



FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



INFORMING, EDUCATING, EMPOWERING FAMILIES
800-331-0688 | www.fcsn.org | fcsninfo@fcsn.org



FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Special Education Surrogate Parent Orientation Training: Making a Difference





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What is a Special Education Surrogate Parent (SESP)?

An SESP is a person appointed to protect the educational rights of children who: are receiving or should be receiving special education services and are in the custody of a state agency; or whose parent or guardian cannot be identified or located. IDEA Sec. 300.519

- Authority comes from federal law
- Highlights importance of parental role in special education
- All states are required to have some type of SESP program



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Basic Rights in Special Education: Six Important Principles

1. Parent and student participation
2. Free and appropriate public education (FAPE)
3. Appropriate evaluation
4. Individualized education program (IEP)
5. Least restrictive environment (LRE)
6. Procedural safeguards (due process)



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Role of SESP **First Steps** **Students** **IEP** **Transition**

Learning Outcomes for Today's Orientation

- Explore the role of SESP's in providing supports and services to eligible students
- **Learn how to take the first steps as an SESP**
- **Meet the students who are eligible for SESP's**
- Review educational processes, such as IEP development, transition, and due process
- **Transitioning out of DCF**



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Role of SESP

RTSC Application Process

- Application form
- References checked
- Orientation training
- CORI application completed
- More training offered as needed
- Application completion notice sent to SESP
- Documents sent to partner program (SESPP/EDCO) for assignment



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Role of SESP

The Role of the SESP

Duties:

- Appointment letter from SESPP/EDCO allows access to student documents
- Request and review evaluations and records from school
- Observe and meet your student
- Attend Team meetings


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Role of SESP

The Role of the SESP

Responsibilities:

- One year commitment; generally 30-40 hours
- Respect the confidentiality of all records and information
- Meet your student with a third party present
- Advocate in the best interests of your student





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Role of SESP

The Role of the SESP

Rights:

- Special education decision-making rights and authority
- Request or reconvene Team meetings
- Request and consent for initial or additional evaluations
- Sign IEP (accept/reject whole or partial)





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Role of SESP


Our Partner Program (SESPP/EDCO) Matches Students with SESP

- Student information verified
- Student eligibility determined
- Gather school and IEP information
- Gather contact information
- CORI check conducted
- Appoint SESP
- Appointment letters sent by SESPP/EDCO




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MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)



EDCO Collaborative


↓



**Special Education
Surrogate Parent (SESP) Program**


- All student referrals, investigations, and eligibility determinations
- Matching of SESP and students
- Notification to providers
- Student case management (i.e. regular student updates, re-referrals)
- Clarification on the rights and responsibilities of the SESP
- Mentor program for SESP

508-792-7679
contactus@sespprogram.org
www.sespprogram.org



**Federation for Children with
Special Needs (FCSN)**

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**Recruitment, Training,
and Support Center (RTSC)**

- Volunteer recruitment
- Orientation training
- Individual support for SESP
- Web-based resources
- On-going general trainings, webinars, newsletters, and regional support groups
- Yearly conference

617-399-8341
rtsc@fcsn.org
www.fcsn.org/rtsc

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Role of SESP

RTSC Ongoing Support and Training

- Monthly webinars
- Federation workshops
- *Consider This...* monthly news journal
- Federation annual conference (March)
- Call-in support
- Mentors
- Annual conference
- Monthly networking meetings – Boston and Holyoke
- Online Support Form
- Quarterly Federation Newsline
- Annual Meet and Greet




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Role of SESP

How Does an Appointment End

- Student turns 18 and makes their own educational decisions
- DCF custody ends
- Student's eligibility for special education services ends
- SESP notifies SESPP/EDCO that he/she must end appointment
- SESP can request reappointment
- SESP completes End of Appointment Form



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First Steps

How Does an SESP Get Started?




