

Old Bridge Township Public Schools

Preschool Program for Students with Disabilities Handbook

(Revised July 1, 2021)

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Preschool Program for students with disabilities is a language-based and sensory-motor program designed to meet the individual needs of children. The New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C. 6A:14) defines a “preschool child with a disability” as:

“... a child between the ages of three and five experiencing developmental delay, as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in one or more of the areas in (c)10i through v below, and requires special education and related services. When utilizing a standardized assessment or criterion-referenced measure to determine eligibility, a developmental delay shall mean a 33 percent delay in one developmental area, or a 25 percent delay in two or more developmental areas.

- i. Physical, including gross motor, fine motor and sensory (vision and hearing);
- ii. Cognitive; iii. Communication; iv. Social and emotional; and v. Adaptive

The Old Bridge Public Schools’ Preschool Program provides a wide variety of multisensory activities to enable each child to develop in accordance with his/her potential. The Preschool Program is located at Southwood Elementary School and Glenn School, centrally located in the township. Instruction in the district’s special and integrated classes is provided by certified special education teachers with the assistance of paraprofessional aides based on the goals and objectives developed in each child’s Individualized Education Program.

A copy of this handbook can be found under the Services tab at www.oldbridgeadmin.org.

CHILD STUDY TEAM SERVICES

The Child Study Team consists of a Social Worker, Psychologist, Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant (LDT-C) and Speech/Language Specialist. The Child Study Team members can be reached at Southwood Elementary School (732-360-2087) or at Glenn School (732-360-4470).

The Child Study Team is available for consultation to discuss your child’s progress or program needs. Parents are encouraged to ask questions, provide input and participate in the parent visitation days as much as possible. Each child is assigned a case manager who monitors your child’s progress, facilitates the annual IEP meeting, consults with the preschool staff and assists with any concerns you might have. Your case manager can help answer any questions that you may have.

When a child is eligible for Special Education based on the criteria, Preschool Child with a Disability, an I.E.P. is developed. The IEP is a written document which is mutually developed by the Child Study Team member(s), teacher, specialist(s) and parent(s)/guardian(s). The IEP will describe the specific program, goals, objectives and services that your child will receive. As you have valuable information about your child’s daily behavior and habits, the information you may share with the social worker and may bring to

the eligibility/IEP meeting is helpful in developing your child's IEP. On an annual basis, a meeting will be conducted to review and update your child's program for the next school year. This is called the annual review. If you have any questions regarding your child's IEP, you may contact your case manager, your child's teacher, and/or related service provider(s).

For Preschool Identification meetings, the Department of Special Services requests parents/guardians bring proof of residency to their ID meetings. This Proof of Residency can be two of the following:

- a. Mortgage/Deed; or
- b. Property tax bill and Water bill; or
- c. Lease if renting; or
- d. Recent Utility bill in parent/guardian name (2 recent bills is renting); or

For additional information on the Old Bridge Department of Special Services, please review the Parent Handbook of Department Protocols and Procedures located on the district website: www.oldbridgeadmin.org.

PRESCHOOL CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): Placement in the LRE is determined based on the student's level of functioning, strengths, weaknesses and where the IEP team (which includes the parent), feels that they will most benefit.

- ✓ All students in the preschool program range from 3 – 5 years old.
- ✓ All classrooms have a Special Education Certified teacher and two (2) Paraprofessional Aides.
- ✓ If recommended by the Child Study Team and therapists, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy will be implemented throughout the school day.

Placement	Description	Location	Class Ratio
Preschool Integrated Class Placement	Program to address students who display close to age appropriate development	Glenn or Southwood	16-18 students - Max 7 receiving Special Education
Half-Day Preschool Disabilities Class Placement	Program for students who display developmental delays and require moderate adult assistance and supports.	Glenn or Southwood	Max 12 receiving Special Education
Full-Day Preschool Disabilities Class Placement	Program designed for students who display some significant developmental delays and require substantial adult assistance and supports to meet with appropriate growth.	Glenn or Southwood	Max 12 receiving Special Education

Full-Day Preschool Disabilities Class Placement (ABA)	Program developed for students who display more significant developmental delays and require maximum adult assistance and supports. Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) strategies are utilized throughout the day.	Glenn or Southwood	Max 12 receiving Special Education
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Placement in the Old Bridge Public School Preschool Disabled program is based on the needs of the student. Students are placed in the half-day or full-day sessions accordingly due to multiple factors including transportation, class size, as well as, student to staff ratios. The Department of Special Services does not accept parental requests for AM or PM sessions.

