

Children's Medical Services

Special services for children with special needs

Florida Department of Health

(NOT the Department of Education)

Recognizing an infant and toddler's first three years are the most important time for learning...

Florida's EARLY STEPS PROGRAM

Is a partnership between families and local providers for any child with significant delays or an established medical condition that will likely result in a delay in the child's development.

Early Steps Eligibility

Babies and toddlers grow and develop at their own pace, but there are certain activities your child should be able to do once they are a specific age. If you have concerns about your child, please check with your doctor and contact your local Early Steps office.

To be enrolled in Early Steps, your child must first be found eligible. Through our screening processes, we will be able to find out if your child has significant delays or an established medical condition that will likely result in a delay.

To determine if your child is eligible, he or she will be evaluated in the following areas:

Physical: *health, hearing, vision*

Cognitive: *thinking, learning, problem solving*

Gross & fine motor skills: *moving, walking, grasping, and coordination*

Communication: *babbling, languages, speech, conversation*

Social/emotional: *playing and interacting with others*

Adaptive development: *self-help skills, (i.e. feeding, toileting, dressing)*

Once your child is determined eligible, Early Steps will put together a team of service providers to address your child's needs. This team will develop the (IFSP) based on family/caregivers outcomes and goals.

Services are provided during your child's daily activities so that natural learning opportunities are maximized while still meeting your child's everyday needs.

The Early Steps team also selects a primary service provider for each child as a central point of contact. This person can be a therapist, other licensed healing arts professional or an Infant Toddler Developmental Specialist (ITDS). The primary service provider is selected based on the needs of the child and family, the IFSP goals, and expertise in the areas of needed support.

Florida's Early Steps is a partnership with providers and families to deliver services that support children's well-being and development where they live, learn and play.

If you feel your child may be eligible, you can refer your family by contacting:

[Florida's Early Steps Directory](#)

(800) 218-0001.

DIPLOMA OPTIONS

(FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES)

Until two years ago (2014) Florida had two primary diplomas for students with disabilities.

- ***A Standard High School Diploma***
- ***A “Special Diploma” for students whose disabilities (e.g. cognitive) adversely impacted their ability to achieve in the Sunshine State Standards curriculum as documented through scores on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment System (FCAT)***
 - *Certain students with more significant cognitive delays were taught to an alternative “ACCESS POINTS” curriculum.*
 - *They were evaluated as to their achievement level with a Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA) tool, not the FCAT.*

Beginning with the student cohort entering grade 9 in 2014-2015, this changed! A legislative amendment to Section 1003.4282, F.S. (the Florida Exceptional Student Education law) created NEW STANDARD DIPLOMA OPTIONS for students with disabilities. Special diplomas are no longer an option for these students.

Today, ALL Florida students work to receive a STANDARD HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA.

- 24-credit program*
- 18-credit, Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning (ACCEL) option
- An International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum
- An Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) curriculum

*In addition to the four options available for students to earn a standard diploma listed above, Rule [6A-1.09963](#), Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), *High School Graduation Requirements for Students with Disabilities*, outlines **two additional options that students with disabilities may complete** within the 24-credit program. These include:

- Specific requirements for students with disabilities for whom the individual education plan (IEP) has determined that participation in the Florida Alternate Assessment is the most appropriate measure of the student's skills and instruction in the access points is the most appropriate means of providing the student access to the general curriculum.
- Specific requirements for a standard diploma for students with disabilities for whom the IEP team has determined that mastery of both academic and employment competencies is the most appropriate way for the student to demonstrate his or her skills.

Discipline of Special Education Students Under IDEA 2004

Discipline of Special Education Students Under IDEA 2004 20 U.S.C. § 1415(k) and 34 CFR §§ 300.530-300.536