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First Steps

Receiving an Appointment

- Our partner program (SESPP/EDCO) makes a match based on region and preferences
- Areas of high need
- Appointment letter
- *What To Do First* checklist
- Contact list: Make contact (phone or email) with all providers to introduce yourself





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First Steps

Learn as Much as You Can about Your Student

- Contact DCF social worker and Educational Coordinator or DCF supervisor
- Call school district contacts
- Contact congregate care facility staff
- Request and review student records from all sources (ten-day rule)
- Learn about district by contacting SEPAC
- Observe and meet you student at school and in residence (with a third party)





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First Steps

Encourage Your Student to Take Part in Their Education

- Help students learn to advocate for themselves and their educational supports
- Make the student part of the Team
- Review their strengths and challenges in school and the community

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First Steps

Keep Track

Organize student's documents

- File folder/3 ring binder
- Appointment letter/contact list
- School documents: evaluations/IEPs/progress reports/report cards/emails
- DCF/other state agencies: letters/emails
- Other professionals: letters/evaluations/emails





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First Steps

Stay in Touch

Document everything

- Follow up all phone calls or voice messages with an email
- Send thank you notes or emails after meetings
- Email or call DCF social worker and school contact on a regular basis
- Contact your student on a regular basis



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Students

Who are the Students?



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Students

Common Characteristics of Students Eligible for SESP


- In the custody of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or Department of Youth Services (DYS) or "dual status"
- Exposed to trauma in early childhood usually involving a primary caregiver (developmental childhood trauma)
- Living in congregate care
- Between the ages of 3 – 22, typically 12 – 18
- Receiving Special Education services, or in need of an evaluation for services

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Students

Multiple Placements

- DCF decides where the student lives according to availability and needs
- An SESP must sign off on the school placement
- Where the student lives affects the choices available for school placement
- A change in where the student resides can result in a change in the programmatic school district and possible cost share issues (the LEA remains the same)




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Students

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

- Reauthorizes the federal law governing education (last reauthorized as the No Child Left Behind Act in 2002)
- Ensures school stability for youth in care including assurances that children enroll or remain in their “school of origin” unless a determination is made that it is not in their best interest
- Children in foster care must enroll immediately in a new school even if the child cannot produce normally required enrollment documents and school records
- Transportation to ensure school stability will be provided, arranged, and funded for the duration of the children’s time in foster care in a cost effective manner
- Ensures collaboration with the state child welfare agency, including designating a state and district employee to serve as a point of contact for child welfare agencies




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Students

Continuum of Care

- Departmental foster care (DCF)
- Intensive foster care (vended to private agencies)
- Group homes (Behavioral Treatment Residences, BTR) previously STARR programs
- Residential school programs
- DYS facilities, including lock-ups
- Psychiatric/hospital settings (short and long term)





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Students

What is Developmental Childhood Trauma?

- Exposure to multiple traumatic events
- Events are severe and pervasive over a period of time
- Begins in utero and during very early life
- Involves a primary caregiver





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Students

The Neuroscience of Developmental Childhood Trauma

- Traumatic events activate physiological systems required for survival (e.g., stress response hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline)
- Autonomic instincts of flight/fight/ - freeze/flock, dissociation, and anxiety can occur and re-occur when triggered





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Students

The Neuroscience of Developmental Childhood Trauma

- Traumatic memory is stored and recalled on several levels – cognitive, emotional, motor-vestibular (the body remembers), and state (hypervigilance and hyperarousal)

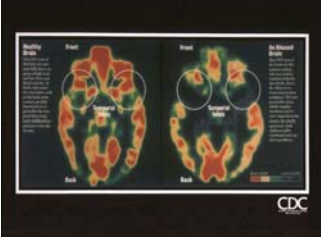



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Students

The Neuroscience of Developmental Childhood Trauma

- Brain functioning may be damaged or delayed
- Especially true in the areas where social-emotional learning takes place (learning empathy and remorse, taking other's perspective)

