

Frequently Asked Questions About Jefferson County Preschools Special Education Services

As your family prepares for preschool, we hope you will find the following information helpful. If you have other questions please contact Child Find 303-982-7247 or the Preschool/Early Learning Office 303-982-1737.

- ❖ **Are all children who have an IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan / Birth-3 yrs.) and received Early Intervention (EI) services eligible for preschool/special education services (IEP - Individual Education Program / 3 yrs. and up)?**

One does not automatically lead to the other. DDRC provides Early Intervention services to children who qualify birth to three. At 2 years/10 months, the school district and Child Find teams use eligibility criteria to determine who qualifies for an IEP (age 3 and up). Children must meet all of the criteria to be eligible for Special Education services.

- ❖ **I am concerned about my child being developmentally behind other children. How do I have my child screened or evaluated?**

Child Find provides free developmental assessments for young children from birth to 5 years of age for whom there may be concerns. Child Find can help families determine if their child is eligible for special education services in the areas of learning, speech, language, motor skills, and social/emotional needs. The Child Find program is a free resource for families who live in Jefferson County. To schedule an appointment, contact Child Find Intake Information at 303-982-7247.

- ❖ **What will support look like for my child? If the child is eligible for an IEP, will preschool meet the therapy needs?**

Jefferson County preschools have a continuum of support to meet a student's individual needs and vary by site. The type of support, amount of service minutes, and accommodations required are determined by the IEP team. Early childhood special education teachers, speech language pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, and mental health supports are available. There are both integrated and separate classroom programs.

- ❖ **What is my home / neighborhood preschool?**

Because Jefferson County does not have a preschool in every elementary school, Preschool sites are not considered home/neighborhood schools. You may register for any preschool but please refer to the next bullet - The Preschool/Early Learning Office makes all location decisions for special education services. Currently, there are 45 preschool sites across the district.

- ❖ **How old does my child have to be to go to preschool? Can I retain my 5 year old in preschool?**

Preschool is available to students who are 3 and 4 years old. Students who are eligible for special education services may begin preschool on their 3rd birthday. Those who have birthdays prior to the October 1 cutoff and will be 3 before or on October 1 may start at the beginning of the school year. All children who meet the October 1 cutoff date for kindergarten will be encouraged to enroll in kindergarten. If a parent wants to retain a child in preschool, the Jeffco School Board Policy and Process for retention is followed. The decision to retain/not retain will be made by the Directors of Early Learning and Special Education.

- ❖ **When do I register for preschool? Where can I register my child for preschool? Should I wait to register until I find out if my child will qualify for an IEP / Special Ed. Services? Where will my child go to preschool and can I go visit that one?**

Preschool registration for the following school year begins mid-January and continues into the school year depending on space availability for all students. Parents may register a child at any preschool site. However, if the child is found eligible for Part B/Special Education services and it is determined by the Child Find / Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team that the needs of the child cannot be met at the location they are registered, a location change may occur. Location decisions are made by the IEP team and the Early Learning Office. Once a location has been decided upon and communicated, parents need to contact the site and complete enrollment prior to the child starting.

- ❖ **What will happen if my child has an IEP and I decide not to enroll in a Jeffco Preschool?**

Once a child has been determined to be eligible and an IEP has been created, the parent has 10 days to enroll the child at the location communicated by the Preschool/Early Learning Office and Child Find. If this does not occur, a Ready to Serve letter will be sent via USPS, and the spot will no longer be held for the child. If the parent late decides to enroll, they must contact the Preschool/Early Learning Office for a location decision. After one year, the IEP expires and the process to determine eligibility starts over with Child Find.

- ❖ **How many days a week will my child go to preschool? Is there a two-day a week option for my child?**

Students with and IEP attend 4 days a week (Tuesday - Friday) / at least 2.5 hours per day to access a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Because special education staff is not on every site every day, a student with an IEP attends 4 days/week in order to be able to provide special education services.

❖ **Is there an all-day option for preschool?**

There are 10 sites that offer a full day or modified programming with extended hours. Tuition is prorated for students who qualify for an IEP. The IEP team determines if the child's needs can be met in a full / modified day program and parents are asked to complete Eligibility Guidelines.

❖ **Is the registration fee refundable if my child qualifies for Special Ed. Services? Is the registration fee refundable if my child does not qualify? Is the registration fee refundable if my child qualifies for Special Ed. Service but I change my mind?**

A registration fee is assessed for each child in preschool and is non-refundable but is transferable to another Jefferson County preschool during the same school year.

❖ **Is there a Montessori preschool option in Jefferson County for children who are eligible for Special Ed. Services? Is there a charter option in Jefferson County for children who are eligible for Special Ed. Services?**

Placement in charter schools is a separate process from Jefferson County Special Education and the Office of Early Childhood. Families have the option of enrolling in a charter school by contacting the charter school office at 303-982-6730. Special Education services are not provided for preschool charter schools through Jeffco Public Schools as they are considered a private school setting.

❖ **What about Head Start?**

Head Start is separate from Jeffco Public Schools. If a family is accepted to Head Start and the child has an IEP, services from a Jeffco Preschool SPED team will be provided. If those services cannot be met at Head Start, the slot in a Jeffco Preschool will be determined for the child to enroll.

