

VENTURA COUNTY SPECIAL EDUCATION LOCAL PLAN AREA

- SELPA -

GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES FOR THE LOCAL PLAN FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION



SECTION 4 INDIVIDUAL STUDENT PROGRAMMING

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This is one section of an eleven-part document. Visit our website below or call the SELPA to request copies of other sections. **Highlighted sections are local plan policy.**

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I. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

A. Philosophy

The Ventura County Special Education Local Plan Area's commitment to the provision of services to individuals with exceptional needs in the Least Restrictive Environment is clearly stated in legislative intent:

"Individuals with exceptional needs are offered special assistance programs which promote maximum interaction with the general school population..." (Education Code Part 30, Chapter 1, Section 5600[g]).

This intent to maximize interactions is based on the principle which maintains that both students with and without disabilities are most successfully educated in a shared environment where qualities of understanding, cooperation, and mutual respect are nurtured.

In all instances, the IEP Team determines the extent to which an individual with exceptional needs participates in general education with students without disabilities. The determination of appropriate program placement, related services needed, and curriculum options to be offered is made by the IEP Team based upon the unique needs of the student with disabilities rather than the label describing the disabilities or the availability of programs.

Students with disabilities are to receive their education in a chronologically age-appropriate, general education environment in the same public school as the students without disabilities in their neighborhood unless there is an educationally compelling reason why this cannot be accomplished. The IEP Team shall document on the IEP the reason for the placement in other than the school regularly designated for attendance. Presence of a disability condition does not, in and of itself, constitute an educationally compelling reason.

Educational environments other than in a general education class shall not be considered until there is adequate documentation that the regular education environment, services and/or curriculum cannot be modified to meet the student's goals and objectives on the Individualized Education Program (IEP). This commitment is stressed in the mandate regarding referral to special education which requires that:

"A pupil shall be referred for special educational instruction and services only after the resources of the regular education program have been considered and, where appropriate, utilized." (Education Code Part 30, Chapter 4, Article 1, Section 56303.)

B. Continuum of Options

To ensure that a full continuum of program options (i.e., Resource Specialist Program, Special Class, and Designated Instruction and Services) are available, the Ventura County Special Education Local Plan Area has determined that:



1. Program options, as appropriate to student's needs, are available at local neighborhood schools.
2. The majority of special education programs, to the maximum extent appropriate to student needs, are housed on regular school campuses and dispersed throughout the districts within the SELPA.

(See appendix 4-A "LRE Page")

C. Physical Location

1. Locating programs on general education campuses provides more opportunities for social interaction with non-disabled students.
2. Operations Cabinet and district administrators collaborate in making long range plans and commitments for physical housing on regular school campuses in order to avoid frequent and disruptive student relocations.
3. Through long range commitments for physical housing on regular school campuses, individuals with exceptional needs are afforded opportunities to develop and maintain continuing relationships with nondisabled peers.

D. Access to Activities

Individuals with exceptional needs have equal access to all general education activities as appropriate to their needs. This is accomplished through education of general education teachers and staff regarding legal requirements and benefits of integration of special education students. Supports are provided by the special education program as appropriate.

E. Site Staff Meetings

School districts ensure that all special education teachers are included in all staff meetings in order to facilitate discussion of opportunities for social interactions. In cases where Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office (VCSSO) classes are located on district campuses, VCSSO staff will be included in staff meetings to discuss issues of social interaction.

Site principals are encouraged to provide opportunities for staff inservice/or planning time to discuss strategies for facilitating social interaction between students with and without disabilities.

F. Access to Academic Programs

All schools allow maximum access to general education academic programs as appropriate. The IEP notes supports needed for the student to be successful in general education, as well as supports needed by the general education teacher(s). **See appendix 4-B IEP form "Accommodations and Modifications" Page.**

SELPA procedures describe the process for service delivery to students when served outside the district of residence. District of residence and receiving district collaborate in making decisions about necessary services to promote



student progress in general education and district of residence assumes fiscal responsibility.

