

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

### **Rhode Island Department of Education Special Education Services**

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) is the State education agency (SEA) responsible for the oversight of Local Education Agencies (LEA) to locate, identify and provide special education and related services to any eligible "child with a disability" in the least restrictive, appropriate environment. Special Education programs operate in all school districts including charter public schools to provide individually designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. Special education includes instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings.

A "child with a disability," means a child, aged 3 to 21, evaluated in accordance with state and federal law as having mental retardation, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, autism spectrum disorder, traumatic brain injury, an other health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services. 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 children, counseling services(including rehabilitation counseling), orientation and mobility services, and medical services for diagnostics or evaluation services. The term also includes school health services and school nurse services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training. Related services generally do not include a surgically implanted medical device (including cochlear implants) or the functional optimization, maintenance, or replacement of such a device. Children aged 3 through 5 (i.e., until the child's 6<sup>th</sup> birthday) can qualify for preschool special education and related services when the child is experiencing developmental delay, as defined by the State and as determined by the evaluation process.

Services are available for eligible children ages 3 to 21 or until the child receives a regular high school diploma. A child must meet the criteria established in the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA), the federal regulations promulgating IDEA, and RIDE state special education regulations. To get a copy of this law/regulations call the RIDE Office of Special Education at 401-222-3505 or check the office's website:

[www.ridoe.net/Special\\_Populations](http://www.ridoe.net/Special_Populations)

Referrals can be made directly to the School Department by calling or writing your local school district's Special Education Director. If your child is over age 5,

you can contact the principal of your child's school or the Special Education Director in your school district.

**Contact Information:**

Office of Special Needs, RI Department of Education  
255 Westminister Street  
Providence, RI 02903  
401-222-3505  
[www.ridoe.net](http://www.ridoe.net)