• This chart should be read in conjunction with discipline procedures in state law, M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H & 37H1/2, and district-wide and school-wide student codes of conduct. • Protections in the IDEA apply to students who have been found eligible for special education and to students for whom the school is deemed to have knowledge that the child might have a disability (i.e., students who have not yet been found eligible but the school had a basis of knowledge of a disability, including students who have been referred for initial evaluation). 34 CFR § 300.354 • Beginning on the 11th school day of a student’s disciplinary removal during the school year, and if removal is a change in placement, the student must be provided free appropriate public education (FAPE) services during the period of removal to allow him/her to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and progress towards IEP goals, even if in a different setting. 34 CFR § 300.530(b) & (d). • If the conduct that the student is being disciplined for involves the “special circumstances” of weapons, illegal drugs, controlled substances, or serious bodily injury, school personnel may remove the student to an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to 45 school days, regardless of the manifestation determination. 34 CFR § 300.530(g). The IEP Team must determine the IAES. • Although the following flowchart lays out the steps that a school district must take when disciplining a student with a disability, it is important to remember that at any point the parent and school district can agree to change a student’s placement for disciplinary reasons. Agreements should be in writing, and signed by the school personnel and the parent.

Disciplinary removal for current misconduct is for less than 10 consecutive school days and removals total less than 10 cumulative school days in the school year 34 CFR § 300.530(b)

Disciplinary removal for current misconduct is for 11 or more consecutive school days

Student’s conduct is a manifestation of his/her disability. 34 CFR § 300.530(f)

May apply relevant disciplinary procedures in the same manner and for the same duration as to students without disabilities. 34 CFR § 300.530(c)

Student's conduct is not a manifestation of his/her disability. 34 CFR § 300.530(c)

Within 10 school days of decision to remove student for disciplinary reasons the district, the parent and relevant members of the IEP Team must review relevant information and make a manifestation determination. 34 CFR § 300.530(e)

Removal is a change in placement. 34 CFR § 300.536(a)(1)

By the 10th cumulative school day of removal in the same school year, the district must consult with at least one of the student's teachers to determine the extent to which FAPE services are needed to enable the student to continue to participate in the general ed curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting IEP goals. 34 CFR § 300.530(d)(4)

YES

Is the current removal one in a series that is a pattern of removal constituting a change of placement? 34 CFR § 300.536

NO

Notify parents immediately of decision to change placement for disciplinary reasons, and of procedural safeguards under IDEA. 34 CFR § 300.530(h). Student is entitled to FAPE services as determined by the Team. 34 CFR § 300.530(d)(5)

Disciplinary removal for current misconduct is for less than 10 consecutive school days but removals total more than 10 school days in the school year 34 CFR § 300.530(b)(2)

Student protected under IDEA violates a school code of conduct

District may exclude student from the current placement without obligation to provide FAPE unless the district provides services for students without disabilities who are similarly removed. 34 CFR § 300.530(d)(3). Types of exclusion may be suspension, removal and assignment to an interim alternative educational setting (IAES). An "inhouse" suspension may be considered a change in placement.

Manifestation Determination: Is the conduct a direct result of the district's failure to implement the IEP? 34 CFR § 300.530(e) Does the conduct have a direct and substantial relationship to the disability?

YES to either

If conduct was a direct result of failure to implement the IEP, the district must take immediate steps to remedy those deficiencies and review. 34 CFR § 300.530(e)(3) IEP Team determines extent to which FAPE services are needed to enable the student to continue to participate in the general ed curriculum and progress toward meeting IEP goals. 34 CFR § 300.530(d)(5) Conduct a functional behavioral assessment and develop a behavioral implementation plan, or review and modify an existing plan as needed. 34 CFR § 300.530(f)(1)(i)-(ii) Provide, as appropriate, functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services and modifications. 34 CFR § 300.530(f)(1) And return student to placement unless (1) parent and district agree to a different placement, (2) hearing officer orders new placement, or (3) removal is for “special circumstances” under 34 CFR § 300.530(g). 34 CFR § 300.530(f)(2) Return student to placement when the disciplinary period expires unless parent and school agree otherwise or student is lawfully expelled

DEFINITIONS

A student for whom the district is deemed to have knowledge of a disability – A child who has not yet been determined to be eligible for special education and related services may assert the disciplinary protections under IDEA if the school had a basis of knowledge that the child is a child with a disability before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred. The school is deemed to have knowledge if: (1) the child’s parent expressed concern in writing to administrative or supervisory personnel of the school or district that the child is in need of special education and related services; (2) the parent of the child had requested a special education evaluation; or (3) the child’s teacher or other school or district personnel expressed specific concerns to the director of special education or to other supervisory personnel about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child. The school or district is not deemed to have knowledge of a disability if (1) the parent has not allowed an evaluation or has refused special education and related services, or (2) the child has been evaluated and determined not to be a child with a disability. 34 CFR § 300.534.

