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### Want to Stay Up-To-Date on Events, Articles, Research?

Sign up for our monthly Newsletter. Each newsletter includes up-to-date information, upcoming events, social opportunities, resources (local, statewide and federal) and more. page it updated almost daily with articles, events and tips on raising a child with special needs or supporting an adult with special needs.

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<https://www.islandcountywa.gov/198/Parent-to-Parent>  
<https://www.facebook.com/islandcountyparent2parent/>



### Resources, Information & Support For Families In Island County, Statewide And Region

This and other resource guides are available on our website:

<https://www.islandcountywa.gov/198/Parent-to-Parent>

\*Island County Disability Resource Guide

\*Island County Autism Spectrum Disorder Resource Guide

\*Island County Behavioral Health Resource Directory

\*Island County Transition Services: School Age to Adulthood *Quick Guide*

\*Island County Transition Services & Resources Packet

Island County Autism Resources for Families Website

<https://www.pilotace.org/>

Updated July 2025

# Special Education Information & Resources Island County



## Learning Knows No Bounds

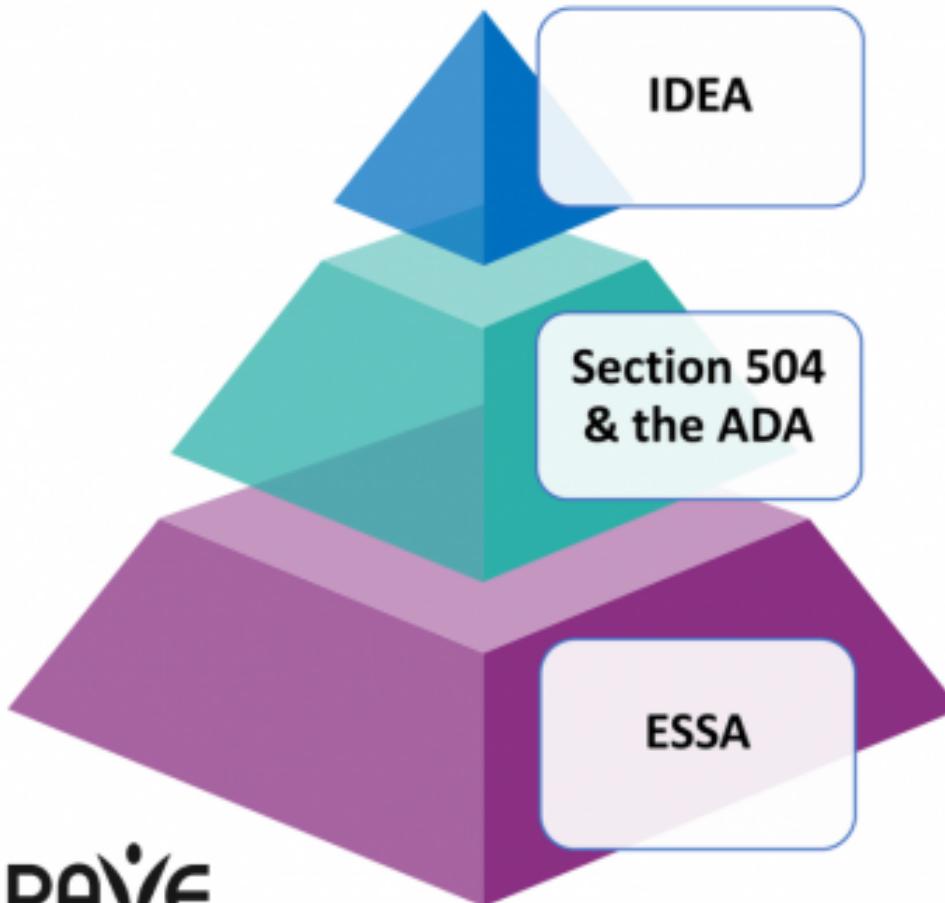
General Education, FAPE,  
Section 504, Special Education



Provided by Island County Parent to Parent  
for individuals with Developmental Disabilities

The alphabet soup of education, especially special education, can be daunting.

## Pyramid of Rights: Students at the top



- [High School Transition Toolkit](https://informingfamilies.org/transition-toolkit/)  
<https://informingfamilies.org/transition-toolkit/>
- [Got Transition](https://wapave.org/school-to-adulthood-transition-planning-toolkit-for-high-school-life-and-work/) <https://www.gottransition.org/>
- [School to Adulthood: Transition Planning Toolkit](https://wapave.org/school-to-adulthood-transition-planning-toolkit-for-high-school-life-and-work/) for High School, Life, and Work <https://wapave.org/school-to-adulthood-transition-planning-toolkit-for-high-school-life-and-work/>

Want to know more about Transition in Island County?  
Check out the Parent to Parent Transition Packet and other resources available on our website.



