


Understanding PPTs and Supporting Students with Special Needs



A Primer for Paraeducators – October 2015

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Overview of Session


Laws/Guidelines Protecting Students with Special Needs
What is a PPT?

What will I learn?

Best Practices in Supporting Students AT PPTs
Best Practices in Maintaining Confidentiality

Acknowledgements:
Some slides adapted from Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) PPT 101 & from EASTCONN Psychological & Behavioral Consultation Division



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Laws/Guidelines Protecting Students with Special Needs

What will I learn?

- **IDEA** – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- **FAPE** – Free and Appropriate Public Education
- **IEP** – Individualized Education Plan

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IDEA – Who is Covered?

- Children with disabilities who, by reason of (certain types of disabilities), need special education and related services
- Special education is defined as “specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability”


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IDEA – Eligibility Categories

- Autism
- Deaf-blindness
- Deafness
- Developmental delay (3-5 year olds)
- Emotional disturbance
- Hearing impairment
- Intellectual disability
- Multiple disabilities
- Orthopedic impairment
- Other health impairment
- Physical impairment
- Specific learning disability
- Speech or language impairment
- Traumatic brain injury
- Visual impairment including blindness



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FAPE Is Fundamental

- Districts are obligated to offer a Free Appropriate Public Education (*Board of Ed. v. Rowley*, 458 U.S. 176 (1982))
- Educational program must be reasonably calculated to permit student to derive an educational benefit
 - ❖ Did the district meet **procedural requirements** of the IDEA **AND**
 - ❖ Did the district offer a **substantive program** designed to confer an educational benefit?

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Individualized Education Program (IEP)

All students covered under the IDEA are provided FAPE through their individualized education program (IEP)

Written Plan of SpEd Services



Legal Document

Reviewed at least annually

Developed by PPT

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Major IEP Components

Recommendations/ Prior Written Notice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decisions re: eligibility/evaluation or placement• Record of actions proposed/refuted
Present Levels of Performance & Measurable Goals/Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current skill level across areas• In identified areas of need• Clear/Measurable
Accommodations/Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changing "how" of what is taught• Changing "what" is taught
Service Delivery Grid	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Framework for delivery of programming• By who, where, how much

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Implementation of the IEP

- IEP must be **accessible** to anyone responsible for its implementation
- Each provider must be informed of **his/her specific responsibilities** to implement the IEP and the specific accommodations/modifications/supports required
- But...the IEP may not be discussed with anyone who does not have a **legitimate educational interest**

» **More on that later...**

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What is a PPT?

What will I learn?

- Purpose
- Membership
- Roles


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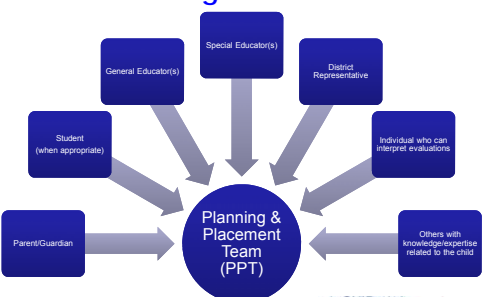
Purpose of PPT

The purpose of the PPT is to review the referral to special education, current evaluations and information, and to determine if additional information is needed to determine eligibility for special education.

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Members of Planning and Placement Team:



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Role of Planning and Placement Team (PPT):

ALWAYS support students in Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):
to the maximum extent appropriate children with disabilities are educated with non-disabled peers

Planning:
Evaluate &
Develop/Revise
IEP

Placement:
Programming &
Supports
Across Settings

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What will I learn?

Best Practices in Supporting Students
AT PPTs

- Logistics of PPTs
- Preparing for and attending PPTs
- Frequently Asked Questions about PPTs (FAQs)


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Logistics of PPTs

- PPTs are typically facilitated by a district representative with input from all stakeholders
- A PPT may be held to:
 - ❖ Review the findings of an evaluation or reevaluation
 - ❖ Review current programming
 - ❖ Following suspension (manifestation meeting)
 - ❖ Develop Individual Transitional Plan (ITP)


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What is my role as a paraeducator PRIOR TO the PPT?

- Discuss with your supervisor any thoughts/input you might share (if asked) and identify 3 student strengths you would share with the team (if asked)
- With your supervisor, identify how you should respond to questions: a) if you do not know the answer, or b) the question is outside the scope of your role
- Express any concerns you may have *with your supervisor* and identify next steps

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What is my role as a paraeducator AT the PPT?

- Listen respectfully to all participants
- Refrain from opinions, hearsay, or sharing of information outside of your role/responsibilities
- Defer to certified staff when unsure if question should be answered or you don't know the answer (e.g. "I believe Mrs. XXX is best suited to answer that question.")

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FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) about PPTs:

- Is voting required at a PPT?
- Is a PPT decision "Majority Rule?"
- Is it okay to disagree?
- What if no one talks at all?

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Final Thoughts on PPTs ...

Think before you speak ...

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What will I learn?

Best Practices in Maintaining Confidentiality

- **Confidentiality**
 - ▶ Understanding FERPA and educational records
 - ▶ Who, Where, What, and Why do we tell?


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What is FERPA?

- Federal law that applies to recipients of federal funds (e.g. public schools, colleges and universities)
- Protects the confidentiality of student education records
- Limits disclosure to 3rd parties without parent consent

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What Are Educational Records?

Any records **directly relating** to a student and **maintained** by the educational institution

- Personal and Family Data
- Evaluation and Test Data
- 504 Plans
- Progress Reports, Report Cards, Work Samples, and Attendance Records
- Conferences
- Written Accounts of Parent/Teacher
- Audio and/or Video Tapes
- Electronic information stored on cell phones, databases, email, and voice mail recordings

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Another Word About Email...

- Emails sent as part of your work (or using district network) are NOT private communications
- May be subject to disclosure under FOIA
- May be student records under FERPA
- May be retrieved as part of routine monitoring, an investigation, or formal discovery process as part of litigation
- **Do not** include student or teacher names or grades in email (use initials, e.g., Mrs. T told JR to...)

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Confidentiality Rights

- As a general rule, all personally identifiable information in educational records must be kept confidential *unless* a parent/guardian or eligible student **consents**, in writing, to disclosure
- Written consent must:
 - ❖ Specify which records are being disclosed
 - ❖ Specify the purpose of disclosure
 - ❖ Identify the recipient

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Confidentiality: WHO do we tell?

ASK YOURSELF: Is the person I am considering sharing information with:

- Someone who is working in collaboration with me, other professionals, and/or the parent(s) to serve the needs of this student (*legitimate educational interest*)?
- A person who is likely to use the information to benefit the student and other students?
- A person who is likely to use the information to prevent harm to the student and to other students?

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Confidentiality: WHERE do we tell?

ASK YOURSELF: Is the place where I am sharing information:

- A private place (such as a teacher's empty room, empty teachers' lounge)?
If not, is the information I am sharing (in a public place) necessary to ensure the student's immediate safety and/or prevent harm?

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Confidentiality: WHAT/WHY do we tell?

ASK YOURSELF: Is the information I am considering sharing:

- A generalization rather than repetition of statements?
- Enough information so that the person can understand the student's problem and situation
- Enough information so that the person understands how to benefit and support the student?

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Summary

Laws/Guidelines
Protecting Students with
Special Needs


What is a PPT?

**What have I
learned?**

Best Practices in
Supporting Students AT
PPTs

Best Practices in
Maintaining Confidentiality

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