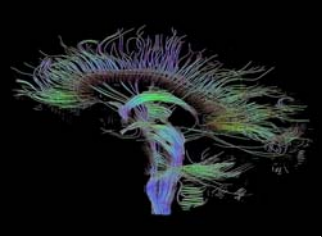


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Students

Neural Connections May be Pruned or Destroyed

- Speech and language delays
- Lack of ability to sort and classify the environment
- Unstable scaffolding of neurocognition



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Students

The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACEs)

- One of the largest investigations ever conducted to assess associations between childhood maltreatment and later-life health and well-being
- Early traumatic experiences are major risk factors for the leading causes of illness and death as well as poor quality of life

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ACEs Primer



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Students

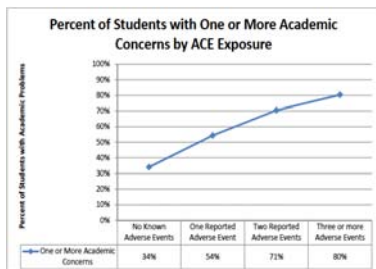
The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE)



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Students

The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE)





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Students

Impact of Trauma on Academic Performance

- Impaired language and communication skills
- Inability to organize internally and externally
- Inattentiveness to classroom tasks
- Impaired executive functioning






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Students

Impact of Trauma on Classroom Behavior

- Affect dysregulation
- Lack of attention and concentration
- Poor impulse control
- Somatization






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Students

Impact of Trauma on Relationships


- Negative self image
- Aggression and risk taking
- Difficulties taking another's perspective
- Inability to develop empathy and remorse
- Difficulty in taking directions from others

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IEP

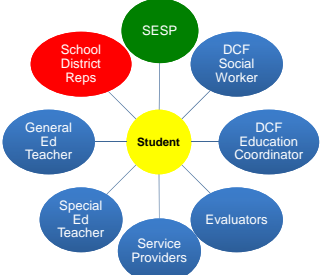
Special Education and the IEP Process



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IEP

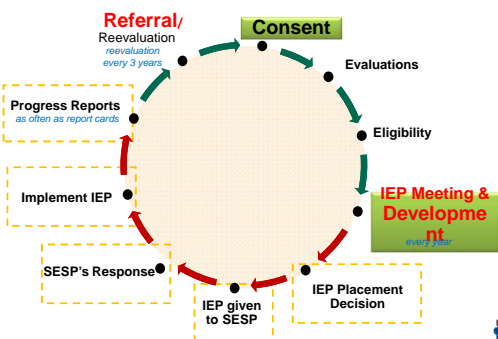
IEP Team Members



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IEP

The IEP Process



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Make your Student Part of the Team

- Discuss with and invite your student to the IEP meeting at whatever age you think is appropriate
- Helps student learn to self-advocate, think about the future
- Self-determination
- Discuss Vision and Transition goals



Evaluations

- Request and review records including previous IEPs and past evaluations
- Assess all areas related to disability, including social/emotional impairment
- Re-evaluation every 3 years

Educational/Psychological
 Speech and Language
 Occupational Therapy
 Physical Therapy
 Neuro-psychological if possible



IEP Development


- Concerns, Strengths, and Vision Statement
- Present Levels of Educational Performance
 - A -- Academic
 - B -- Functional
- Goals for the coming year



IEP

Present Levels of Educational Performance (PLEP) A vs. B

<p>PLEP A – Gen. Ed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> English Language Arts <input type="checkbox"/> History and Social Sciences <input type="checkbox"/> Science and Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> Other Curriculum Areas 	<p>PLEP B – Other Ed. Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Adapted physical ed. <input type="checkbox"/> Extra curriculum activities <input type="checkbox"/> Social/emotional activities <input type="checkbox"/> Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior <input type="checkbox"/> Language Needs <input type="checkbox"/> Non-academic activities <input type="checkbox"/> Skills training → And more...
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IEP


Building a Successful IEP: Beyond the IEP

- Integrating Goals into the IEP
 - Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP)
 - Transition Planning Form (TPF)
- Measuring Progress
 - Progress Reports
 - MCAS Parent/Guardian Reports