Change of placement – A change of placement because of a disciplinary removal occurs if a child with a disability is removed from his/her current educational placement for more than 10 consecutive school days, or the child is subjected to a series of removals that constitutes a pattern because: (1) the removals total more than 10 school days in a school year; (2) the child’s behavior is substantially similar to previous incidents that resulted in the series of removals; and (3) additional factors such as the length of each

removal, the total amount of time the child has been removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another constitute a pattern. 34 CFR § 300.536.

Current placement – The placement from which the student was removed for disciplinary reasons.

Interim alternative educational setting (IAES) – An IAES is a disciplinary placement that is not the same as the child’s current placement as defined in his/her IEP.

Manifestation determination – The determination made by the district, the parent, and relevant members of the student’s Team, after review of all relevant information in the student’s file including the IEP, teacher observations, and relevant information provided by the parents, whether (1) the conduct in question was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the child’s disability; or (2) the conduct in question was the direct result of the district’s failure to implement the student’s IEP. 34 CFR § 300.530(e).

Special circumstances – Where the disciplinary conduct is a “special circumstance,” school personnel may remove a student to an IAES for not more than 45 school days, regardless of the results of the manifestation determination. Special circumstances exist if the student: *f* carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency (district); or *f* knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency; or *f* inflicts serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency. 34 CFR § 300.530(g).

Serious bodily injury – As defined in 18 U.S.C. § 930, a bodily injury that involves a substantial risk of death, extreme physical pain, protracted and obvious disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty. 34 CFR § 300.530(i)(3).

Internet Resources for Families of Children with Disabilities

Home	Getting Started	The Laws	Parent Sites	Specific Disabilities
Education	Health	Mental Health	⇒ Transition to Adulthood ←	Español

Transition to Adulthood

There is a wealth of internet resources for families of children with disabilities. The numbers decrease when the subject turns to transition to adulthood. When children with disabilities reach adolescence, questions about post-secondary education, employment opportunities and independent living arise. The sites on this page address some of these issues.

Education and Transition

AHEAD (Association on Higher Education and Disability)

<http://www.ahead.org/>

Directed toward educational professionals, this site is valuable to families chiefly for its "Links" page, which includes, among other things, links to various college disability services offices.

Autism After 16

<http://www.autismafter16.com/>

Autism After 16 is dedicated to providing information and analysis of adult autism issues, with the emphasis on analysis. Anyone can Google "autism + adults" and discover a vast array of programs, documents, and products. Our intention here is to try to help adults with ASD and their families make sense of what's out there. Our big focus out of the gate will be Transition issues, since so many of you are struggling with Transition right now.

The Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)

<http://www.aucd.org/>

AUCD's mission is to advance policy and practice for and with people with developmental and other disabilities, their families, and their communities by supporting our members in research, education, and service activities that achieve our vision.

Career Investigations for Transitioning Youth (C.I.T.Y.)

<https://gsehd.gwu.edu/career-investigations-transitioning-youth>

The Career Investigations for Transitioning Youth (C. I. T. Y.) Program is a partnership among the George Washington University, the Kingsbury School, a school for students with learning disabilities, and the HSC Foundation. The C. I. T. Y. Program was developed to provide a "how to" model for schools and universities to positively impact the transitioning of youth with high incidence disabilities.

The Florida Center for Inclusive Communities' My Health Passport <http://flfcic.fmhi.usf.edu/projects/health.htm>

The Florida Center for Inclusive Communities'™ My Health Passport is a document that was designed to be shared with many types of healthcare providers, in clinic and hospital settings to provide pertinent information to those who are not very familiar in providing care to individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities. Download English and Spanish versions at no cost, or find hard copy ordering information on the website.

HEATH Resource Center <http://www.heath.gwu.edu/>

HEATH Resource Center is a national clearinghouse of information on post-secondary education for individuals with disabilities. The site features articles, HEATH's publications, FAQs and an excellent "[Links](#)" page.

LD Online -- Postsecondary Education http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/postsecondary/

LD Online's special section on Postsecondary Education contains valuable publications and links to resources for students with learning disabilities who are moving on to college or university.