- [Northwest Justice Special Education Clinic](https://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/resource/special-education-legal-clinic)  
Attorneys present an overview of the laws affecting students' special education. Parents of children with special education needs can learn about their legal rights and options and where to get legal help with their children's needs aren't being met. (206)464-1519 (888)201-1012  
<https://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/resource/special-education-legal-clinic>

### Technology and Communications

- [Telecommunication Equipment Distribution \(TED\) Program](https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/odhh/telecommunication). Devices and apps for anyone who lives in Washington State (over age 4) and who is deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, or has difficulty with speech. <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/odhh/telecommunication>
- [Special Education Technology Center](https://specialedtechcenter.com/)  
(509)963-3350 <https://specialedtechcenter.com/>  
Assists with special technology needs of special education students.



- Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction-Special Education  
(360)725-6075 Children with disabilities have access to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).
- <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/special-education>
- US Department of Education: Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) <https://www.ed.gov/> is dedicated to improving results for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities ages birth through 22 (800)872-5327
- WA State Governor's Office of Education Ombuds (OEO) provides conflict resolution: (866)297-2597 <https://www.oeo.wa.gov/en/education-issues/supports-students-disabilities>
- WA PAVE Can connect you with parents and advocates in your area who can help. PAVE provides support, training, information and resources to empower and give voice to individuals, youth and families impacted by disabilities in Washington. (800)5-PARENT <https://wapave.org/>
- Washington Autism Alliance and Advocacy  
Helping children and adults with ASD. Access to healthcare, education and services for people with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities in WA State (425) 894-7231 <https://washingtonautismalliance.org/>
- Informing Families Of the major systems, education is the only guaranteed entitlement for your child.  
<https://informingfamilies.org/>
- Wright's Law Information about special education law, education law and advocacy for children with disabilities.  
<http://www.wrightslaw.com>

Federal and state laws, the differences between a 504 Plan & IEP, and more.

## Top have all these protections!

**Special Education Rights** are protected by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Eligible students are served with an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

**Civil Rights** are protected by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities impacting a “major life activity” receive accommodations and individualized support as part of their IEP (if eligible) or through a Section 504 Plan.

**General Education Rights** are protected by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). All children in the United States have the right to access free public education through age 21 or until they earn a high school diploma.

New legislation states age 22

Who do you call when you have a concern about your child's development?

### Ages Birth until 3rd Birthday

#### Whidbey Island

##### Steps

(360)679-1039

#### Stanwood/Camano Island

##### Sherwood Community Services

(425)334-4071

### Ages 3-22 Call Your Local School District

#### Stanwood/Camano Island

##### Stanwood/Camano Island School District

##### Special Education Office

(360)629-1236

#### North Whidbey Island

##### Oak Harbor School District

##### Hand in Hand Ages 3-5

(360)279-5928

##### Special Education Office

Ages 5-21 (360)279-5073

#### Central Whidbey Island

##### Coupeville School District

##### Special Services

(360)678-2420

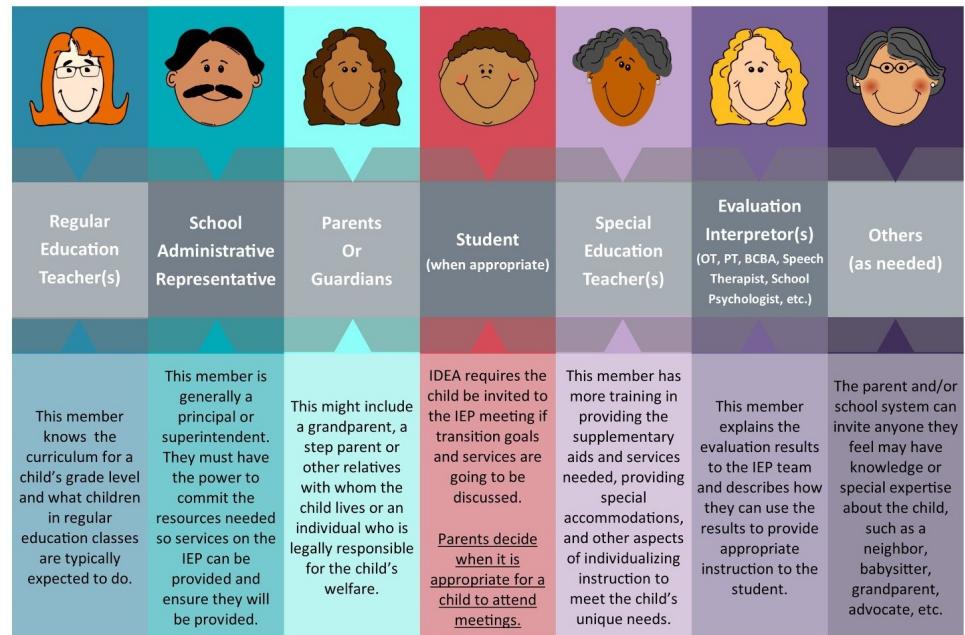
#### South Whidbey Island

##### South Whidbey School District

##### Special Education Office

(360)221-6808 x 2206

# Student's IEP Team



### Navigating the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Process

#### Pre-Referral

During the pre-referral phase, parents work together with teachers and staff to try and resolve problems informally within the classroom.

