



# Special Education at Charter Schools

## Charter Schools Welcome Students with Exceptionalities

Charter Schools are required to provide special education supports and programs, just like every other public school in Pennsylvania. As the charter authorizer, Pittsburgh Public Schools provides oversight to ensure the Charter Schools adhere to federal and state requirements in order to guarantee that all students receive the most beneficial educational opportunities.

## Charter Schools...

- Are considered Local Education Agencies (LEA).
- Must ensure a free appropriate public education (FAPE) is available to each child with a disability.
- Must comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- Must comply with PA and federal special education laws and federal disability laws.
- Must comply with regulations specific to individuals with disabilities being educated in charter schools, which can be found in Chapter 711 of the regulations to the Pennsylvania School Code, 22 Pa. Code Ch. 711.
- Must comply with the following additional sections of Pennsylvania's school regulations:
  - Chapter 4, as it relates to academic standards and assessment.
  - Chapter 11, as it relates to pupil attendance.
  - Chapter 12, as it relates to students and student services.
- Must comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).
- Must act in a timely manner to provide instructional materials in accessible formats (braille, enlarged print, digital or audio).



**Children in Pennsylvania are eligible for special education services until they reach the age of 21 and cannot be denied entrance to a Charter School because of their disability.**

## Resources for parents, guardians and educators

For extensive information about the laws and regulations all charter schools must follow and processes for managing special education, see the Resource Guide for Charter Schools and Cyber Charter Schools: Managing the Special Education Process at [www.pattan.net/getmedia/60308987-5429-47bc-b6ea-2e1a81ec7537/Toolkit%206.27.18](http://www.pattan.net/getmedia/60308987-5429-47bc-b6ea-2e1a81ec7537/Toolkit%206.27.18).

For resources for parents and educators regarding special education disputes, visit the Office of Dispute Resolution at [odr-pa.org](http://odr-pa.org).

For special education support and resources in the state of Pennsylvania, visit the PA Bureau of Special Education (BSE) at [www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Special%20Education/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Special%20Education/Pages/default.aspx).

## Child Find Mandate

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act includes the Child Find mandate.

Child Find requires all school districts to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities.

  
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## Additional Mandates Regarding Suspension and Expulsion

- An informal hearing must be provided when a suspension exceeds three school days.
- Suspensions may not exceed 10 consecutive school days.
- Upon removal for more than 10 school days in the same school year, the Charter School is responsible for providing services to the student starting on the eleventh day.
- Expulsions require a formal hearing.
- Upon expulsion (i.e., exclusion from school for more than 10 consecutive days), the Charter School must provide the child with FAPE until notified in writing the child has enrolled in another public, private or approved private school.

## Handling Disagreements about Special Education Program

- Parents may challenge the appropriateness of a special education program for a child.
- Parents can request an IEP meeting to discuss changing the child's program.
- Parents must be contacted in writing and consent anytime school officials suggest a reevaluation.
- Parents may request an IEP meeting, a mediation session or a due process hearing to resolve differences.
- Parents have the right to revoke their child's special education and related services. The school must issue a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement/Prior Written Notice (NOREP).
- Parents may file a complaint with the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Bureau of Special Education (BSE), Division of Monitoring and Improvement if a Charter School is not compliant with state and federal laws and regulations.
- Parents may also choose to file for IEP Facilitation, Mediation or Due Process through the Office for Dispute Resolution at odr-pa.org.

## Related Services for Special Education in Charter Schools include but are not limited to:

- Speech and Language
- Occupational Therapy
- Hearing
- Physical Therapy
- Vision
- Audiology
- Orientation and Mobility

Additional supports are available in the areas of curriculum, behavior, low incidence, assistive technology, nursing, and personal care.

Para asistencia con este documento en español, por favor llame a la línea nueve al 412-529-6463 y seleccione la opción #1.

यो दस्तावेज सम्बन्धी सहयोगको नमिती कृपया नाइन लाइन नम्बर (४१२)५२९-६४६ मा फोन गरी अंक # २ चुनुनु होला।

Kwa msaada kwa nyaraka(document) hii katika Swahili , tafadhali piga msitari wa tisa 412-529-6463 kisha chaguwe uchaguzi la #3.

=如需获得本文件的中文帮助，请拨打电话412-529-6463致电九号线，并选择选项 #4

حصول على المساعدة باللغة العربية ، إضغطوا على #5

Чтобы получить помощь по этому документу на русском языке, пожалуйста позвоните на Девятую Линию 412-529-6463 и нажмите #8.

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Valuable parent resources, including a link to The Pittsburgh Local Task Force on the Right to Education, are available online at [pghschools.org/collaboratingfamilies](http://pghschools.org/collaboratingfamilies).

## Is your young child developmentally delayed?

Children between the ages of three and admission to kindergarten may be eligible for Special Education services if screening tests indicate they are delayed in one of these critical areas: cognitive, communicative, physical, social/emotional, and self-help.

Contact the PPS Early Intervention Office at 412-323-3960 for more information.

## Need more information?

Contact Lisa Augustin at 412-529- 7334 or [laugustin1@pghschools.org](mailto:laugustin1@pghschools.org).

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