G. Ability Awareness

The Ventura County SELPA – CAC offers “Ability Awareness” programs to all local elementary schools to facilitate acceptance and understanding. **(Appendix 4-C)**

II. Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Services are provided to each student as specified in the IEP. Occupational Therapy is provided as specified on the IEP. **(Appendix 4-D “OT Guidelines”)** Adapted P.E. Services are also provided if needed. **(See Appendix 4-E “APE: Fun and Games for Everyone”)** If a related service is required in order to assist a student in meeting his/her goals and objectives and the service is to be provided by an outside agency, the service is documented on the IEP.

The Student’s Case Manager is responsible for monitoring the provision of all related services. The Case Manager is identified on the IEP. The Case Manager assures that all related service providers submit progress reports toward goals and objectives at required reporting periods.

Educationally necessary services are provided at no cost to families as specified in the IEP. If an outside agency is being considered as a provider, the district will assist the family in the referral and eligibility process as necessary. If the outside agency determines the student is not eligible for that agency’s services, the services will be provided by the district in another way.

When a referral is made to an outside agency, the district will make every effort will be made to adhere to required timelines in order to not unduly delay IEP development.

If another public agency fails to provide the agreed-upon services as specified in the IEP, then the service shall be contracted for with another agency or provided by the local school district.

If a private, non-public agency or outside contractor will provide the service, a contract will be generated. See **Section 1** for sample Master Contract and procedures.

III. Resource Specialist Program

As part of the continuum of options, services of a Resource Specialist or Specialist(s) shall be made available to those students who are assigned to general education for a majority of the school day, as determined by the IEP team.

The duties of the Resource Specialist are to:

- A. Provide information and assistance to special education students and families.
- B. Provide consultation, resource information and material regarding special education students to parents and general education staff.



- C. Coordinate special education services with the general education program for students enrolled in the Resource Program.
- D. Monitor student progress and participate in review and revision of IEPs.
- E. Emphasize academics, career/vocational development and transition to adult life at the secondary level.

The Resource Specialist shall have an appropriate credential as established by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. The caseload shall not exceed 28 pupils, unless a waiver has been applied for with the State Superintendent of Public Instructions.

Resource Specialists will not simultaneously be assigned to serve as a Resource Specialist and teach general education classes. A student may not be enrolled in the Resource Specialist program for a majority of the school day without a waiver with the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. At least 80% of the Resource Specialists in the SELPA will have an Instructional Aide/Paraprofessional.

IV. **Low Incidence Pupils**

The Ventura County SELPA is committed to providing appropriate special education programs for all pupils with low incidence disabilities. To this end, the local education agencies providing programs and services to low incidence pupils shall use the ***California Department of Education Program Guidelines for Low Incidence Disabilities (Appendix 4-F)*** as a resource in providing quality programs for students with low incidence disabilities.

The SELPA Low Incidence Committee meets monthly to ensure equitable distribution of Low Incidence Funds in order to meet the needs of pupils within the districts. This method ensures that funds are made available to purchase equipment regardless of location of program. **(See Section 2 “Budget” regarding low incidence fund distribution)**

Districts assume responsibility for informing staff of the district-approved methods for accessing low incidence funds.

V. **Transportation**

Transportation is provided as a related service via the IEP process for preschool and school-age students who require transportation to access their educational program and for whom the disability makes it impossible to access the regular district system of transportation. If the district has no regular system of busing, transportation is made available to students whose IEP indicates that they need it due to the nature of the disability. If students can access the regular district transportation, the IEP shall so state.

Students who are able to use the regular bus stop shall do so. Others may require specific transportation to/from home to school.

The Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office (VCSSO) provides transportation services to students served in VCSSO programs, and to students who use wheelchairs in all other districts. There are Transportation Policies and Procedures for Special



Education Students (**See Appendix 4-G**), which includes procedures for wheelchair installation and securement.

If a transportation contractor is used, the contractor has the responsibility for ensuring school bus drivers are trained in the proper installation of mobile seating devices in the securement systems.