#### Referral

If informal measures are not solving the problem, you can request an evaluation for special services. Referrals can be made by parents, teachers, or other staff.

#### Informed Consent

After receiving a referral, the school district has 15 days to provide you with a plan for evaluating your child's needs. After reviewing it, you have 15 days to sign the consent before testing can begin.

#### Send a Letter

#### Provide Consent

#### IEP Meeting

After the evaluation is done, you will meet with involved school personnel to review results and discuss your child's needs. If your child qualifies, you will discuss what services your child will receive and establish goals for the next year.

#### Evaluation

Qualified school district personnel will assess your child to determine whether he/she needs special education services. Evaluations may be conducted by the school psychologist, speech/language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, and others as needed.

#### Attend IEP Meeting

#### Be Evaluated

#### Revisions

The IEP is reviewed annually or whenever you request a review meeting. Every 3 years, your child will be re-assessed to make sure the services are the best fit for your needs.

NOTE: Timelines are based on standards for families in California. Your state may vary.

#### Implementation

Once you have signed the IEP, it will be implemented as soon as possible. If you disagree with the plan, you can request mediation to resolve the dispute.

Prepared by Nicole Connolly, Ph.D.  
<http://drnicoleconnolly.com>



- ◆ Get Organized
- ◆ Document Changes
- ◆ Communicate in Writing!!!



Ready, Set, KNOW...

## Your Child's IEP and You

**An Individualized Education Program (IEP)** drives your child's educational instruction and ensures that they have equal access to the same educational opportunities as every other student.

As a member of the IEP team, you are your child's best advocate, making sure that the proper supports are in place to work toward learning goals that are meaningful and educationally appropriate.

It's not always easy, but there are steps you can take to ensure that your child's educational needs are being met in a way that reflects their individual strengths, needs and priorities for learning.

### Get Organized

Documents, doctors reports, IEPs, and other papers will grow over the years, so be sure to keep them filed and organized so that you know right where to look for what you need, when you need it.

### Document Changes

Keep a written record of the specific things you notice with your child that cause you concern—such as new

behaviors—and any solutions you might have that relate to your child's IEP.

### Communicate in Writing

Poor communication and unclear expectations can create big issues down the road. Sending a letter of understanding after a meeting is one way to avoid these misunderstandings. For day-to-day information sharing, some parents send a notebook to school, with notes and information that's helpful to school staff, such as something new that's happened at home. School staff can then send notes back as needed.

### Get Help

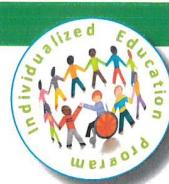
If you've agreed to a program that's not having the results you'd hoped for, and the school district doesn't want to change its approach, it's a good idea to ask for outside help.

**Parent-to-Parent and PAVE** can connect you with parents and advocates in your area who can help:

**Parent to Parent:** 800-821-5927; [arcwa.org/getsupport](http://arcwa.org/getsupport).

**PAVE:** 800-5-PARENT; [wapave.org](http://wapave.org).

**The Office of Education Ombuds** provides conflict resolution: [oeo.wa.gov](http://oeo.wa.gov).



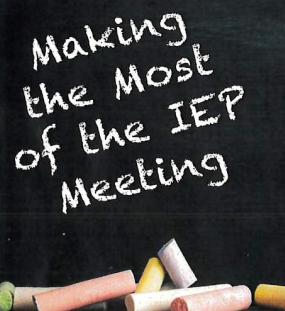
*"Think about your hopes and dreams for your child... Instead of maybe going in with 10 or 15 goals, really focus on two to three things that are really important to you. And remember, it's a relationship you're developing with the staff."*  
Betsy M.

*"What kids do at home is not always happening at school. Get the school to see what your child can do at home, things they can do and are interested in."*

Liz M.



- Send your ideas to the IEP team ahead of the meeting to help shape the discussion and draft the plan.
- Use positive language. Focus on what will help your child work toward their goals.
- Include the student as a meaningful participant in their IEP, life goal setting, career planning and decision-making.
- Be sure to include work-related goals in your child's IEP. If it's not in writing, it won't happen.
- Bring another family member, friend, or advocate to the IEP meeting.
- Work at building a good relationship with all members of the IEP team.
- Remember that this is a marathon, not a sprint. Keep your eyes on your and your child's long-term vision for the future.