❖ **I have twins and want both to go to preschool even though only one is in EI. Can they go to the same school? Can they go to the same school but be in different classrooms?**

The Early Learning Office makes every effort to accommodate siblings at the same site. However, this may not be possible based on student needs, space availability, and variation of the number of classrooms per site.

❖ **Will people know my child was receiving special education services in preschool?**

Any information regarding an IEP is a part of the student's confidential record protected under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and is shared only on a need to know basis with the staff directly working with the child.

❖ **Is there as summer option for my child to attend preschool if they do not qualify for ESY (Extended School Year)? What is ESY?**

- There are no special education services offered through the summer, however parents may explore therapeutic service through their private insurance. ESY services are available to those who qualify age 3-21 and are eligible for special education services – ESY is at no cost to the parents of students who qualify. To qualify, students must demonstrate a significant loss in existing skills from time away the classroom that impacts the student’s ability to achieve their annual IEP goals. There must be both significant regression in skills and recoupment time AND/OR meet the CDE guidelines for predictive factors.

❖ **Is physical therapy (PT) / occupational therapy (OT) available in preschool? What is the difference between OT and PT in preschool?**

If it is determined by the IEP team that a child needs OT or PT services, an itinerant service provider works directly with the preschool staff and provides services in the classroom. PT service providers address mobility issues where a child cannot access the physical environment - significant concerns with balance, strength issues, and coordination that impact classroom navigation and educational access. OT service providers address fine motor, visual / perceptual, sensory processing, and self- help / adaptive skills.

❖ **Will my child have opportunities to interact with peers who do not have disabilities?**

All students have opportunities to integrate. Most classrooms are inclusive. There are Separate Classroom programs that do not have typical students enrolled, but are located at sites with integrated programs and opportunities for inclusion.

❖ **How is discipline/behavior in preschool addressed?**

Activities in preschool focus on teaching students to self-regulate and build appropriate social -emotional skills to assist all children in learning the necessary skills for interacting positively with their peers. When necessary, the Student Discipline Procedures are followed. All parents receive a copy of the discipline procedures at registration and must review the District Code of Conduct online. They are asked to sign that they have reviewed both. There are times, too, that a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and/or Behavior Improvement Plan (BIP) may be implemented. Preschool Mental Health providers support as needed.

❖ **Is there transportation for my child to get to school?**

Students eligible for a Separate Classroom program qualify for specialized transportation. District Eligibility Guidelines are utilized by the IEP Team to determine if a student qualifies for specialized transportation.

❖ **Does my child have to be potty trained to go to preschool?**

Children are not required to be potty trained.

❖ **My child has severe allergies. My child has diabetes. My child has difficulty eating / feeding issues. How will these be addressed in preschool?**

A District Registered Nurse can be a part of any IEP meeting that includes health concerns for a child. Before beginning a preschool program, a Health Care Plan will be created as appropriate and staff will be trained on the procedures for each individual child's health needs. Other related service providers will be consulted as seen fit.

❖ **What are the preschool / therapy options if my child is not eligible for an IEP?**

Parent can apply for CPP (Colorado Preschool Program) to see if they qualify for free preschool or may enroll in any preschool program and pay tuition. Parents can work with their child's physician and their insurance company to help find private providers for additional services.

❖ **What is MTSS?**

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a systemic, continuous improvement framework in which data-based problem-solving and decision making is practiced across all levels of the educational system for supporting students. The framework of MTSS is a "way of doing business" which utilizes high quality evidence-based instruction, intervention, and assessment practices to ensure that every student receives the appropriate level of support to be successful. A Multi-Tiered System of Supports helps schools and districts to organize resources through alignment of academic standards and behavioral expectations, implemented with fidelity and sustained over time, in order to accelerate the performance of every student to achieve and/or exceed proficiency.

❖ **In Early Intervention, 3 Global Outcomes were measured. Are there also Global Outcomes for preschool students with disabilities?**

The 3 Global Outcomes for EI are the same for Preschool Special education:

- Children will have positive social emotional skills (including social relationships)
- Children will acquire and use knowledge and skills (including communication skills)
- Children will use appropriate behaviors to meet their needs

❖ **Does preschool utilize Colorado Academic Standards for all students? What is the curriculum?**

Jeffco Public Preschools provides foundational learning for mastery of the Jeffco 2020 competencies. These include:

- Content Mastery
- Civic and Global Engagement
- Communication
- Critical Thinking and Creativity and
- Self-Direction and Personal Responsibility

Jeffco Curriculum is aligned to the Colorado Academic Standards. Our delivery is hands-on and play-based. This research-based model fosters creativity, focused attention, self-regulation, deliberate memory, and strong oral language. It is also fun and engaging for students!

Data is utilized to design the student experience, ensuring just right instruction at each student's developmental level. This includes core instruction, intervention services for students who require support with English Language Acquisition; Socio-emotional needs; or a Special Education Individualized Learning Plan (IEP); as well as, challenge. Two of our preschools offer programming that aligns with the International Baccalaureate approach, and three offer Native Language Spanish Instruction for students whose primary language is Spanish.

❖ **Can I go visit any preschool to see what it is like?**

Parents may schedule a visit of a preschool. To set this up, please contact the Early Learning Office at 303-982-1737 or contact a nearby preschool.