OLD BRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOL PRESCHOOL HOURS

Preschool	Regular Day	Early Dismissal	Delayed Opening
AM	8:50-11:15	8:50-10:50	10:50-12:50
PM	12:50-3:15	11:15-1:15	1:15-3:15
Full Day	8:50-2:00	8:50-12:15	10:50-2:00

RELATED SERVICES

Speech and Language Development: The Speech/Language Specialist works in conjunction with the classroom staff to develop and coordinate instructional themes and strategies to meet the needs of each child. Speech/Language development is an integral part of the program. Speech and Language Therapy goals and objectives are written in the IEP, if needed, and monitored four times a year.

Occupational/Physical Therapy: School based occupational and/or physical therapy services are provided to students who require these services to achieve their related IEP goals. School based occupational and/or physical therapy services focus solely on educational needs. Although the focus of services is an academic model and not a medical model, clearance to participate in physical activities may be required from your child's physician.

The District utilizes a the 3:1 Workload model for all Speech Language Specialists, Occupational Therapists, and Physical Therapists. This model will provide a higher quality of service to your child and his/her teachers because our related service providers will be available to integrate your child's speech language, fine motor and/or gross motor goals with his/her classroom curriculum and will be have the ability to make-up sessions on their indirect service week if necessary.

A copy of the 3:1 Related Service Calendar and a Frequently Asked Question Sheet is available on the Old Bridge Public School District Website.

PRESCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

The District will transport your child to and from the designated bus stop near your home.

- 1. If your child is eligible for the preschool disabled program, you will be notified of the session and school location. We do not accept requests for school, teacher, or session (morning or afternoon).**
- 2. *Pick-up and drop-off can only be to and from the student's home address.*** In other words, your child cannot be transported from bus stop near home to school and then from school to another location.

Transportation is provided for preschool children with disabilities to/from a bus stop closest to your home. The bus will have an aide to provide supervision and assistance for preschool students. *A parent or adult must come out to the bus to meet their child when the bus arrives at the bus stop near home, and the adult must assist the bus aide to get the child on and off the bus.* At the school, the staff members will meet the bus and assist the student into the school. If you cannot be at the bus stop near home, give the bus driver a note with the name(s) of other adult(s) who will be home to meet the bus, and let your child know who will be waiting when he/she arrives home. Please be mindful of the following:

- At no time can the parent/guardian/adult get on the bus.**
- Under no circumstances will children be dropped off where there is no adult waiting. The child will be brought back to school and/or police station.**

Please notify your child's case manager about any requested changes in writing; however, changes can only be approved once per school year. These approved transportation requests will be honored for the current school year only.

For those children attending the Extended School Year program (as determined at an IEP meeting), transportation requests should be put in writing by the first week of June. Transportation requests for the school year must be submitted by July 31 to the Director of Transportation.

If your child will not need transportation on a given day due to illness, vacation, emergency, etc., please notify the DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION directly at (732) 360-4502.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

To register your preschool age child for school:

1. Go to the Old Bridge Public School District Website under "Menu" for documents.
2. Note the items you are required to bring when you register and complete all of the downloadable forms.

3. You will be notified who to call to schedule a registration appointment at Glenn School (732-3604567). The appointment will take approximately 30 minutes if all forms are completed and required items are provided.

DURING PRESCHOOL

School Nurse: A nurse is available in all the elementary schools. Parents should contact the nurse regarding special medical problems, health needs, administration of any medications, and illnesses as they occur. Known food allergies should also be brought to the attention of the nurse and school staff. ***If your child has any difficulty with feeding skills or has allergies or adverse reactions to certain foods or beverages, please inform your child's teacher and the school nurse.***

Please call the school nurse at your child's school when your child is absent for any reason:

Southwood School (732) 360-4539

Glenn School (732) 360-1021

Snack/Lunch: For children enrolled in the Half-day Preschool program, snacks and beverages should be sent to the school with your child each day. We encourage the children to bring small portions of "healthy" foods and drinks such as fruit, crackers, vegetables, cheese, milk, fruit juice, etc. We request parents send food and drinks in disposable containers, as we are using snack time to teach self-help skills such as cleaning up the snack area. The snack time gives the children an opportunity to develop self help skills as well as an additional opportunity to socialize.

For children enrolled in the Full Day Preschool Program, both a snack and lunch are to be sent in daily.

To comply with recent state regulations, schools are encouraging parents to avoid sending snacks that primarily contain sugar, high fat content, and others with minimal nutritional value.