VI. Literacy and Core Curriculum

Copies of the **California Reading Initiative Handbook (Appendix 4-H)** will be disseminated at workshops related to reading disabilities and the annual workshop for new Resource Specialists entitled “It’s Lonely Out There.” Copies will also be made available to all special education staff who teach reading. Copies of the Handbook will be given to all district Curriculum Directors to copy and distribute to general education teachers as appropriate. Operations Cabinet members will encourage ongoing dissemination of the document to teachers within the district.

The SELPA will assure that all Special Education instructional personnel are provided with opportunities to participate in staff development opportunities in the area of literacy, including information about current literacy and learning research, and state adopted standards and frameworks. This will be accomplished via the following means:

- Dissemination of a “bank” of IEP goals and objectives which are correlated to state curricular standards. (**See Appendix 4-I – Sample of Reading Section**)
- Assuring that all Special Education staff have access to state standards and frameworks.
- Dissemination of information from the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment to all Special Education staff if related to the topic of literacy and learning research or state adopted standards and frameworks.
- Inservice opportunities will be made available to all staff on research-based instructional strategies for teaching reading to a wide range of diverse learners. The SELPA offers workshops on reading disabilities on a regular basis which include assessment and intervention strategies.

Also, using the research of Michael Spagna, Ph.D., and G. Reid Lyon, several reading methods were adopted by our SELPA Reading Disabilities Task Force in 1998 as those which are best supported by research for effectiveness in working with children with reading disabilities. We are committed to offering presentations of these approaches and/or materials on a regular basis over the next several years. (**See Appendix 4-J**)

All Directors and Coordinators of Special Education shall assure that all special education students have access to state adopted standards and frameworks, core curriculum text books, supplementary text books, instructional materials and support so that students with disabilities may attain higher standards in reading.

VII. Autism

The SELPA provides services to children with autism in a continuum of options, ranging from self-contained classes designed for learners with autism to full integration in



general education. The California Department of Education book “Best Practices in Service Delivery to Students with Autism” is made available to staff. **(Appendix 4-K)**

The SELPA also provides a process for staff, both certificated and classified, to achieve certification of advanced training in the field of autism. **(Appendix 4-L)**

VIII. Central Auditory Processing Disorders

The SELPA collaborates with the VCSSO Hearing Conservation Department to assess for difficulties with Central Auditory Processing Disorders (CAPD). A handbook on discussing symptoms and process for assessment is available. **(Appendix 4-M)**

IX. Services Provided via Chapter 26.5 of the California Government Code

California Code of Regulations, Title 2, Division 9, Chapter 1 “Interagency Responsibilities for Providing Services to Pupils with Disabilities” specifies responsibilities for certain public agencies in California who are required to provide services as part of the IEP process for a student with disabilities to benefit from his or her educational program. At the state level, these agencies are the State Departments of Mental Health, Health Services, and Social Services. At the county level, we have two county agencies that we work with in order to provide services under this Code:

A. Mental Health

The SELPA and the Ventura County Department of Behavioral Health (VCBH) have an Interagency Agreement, which delineates responsibilities of both agencies in providing mental health services to a Special Education student as part of the IEP. **(See Appendix 4-N)**

The SELPA and VCBH have also developed a brochure for families and the community to understand how mental health services are provided to students under Chapter 26.5 of the Government Code. **(See Appendix 4-O)**

They have also developed a handbook on making a referral for Mental Health Services under Chapter 26.5 of the Governmental Code. **(See Appendix 4-P)**

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health collaborates with local school districts to provide appropriate services to eligible students who are residents of Los Angeles County.

B. California Children Services

The SELPA and California Children Services of Ventura County have an Interagency Agreement which delineates responsibilities of both agencies when Occupational or Physical Therapy services are provided as part of the IEP in order to assist a student in benefiting from his or her educational program. **(See Appendix 4-Q)**

California Children’s Services in Los Angeles County provides appropriate services via the IEP for those eligible students who are residents of Los Angeles County.