**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**MASSACHUSETTS
COMPREHENSIVE
ASSESSMENT
SYSTEM**




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IEP


Supporting the SESP Student through the IEP


- Access the general curriculum and the life of the school across multiple educational settings through specially designed instruction, related services, and accommodations
- Develop the IEP so that it can be implemented in different educational settings if necessary
- Make the IEP trauma focused





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IEP	
Transitioning from School Life to Adult Life	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning at 14 years of age or earlier, student is invited to IEP meeting to discuss their vision for life after school Vision is based upon individual's strengths, preferences and interests The IEP Team determines the skills needed for the student to achieve post-secondary goals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Employment <input type="checkbox"/> Independent Living and Community Participation <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation 	
	
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IEP	
Transition Planning Form	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Transition Planning Form (TPF) is mandated and must be maintained with the IEP Transition Assessments help identify student interests, strengths, and needs It includes a statement of needed transition services, including post-secondary education, employment skills, and independent living skills Necessary transition skills must be included as goals on the IEP and reviewed annually 	
	
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IEP	
<p>Present Level of Performance: 15 year-old Isaiah would like to work at a warehouse and has very good organizational and perceptual skills. Due to his lack of time management skills and motivation deficit it may be difficult for him to retain a job in the community.</p> <p>Annual Goal: Isaiah will remain in a part-time community position in a local warehouse for at least six months.</p> <p>Benchmarks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> During the first marking period, Isaiah will work with his <u>ELA teacher</u> to write a resume for application to three places of employment of his choosing. By the end of the third marking period, with the help of his <u>Guidance Counselor</u>, Isaiah will have obtained an after-school position in the community that is accessible by public transportation. By the end of the academic year and through the summer, Isaiah will remain at his job with emotional support and technical guidance from his <u>Guidance Counselor</u>. 	
	
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IEP
<p>Present Level of Performance: When 11 year-old Joe is presented with challenging material in the classroom, he becomes aggressive and often starts a fight with one of his classmates.</p> <p>Annual Goal: In response to challenging classroom material, Joe will use a three-question self-monitoring tool everyday as monitored by his teacher.</p> <p>Benchmarks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. During the first marking period, Joe will work with an Adjustment Counselor to identify his emotions when presented with challenging material. 2. By the end of the second marking period, Joe will use his three-question self-monitoring tool with prompts from the teacher at least three times per week as monitored by his teacher. 3. By the end of the academic year, Joe will use his three-question self-monitoring tool five times per week as monitored by his teacher.

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IEP
<h3>Protecting Student's Rights</h3>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right to written notice • Right to consent/refuse • Right to receive evaluations 2 days in advance of Team meeting, if requested • Disciplinary considerations according to Manifestation Determination Reviews (MDRs) • Mediation and due process • Timelines • Confidential records

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IEP
<h3>Protecting Student's Rights: Procedural Concerns</h3>
<p>If you have questions about the IEP process or if you are concerned that the IEP is not being followed or services are not being provided as agreed, these are actions you can take:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact RTSC (617) 399-8342 www.fcsn.org/rtsc - rtsc@fcsn.org • Contact local school personnel • Contact district's Sp. Education Director • Contact DESE's PRS (781) 338-3700

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Transition

Turning 18...Transition from DCF




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Transition

Rights of Young Adults Staying in DCF Care Until Age 22

- DCF Adolescent Worker will be assigned
- Paid internships are available
- Stable funded housing
- Funded post secondary education
- Right to counsel
- Automatic MassHealth until age 26




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RTSC Ongoing Support and Training

Training Discounts

• Parent Consultant Training Institute	\$100
• Annual Federation Conference	\$30
• Planning a Life	\$50



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RTSC
Recruitment, Training & Support Center
for Special Education Surrogate Parents

Thank You For Volunteering

Please take a few moments to
complete the evaluation in
your packet



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