Clothing: Two complete changes of clothes, labeled with your child's name, should be sent to the school in case your child has a toileting accident or a spill. If wet or soiled clothing are sent home, please make sure your child brings a clean set the following day. A smock or old adult shirt will also be helpful for painting, cooking, etc.

Please label all outer clothing clearly with your child's name. This is especially important for children who have difficulty identifying their belongings. If your child wears diapers, please send at least a week's supply at a time. Label the box or bag with your child's name. Sneakers are recommended for days your child receives OT and/or PT services, as appropriate.

Parent Communication: Parents receive written notes from the teachers concerning the child's daily routine. Parent/Teacher Conferences are scheduled by your child's teacher during the school year to keep you informed of your child's progress. Parents are invited to visit and observe their children while school is in session. Please contact your child's case manager if you wish to schedule a visit. All observations will be scheduled in alignment with the district Classroom Observation Policy # 9241.

Parents are also encouraged to participate in Special Education Parent-Teacher Association (SEPTA) meetings that are scheduled at 7:30 P.M. once a month on Thursday evenings at John Glenn School. A list

of the dates is provided with the letter notifying parents of case managers, and fliers with information about monthly presenters are sent home with children.

EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR

At every IEP meeting, there will be a discussion about whether your child is recommended for an extended school year (summer) program. For those children for whom an extended period of time without services would cause a significant regression in their skills and for whom it would take an extended period of time to recoup those skills, an extended school year may be recommended. This determination is usually based on how the child performs after a long weekend or winter or spring break.

PRESCHOOL RE-EVALUATION PROCESS

For those children who turn five after October 1 of the current school year and before October 1 of the next school year, a re-evaluation will be conducted, and consent will be obtained for assessments. This re-evaluation will be conducted in order to determine if your child continues to be eligible for Special Education and Related Services and, if eligible, to develop a new IEP with a recommendation for Kindergarten placement.

Some preschoolers may be declassified (no longer needing special education services) once they have made significant progress on their IEP goals and are assessed through standardized testing measures. If your child is no longer considered eligible under N.J.A.C. 6A:14, New Jersey Special Education Code, because they have displayed measurable growth and no longer needs special education services, the Child Study Team will notify you in order to plan for their appropriate exit from preschool. However, if your child remains eligible for Special Education and Related Services, they will continue in the special needs preschool program and then may attend a kindergarten class with services. Your child might also need a special kindergarten class placement in a different elementary school within Old Bridge. This will be discussed with the Child Study Team when reviewing placement for the upcoming kindergarten year.

IEP MEETINGS

Beginning September 1, 2021, all IEP meetings (including Annuals, Re-evaluation Planning, Initial, etc.) will be scheduled as an in-person meeting. All participants are required to wear masks at any in-person meeting (regardless of vaccination status) until further notice. Parents can request a virtual meeting (i.e. Microsoft Teams, Zoom, etc) in writing via e-mail or other correspondence to be held at a mutually agreed upon time with the Child Study Team.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

The district recognizes a parent's right to observe his/her child in their educational setting; however, to maintain the instructional integrity of their educational setting, any request should be linked to an inquiry about a student program, inclusive of a request to change program, a post IEP program observation and/or addressing a behavior plan. Additionally, all observations must be scheduled in advance and in accordance with Old Bridge Board of Education Policy # 9241, Request for Classroom Observation Policy.

LOTTERY for TUITION BASED STUDENTS

Old Bridge Preschool accepts tuition students in the integrated class each year at both Glenn and Southwood Schools. Interested families must complete an application for the program prior to the lottery which is held approximately February 1st in each year. Tuition students need to re-register for future years in January of each school year. Additional information can be found on the Old Bridge Public Schools Website.

EXITING PRESCHOOL

All students exiting preschool must be registered for kindergarten in their neighborhood school, with a copy of birth certificate, updated physical examination, immunization and proof of residence. Please note: Transportation is provided for Kindergarten children with disabilities to/from a bus stop closest to your home. A parent or adult must come out to the bus to meet their child. Kindergarten registration documents can be found on the Old Bridge Public Schools Website.

