects their child has a disability and needs special education; identifies the specific assessments that will be conducted to determine eligibility; and documents the parent's approval or denial of consent for the evaluation.

The student's Evaluation Team, along with any other appropriate qualified professionals, are responsible for developing the Evaluation Plan. A meeting is not required, however, in order to develop the Evaluation Plan.

The District must evaluate the students in **all** areas of suspected disability-this is the comprehensive evaluation. This does not mean that the student must be assessed in all areas and for all categories. Rather, the Evaluation Team must determine those assessments appropriate for those areas in which it is suspected a student may qualify. Screenings may be done if appropriate to determine whether there is a need to conduct a more comprehensive evaluation in a certain area.

The Evaluation must be based upon a variety of assessment tools and strategies used to gather relevant functional, developmental and academic information about the child. This includes information provided by the parent.

The Evaluation Plan lists the various types of tests and assessments to be conducted. Based upon the Referral completed, the Evaluation Team must determine whether any of the following should be conducted:

- Academic achievement
- Assistive technology/services
- Behavioral
- Communication
- Developmental
- Physical
- Psychological
- Social/emotional
- Transition

All evaluations must include classroom-based assessments and observations.

If there is a type of test or assessment the Evaluation Team believes is appropriate and it is not specifically listed as one of the categories on the form, the assessment should be listed in the “other” category.

Screening does not require parental consent.

Assessments must be conducted in a non-discriminatory manner. This means:

- Testing and evaluation materials and procedures must be selected to be as free of racial, cultural and language bias as possible.
- These must be appropriate for the age and stage of development of each student to whom they are administered.
- Procedures, tests, and other evaluation materials used for an evaluation must be selected and administered to ensure that for a child with impaired sensory, motor, or

communication skills, the test results accurately reflect the child's aptitude and/or achievement level or whatever other factors the test purports to measure.

- Tests should be written and/or administered in the native language of the child or conducted in the mode of communication most familiar to the student being unless it is clearly not feasible to do so. If it is clearly not feasible to administer a test in the native language or mode of communication most frequently used by the student, or if you have any questions about how to assess a child who has limited English, contact the Director of Student Services.

Observations are staff's objective impressions that document the student's overall functional, behavioral and academic progress during the school year. These observations do not have to be a "snapshot" of the student's behavior on a particular date and time.

Any member of the Evaluation Team may conduct the observations. For a student attending a private school, a representative of the private school who participated at the Evaluation Team meeting could conduct the observation, or another member of the Evaluation Team could observe the student in the private setting.

ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

At the Evaluation Team meeting for an Initial Evaluation, the Evaluation Team must make the determination whether the student:

- Has a disability recognized by IDEA; and
- Is in need of special education related services.

The evaluation must include information from a variety of sources, which allows the Evaluation Team to avoid using any single measure or assessment as the sole criterion for determining whether the student has a disability and for determining an appropriate educational program for that student.

Montana recognizes the following disabilities for purposes of qualifying for special education services:

- Developmental Delay (ages 3 through 5 only)
- Autism
- Cognitive Delay
- Deaf-Blindness
- Deafness
- Emotional Disturbance
- Hearing Impairment

- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment

OPI has identified criteria for each of these categories. The Evaluation Team must review and complete the checklists for each area in which it is suspected the student may qualify. The completed checklists must be attached to the Evaluation Report. The Eligibility Criteria Checklists are found on the AIM system.

In addition to meeting the criteria, the Evaluation Team must also determine whether that identified disability or disabilities adversely affect the student's educational performance. This means that there is evidence that measures of student performance (e.g., achievement tests, grades, behavioral or developmental assessments, classroom based assessment, observations, progress monitoring, or criterion-referenced tests, etc.) indicate a pattern of education, developmental, or functional attainment or achievement below the student's age or grade level.

The Evaluation Team determines that the student meets the criteria for one or more of the IDEA disability categories and that disability(ies) adversely affect the student's educational performance, the Evaluation Team must determine that the student is eligible for special education and related services under the IDEA. If the Evaluation Team determines that, even though the student falls into one or more of the disability categories, the disability does not adversely affect the student's educational performance, the Evaluation Team must determine that the student is not eligible for special education and related services under the IDEA.

The following are the most common disability categories used in preschool:

Developmental Delay

A student between the ages of three and five (i.e., up to age six) may qualify under the category of Developmental Delay if the Evaluation Team determines the student meets the criteria of the category. Once the student turns six, the Evaluation Team must complete a new Evaluation Plan and conduct a new evaluation to determine if the student continues to qualify for special education and related services and under which category (i.e.) the student qualifies.

Autism

When Autism is being considered, the Evaluation Team must include (in addition to the other required members identified above), a school psychologist and speech-language pathologist.

Speech Language Impairment

When Speech Language Impairment is being considered, the Evaluation Team must include (in addition to required members identified above), a speech language pathologist.

ER/IEP ATTENDANCE

As described in the District's Special Education Policy Manual, the IEP team must be present during evaluation meetings and IEP meetings. The preschool classroom teacher must also be in attendance.

PRESCHOOL SERVICES

Preschool services are part of the continuum the District must provide. The District offers a preschool program on the campus of Hamilton Middle School.

