Early Childhood Special Education Services

3 to 5 years old



Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) supports children ages 3 to 5 in their local or cooperative school district by promoting development and building pre-academic skills. Common supports include classroom-based learning and targeted help with language development, fine and gross motor skills, and self-help abilities.

Why should I consider ECSE for my Child?

If your child learns differently due to a developmental delay or disability, your local school district can do an evaluation to see if they qualify for an Individualized Education Program (IEP). An IEP can provide the support your child needs to learn and grow.

Children ages 3 to 5 years old may qualify for ECSE if:

- They have a developmental delay or disability
- They need extra support to learn and get ready for kindergarten
- They are found eligible after completing an evaluation

Who do you contact for more information?

Contact the local school district or special education cooperative (i.e., a collaboration between multiple school districts) that serves children in the area where you live. Searching the internet for a district or cooperative will allow you to find contact information.

Common Terms you may hear:

- **Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA):**
  - Federal law that helps children with disabilities have access to appropriate specialized instruction and related services that meet the student's unique needs at no cost to the family.
- **Individualized Education Program (IEP):**
  - A plan to support a child's learning and development, based on evaluation results that highlight strengths and areas of needed support.
- **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE):**
  - Children with disabilities have the right to receive specially designed instruction and related services to support their unique needs at no cost to the family.
- **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):**
  - Whenever possible, children with disabilities learn alongside their peers without disabilities.