

(Continued from previous panel)

- You may desire more services for your child than are being made available to private school students.

If you re-enroll your child in a public school, he/she will be entitled to receive all the services for which he/she is eligible.

Important points to remember:

Special Education is guaranteed to eligible students in public schools by Federal law...the IDEIA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act).

Help is provided to eligible students with an identified need—regardless of their housing situation.

Some private school students may be eligible to receive special education services.

Special education is provided to eligible students without any cost to their parents.

Special education is free.

Before we can help, it is important that you contact your child's teacher or school principal or the Rutherford County Schools Special Education office if you feel your child has a disability which is affecting his/her educational progress.

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**Special
Education
And Related
Services**

In
Rutherford County Schools



Special Education in Rutherford County Schools

The IDEIA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act) is a Federal law that applies to children, between the ages of *three and twenty-one*, who are being educated in the public school system.

Rutherford County Schools' Special Education Department is comprised of professionals whose job is to help eligible children in our county with their individual education needs.



Highly trained teachers and related service providers provide individualized instruction, and may help with a child's speech, vision, hearing, and behavior needs if one or more of these areas have an adverse affect on his/her education. Occupational therapy and physical therapy are also available if they are needed in order to benefit a child's education.

A few examples of qualifying disabilities include: autism, intellectually disabled, learning disability, intellectually gifted, emotional disturbance, and physical and/or health impairment.

Is your child eligible?

All you, as a parent, have to do is notify your child's teacher, principal, or the Special Education Department at the Board of Education that you believe your child may need help from or through special education.

This starts a process during which the school provides a free screening and, if necessary, an individual evaluation in order to determine if your child has a qualifying disability and a need for special education and related services.

You, as the parent, will be involved in this process. You will be asked for your input and you will be invited to participate in any meetings regarding special education and your child.



If your child meets Tennessee Eligibility Standards, an IEP (Individualized Education Program) will be developed to meet his/her individual educational needs.

Special education and related services may include services provided to your child at the school as well as training and help for you, the parent, in order to enable you to help your child outside the school setting.

Rutherford County has social workers on staff who may be able to help you contact agencies and organizations in the community that may offer additional help to you and your family.

Everything that special education does is intended to help enable a child with disabilities to benefit from his/her education experience.

But, in order to help, we must know there is a need. This is why it is so important that you contact us.

Do you have special circumstances?

- You may be living at a temporary address, with friends, or have been displaced because of a natural disaster, etc.

Your family may be in transit, staying with relatives, living at a motel, a campground, a shelter, etc. Wherever you are living, if your child needs special education, we want to help.

- Your child may be attending a private school.

A child in a private school is no longer enrolled in a public school and has no individual entitlement to any special education services provided under IDEIA.

However, the law does provide for the public school system to use a proportionate amount of their special education budget to provide services to eligible private school students.

Even though your child may be in a private school learning environment, he/she still may be eligible for special education and/or related services.

The decisions of what services to offer, which students to offer the services, where to provide the services, and how to evaluate the services are all left up to the discretion of the public school system.

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