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition <http://www.ncset.org/>

This is the site to visit for information about transition. NCSET offers publications and links to resources on the subject. The [Site Tour](#) is a helpful starting place.

ThinkCollege.net <http://www.thinkcollege.net/>

This website provides guidance and information for students considering post-secondary education. It includes resources for families and professionals, as well.

TransCent.Net <http://www.transcen.org>

TransCen, Inc. is a nonprofit organization that since 1986 has been developing creative and innovative projects in school to work transition, education systems change, and employment for people with disabilities. We were founded and named to be a "**Transition Center**", convening parties involved in promoting the successful transition of youth with disabilities from school to work and adult life.

Transition Assessment Matrix Timeline <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/transitn/matrix/matrix.pdf>

The ND Transition Assessment Matrix tool was developed to provide assistance to professionals when selecting the types of transition assessments to use for evaluating student's skills related to the student's postsecondary goals. { IDEA 2004 Regulation 300.320(b) Transition services . Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the

child turns 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP Team, and updated annually, thereafter, the IEP must include“(1) Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and where appropriate, independent living skills”}

Transition Coalition

<http://www.transitioncoalition.org/>

Providing online information, support, and professional development on topics related to the transition from school to adult life for youth with disabilities.

Transition Link

<http://www.transitionlink.com/>

Transition Link is a helpful resource for those seeking information about transition issues. Among its features are a list of resources and the opportunity to download articles from a variety of sources.



Employment and Independent Living

Institute on Community Inclusion

<http://www.communityinclusion.org/>

The Institute on Community Inclusion focuses on the inclusion of children, youth and adults with disabilities in "all aspects of the community." The site provides links to publications and resources regarding transition, post-secondary education, employment, person-centered planning and a host of other topics.

Institute on Community Integration

<http://ici.umn.edu/default.html>

The focus of this organization, and the site, is on the integration of individuals with disabilities into their communities. The Institute on Community Integration produces a truly fabulous newsletter, *Impact*, guides, reports and videos. You can review these on this site and connect to resources.

Job Accomodation Network (JAN)

<http://www.jan.wvu.edu/>

For employment-related resources for individuals with disabilities, JAN's website is indispensable. The home page is a little confusing, but hitting the "Enter" button will bring you to a long page of important links to resources.

Mobility International USA (MIUSA)

<http://ww.miusa.org/>

MIUSA provides programs for individuals with disabilities to participate in international exchange opportunities.

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability -- NCWD For Youth <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/>

This site is a good starting place for information and resources regarding youth with disabilities and employment. It includes links to resources, [publications](#) and websites.

Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) - Integrated Employment Toolkit <http://www.ncwd-youth.info>

The Toolkit offers a collection of resources, reports, papers, policies, fact sheets, case studies, and discussion guides from a variety of sources to accommodate the full range of users and increase capacity and understanding about the value and potential of integrated employment. It is organized by different audiences or perspectives. Within each audience, there are key, commonly-asked questions to guide the user to the appropriate materials.

Travelin' Talk <http://www.travelintalk.net/>

Travelin' Talk provides travel and access resources for individuals with disabilities. The site offers the opportunity to join their network and share travel experiences with others.

WE Include <http://www.arcanet.org/weinclude/>

WE Include aims to open the door to opportunities and raise awareness of resources that address the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities in order to enable them to live a fulfilling and purpose-filled life through inclusion in opportunities such as employment, education, independent living and financial empowerment.

What Can You Do? The Campaign for Disability Employment <http://www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org/>

The Campaign for Disability Employment is a collaborative effort between several disability and business organizations that seek to promote positive employment outcomes for people with disabilities by encouraging employers and others to recognize the value and talent they bring to the workplace, as well as the dividend to be realized by fully including people with disabilities at work. People with disabilities can and do make important contributions to America's businesses every day. By implementing good workplace practices, like maintaining a flexible and inclusive work environment, businesses can capitalize on the talents of qualified people with disabilities, benefitting everyone.

[Home](#) [Getting Started](#) [The Laws](#) [Parent Sites](#) [Specific Disabilities](#) [Education](#) [Health](#) [Mental Health](#) [Transition to Adulthood](#) [Español](#)

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1663 Mission St., 7th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103
415-282-7494

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