ELEMENTARY STUDENT HANDBOOK

Parents of both Glenn Preschool and Southwood Preschool can review the Old Bridge Public Schools Elementary Parent Handbook for any additional questions or concerns not specifically addressed within this document. The Elementary Student Handbook is located on the Old Bridge Public School Website. d

PARENTAL RIGHTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION (PRISE)

As the parent of a student who may have disabilities, you have rights regarding the identification, evaluation, classification, the development of an IEP, placement, and the provision of a free and appropriate public education under the New Jersey Administrative Code for Special Education, N.J.A.C. 6A:14. A description of these rights, which are called procedural safeguards contained in the document, Parental Rights in Special Education (PRISE). This document is published by the New Jersey Department of Education. A copy of the Parental Rights in Special Education booklet can be found at the following link:

English version: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/specialed/form/prise/prise.pdf>

Spanish version: http://www.state.nj.us/education/specialed/form/prise/prise_s.pdf

Arabic version: http://www.state.nj.us/education/specialed/form/prise/prise_ar.pdf

Portuguese version: http://www.state.nj.us/education/specialed/form/prise/prise_por.pdf

Korean version: http://www.state.nj.us/education/specialed/form/prise/prise_kor.pdf

BOARD POLICY 5516 (Use of Electronic Recording Devices)

The Department of Special Services recognizes the positive use of technology to ensure the safety and security of our students and staff. Additionally, the Department acknowledges that the increasing capacity of technology allows for parents to physically track students who can have elopement tendencies, are non-verbal, and/or have some additional and concerning behaviors. However, any devices that have one-way or two-way voice/hearing features must be disabled during the school day. In accordance with Old Bridge Board of Education Policy 5516, Electronic communication and Recording Devices (ECRDs), including AngelSense, are not permitted to be turned on or in use on school grounds during the school day or when the student is participating in a curricular or school-sponsored co-curricular activities. A student's personal ECRD, including Angelsense, may only be used on school grounds in an emergency situation or before and after school with the permission of a school staff member supervising the student. Please refer to Board of Education Policy # 5516 for further details and/or ask your case manager.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (SEPTA)

The Special Education PTA (SEPTA) of Old Bridge is a non-profit organization committed to bringing parents and guardians current and vital information on issues that face children with special needs and their families. There are over 1,000 children in Old Bridge who are classified with a wide variety of disabilities. Our students and their families are trying to address the impact of various disabilities such as Autism, ADHD, various learning disabilities, hearing impairment, visual impairment, health needs, and even children with behavioral and social disabilities. SEPTA does this by utilizing speakers, providing workshops (for parents and caregivers) and providing pertinent information to parents, guardians, and caregivers.

Additionally, SEPTA does fundraising every year to purchase items for the classrooms from preschool through high school that the teachers would not be able to obtain without our assistance. Also, any money raised also goes to scholarships for our graduating seniors as well as for many other programs for our students, including preschool. There is so much information and so many things going on in the State of New Jersey having to do with Special Education that it is imperative that parents know what is going on. It is SEPTA's mission to ensure that they do.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT ADVISORY GROUP (SEPAG)

All families have a shared and vested interest in our educational programs, especially families who have a child with an identified learning disability or a different learning style. Parent-led committees offer parents the opportunity to work together to make a difference. The Special Education Parent Advisory Group and Old Bridge Friends of Diverse Learners welcome ALL parents who are interested in learning more about how to best support their child during their academic career.

OBFODL is a Special Education Parent Advisory Group (SEPAG) established to:

- Collaborate with district administration to positively affect policies, practices, and programs for students with IEPs and 504s

- Promote inclusion and acceptance of students with special needs and learning challenges in school and extracurricular activities
- Service as a resource to parents through meetings, workshops, and social media presence

PARENT LIAISON

The Old Bridge SEPAG consists of a minimum of one parent liaison from each school including out of district schools. This volunteer must be a parent of a student who currently receives special education under IDEA or accommodations and modifications under Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act. SEPAG parent liaisons will ensure their respective school is implementing SEPAG initiatives, attend SEPAG and PTA meetings, consult with fellow parent liaisons on issues pertaining to their schools and brainstorming ideas and solutions to present to key stakeholders.

<http://www.obsepag.org/>

Please feel free to contact us - Join our email distribution list to stay informed:

obsepag@gmail.com

REGISTER TO VOTE

All residents of Old Bridge are eligible to vote in local and school board elections. Please remember to register, if you are not already registered, so you can vote in the School Board elections. Programs are dependent on state, federal and local funding!

Forms to register:

English:

http://www.njelections.org/form_pdf/09-voter-regis-forms/middlesex-voter-reg-form-013111-rev..pdf

Espanol: http://www.njelections.org/form_pdf/09-voter-regis-forms/middlesex-voter-reg-form-esp-020111.pdf