## EARLY INTERVENTION

Early intervention is a system of services that helps babies and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities. Early Intervention provides a free screening to all families that suspect a delay or disability.

### NO REFERRAL NEEDED

The **IFSP** is a written treatment plan for Early Intervention (EI). It details your child's current levels of functioning, specific needs and goals for treatment (referred to as outcomes). The first step in writing the IFSP will be for the members of your child's team to conduct various types of assessments to identify your child's individual strengths and needs. Physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social & emotional development, adaptive development, fine & gross motor skills, vision, hearing, etc. Contact Information on page 4

IFSP	IEP
Birth through age 3	Age 3-22
Is inclusive of the family's needs	Focuses on the child's needs
Services provided in natural environments	Services provided at school
Families are assigned a service coordinator	No service coordinator
Generally reviewed every 6 months	Generally reviewed 1x a year
IFSP Team makes decisions	IEP Team makes decisions
Governed under Part C of IDEA	Governed under Part B of IDEA

## SCHOOL DISTRICTS & CHILD FIND

Each Island County School District provides evaluation and services for children beginning at age three. If a delay is suspected in any of the five areas (cognition, communication, fine motor, gross motor and/or social emotional) the school district will provide an interdisciplinary evaluation. Eligible children will be provided a program with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Contact info on page 4.

## WHAT IS SPECIAL EDUCATION?

Special education is specially designed instruction that addresses the unique needs of a student eligible to receive special education services. Special education is provided at no cost to parents and includes the related services a student needs to access her/his educational program.

## EARLY STAGES (AGES 0-3)

Early Intervention services are available to children who have disabilities and/or developmental delays. The [Early Support for Infants and Toddlers \(ESIT\) program](#) provides services to eligible children and families in a variety of settings - in their homes, in child care, in preschool or school programs & in their communities.

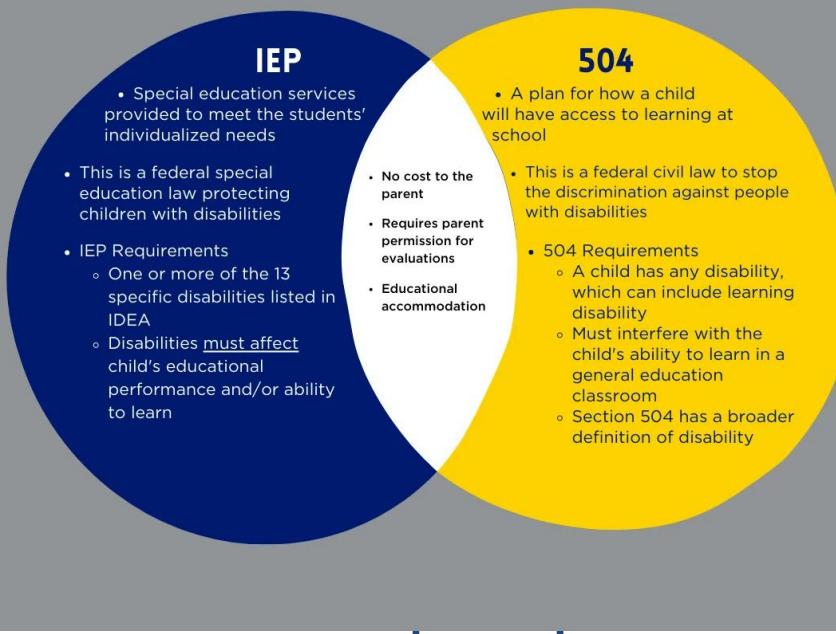
## SCHOOL AGE (AGES 3-22)

Students with disabilities who are determined eligible for special education and related services are entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education (**FAPE**). Services are provided to eligible students according to an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in pre-schools, elementary, and secondary schools, or other appropriate settings.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION WASHINGTON ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (**IDEA**) of 2004 is the federal law that guarantees free appropriate public education

# UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE



(**FAPE**) is provided to eligible students with disabilities. The Washington state regulations on special education can be found in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) Chapter 392-172A.

## SECTION 504 of THE REHABILITATION ACT of 1973

Commonly called "Section 504," is a federal law that *protects students from discrimination based on disability*. This law applies to all programs and activities that receive funding from the federal government-including Washington public schools. For a child who is having trouble in school, a **504 plan** can offer a lot of support. The plan can put in place changes to how your child is taught, like frequent breaks or audiobooks. **504 plans** are great for kids who don't need special education but who do need support to learn.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION FEDERAL LAW (IDEA) <http://idea.ed.gov/>

US Department of Education: IDEA 2004. Ages 0-22

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (**IDEA**) is a law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities. Infants & toddlers with disabilities (birth-2) and their families receive early intervention services under **IDEA Part C**. Children and youth (ages 3-22) receive special education and related services under **IDEA Part B**.... See website for full definition.