Under Montana law, the preschool program (for children between the ages of three and five) must be offered free of charge. The law also requires that the preschool program is offered as an integral part of the elementary school.

Pursuant to the District's Child Find activities, preschool aged children between ages three and five are identified either by transitioning from Part C services or through preschool screening activities. When the District conducts an evaluation of a student transitioning from Part C services, it must provide a copy of the Eligibility Determination from the Evaluation Report (with the written consent of the parent) to the Part C agency if it is not in attendance at the Evaluation Report meeting.

Unless the student is not located or identified prior to turning three, the District must ensure that an IEP has been adopted prior to an eligible child's third birthday. The IEP incorporates the same categories as an IEP for a K-12 student, including consideration of ESY services.

Although the law does not require school districts to provide preschool services to nondisabled students, the District must provide special education preschool services in the LRE. Thus, a preschool student must be educated along nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. The special education preschool student may only be removed from the regular setting if the

nature and severity of the child's disability prevents him from receiving a satisfactory education, even with the use of supplementary aids and services. To meet the LRE requirements, the District is required to place preschool students as appropriate with nondisabled peers. This can include placement in programs operated by the District that are open free of charge to nondisabled preschool students or in other programs with nondisabled peers.

Preschool Outcome Measures

Preschool outcome measures must be completed for preschool-aged children:

- Within 30 days of determination of eligibility (provided it is at least six months prior to the child's sixth birthday); and
- Upon the occurrence of either:
 - The time a preschool-aged child is exited from special education and related services (if determined to no longer be eligible or in need of special education and related services; or
 - Within 90 days of the child's sixth birthday for a child who will continue to receive special education and related services.

Preschool outcomes are measured through various assessments and/or a review of data in the child's file. Parental consent is not necessary to measure preschool outcomes.

Assessments can be conducted by the child's case manager, or anyone else with knowledge of the child's performance, including the child's parent. The District should request assessment and outcome measurement information during the transition meeting for any student transitioning from Part C services.

The Preschool Outcome Measures form must be completed separate from an IEP or Evaluation Report.

EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR

Extended school year (ESY) is provided for those students who qualify. Under IDEA, the District must provide extended school year services to ensure FAPE. Extended school year services are provided only if the student's IEP team determines, on an individual basis, services are necessary as a provision of FAPE. The term extended school year services means special education and related services that--

1. Are provided to a child with a disability--
 1. Beyond the normal school year of the public agency;
 2. In accordance with the child's IEP; and
 3. At no cost to the parents of the child; and

2. Meet the standards of the State education agency (SEA).

The district uses the regression model to determine ESY eligibility. The IEP team must determine if the student is likely to lose critical skills during the time when services are not delivered (regression). If the likelihood of regression is established, then the IEP team must determine whether the time the student will require to re-learn the skills lost is not within an 8 week period of time, the IEP team may consider extended school year services.

TRANSFER SERVICES

If a student moves into the District while in the process of being evaluated (regardless of the location from which the student moved), the District is required to complete and evaluation of the student. The District is not required to complete the evaluation within 60 days, but rather must complete the evaluation as soon as feasible.

Students moving within Montana

The District is not required to evaluate a student moving within Montana who has been determined by another district to be eligible.

For those students who have been determined to be eligible by another Montana school district and have an IEP in effect at the time of transfer, the District must continue to provide FAPE by providing services comparable to those services in the student's existing IEP. Within a reasonable time period after the student's transfer, the District should convene and IEP Team meeting to determine whether to:

- Adopt the IEP from the previous district;
- Amend the IEP from the previous district;
- Develop a new IEP.

If the student's IEP is expired (i.e., over 12 months old), the District must convene and IEP Team meeting to adopt a new IEP.

Students moving from outside of Montana

For those students who have been determined to be eligible by another school district outside of Montana and have an EIP in effect at the time of transfer, the District must continue to provide FAPE by providing services comparable to those services in the student's existing IEP. Within a reasonable time period after the student's transfer, the District must either:

- Refer the student for a special education evaluation and send the parent an Evaluation Plan in which to seek consent to conduct an evaluation; or
- Convene and IEP Team meeting to develop a new IEP.

The District must continue to provide comparable services under the student's existing IEP until the parent consents to the implementation of a new IEP. If the existing IEP is being implemented at the time progress reporting is required, the case manager must develop a form that will report the student's progress on that existing IEP. The case manager will not be able to use AIM to generate a progress report because the existing IEP from another state was not developed through AIM.

If the District is aware that the student has been determined to be eligible for special education in the previous district (regardless of its location) but is unable to obtain a copy of the student's IEP, the District must promptly convene an IEP Team meeting to develop an IEP for the student.

KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION

The preschool case manager will work with the case manager at Washington School to schedule transition meetings for all students leaving preschool and entering kindergarten. These meetings will be scheduled in April or May. Meeting participants include:

- Parents
- Preschool case manager
- Kindergarten case manager
- Kindergarten teacher

The content included in the kindergarten transition meetings includes:

- Introductions
- Parents describe and tell about the child
- Disability Category
- Paraprofessional support
- Related Services
- Medical Concerns
- Supplementary Aides and Services
- Student Transportation

At the conclusion of the school year, the preschool case manager hand delivers all of the special education files to the kindergarten case manager.

