**Definition NA**

**Legal Requirements**

**Legal References**

All children with disabilities residing in the state, including children who are homeless or wards of the state and children attending private schools, who are in need of special education and related services, shall be identified, located and assessed. Each SELPA shall establish written policies and procedures for initiating a referral for assessment to determine if a student is eligible and in need of special education services. Identification procedures shall include systematic methods of utilizing referrals of pupils from teachers, parents, agencies, appropriate professional persons and from other members of the public. A pupil shall be referred for special education instruction and services only after the resources of the regular education program have been considered and, where appropriate, utilized.

All referrals shall initiate the assessment process and shall be documented. When a verbal referral is made, staff shall assist the individual in making the request in writing. All school staff referrals shall be written and include a brief reason for the referral and documentation of the resources of the regular education program that have been considered, modified and, when appropriate, the results of the intervention.

**EC**

EC 56029; EC 56040; EC 56043; EC 56301; EC 56302; EC 56303; EC 56321; EC 56326

CCR Title 5 Section 3021; 3021.1; 3025

**Tehama County SELPA Preschool Continuum of Services**

**Statutory Requirements of the SELPA: Preschool Continuum of Services**

The SELPA assures that 3-4-5 year olds with disabilities not yet in kindergarten have access to Special Education services, as per EC 56440.  At this age, children qualify for services under the same categories as for K-12.  Eligibility is established via assessment conducted by a team, which may include several professionals.  The decision about whether or not a child is eligible for special education services is made by the IEP team, including parents, based on the assessment results.

**Tehama County Regional Preschool Assessment and Services Model**

The Tehama County Preschool continuum provides special education services for children three to five years of age who have been identified with one of the federal and state defined special education eligibilities. The services are designed to promote a partnership between professionals and families to help meet the child's individual needs and increase future school success. Children are served in the least restrictive environment (LRE) in a wide variety of early childhood settings. Emphasis is placed on the development of language, social-emotional, motor and pre-academic skills through activities and materials that are concrete and relevant to their lives. Families and staff work together to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that guides the service delivery for each child.

**Referral Guidelines and Process:**

For initial special education referrals for preschool aged students, use the SELPA form titled Referral for Special Education Assessment. It is not necessary for staff to use the referral form when requesting an assessment for an already identified special education student who is currently receiving services through an IEP.

**Parent Referrals** – Parents should contact the Tehama County Department of Education (TCDE) Special Schools and Services office in order to make a referral for their child. Parent referrals may either be in letter format or on the SELPA referral form.

**Referrals from Preschools** (Head Start, State Preschool, Private Preschools, etc.) – Prior to referring a student for a special education evaluation, local preschools must initiate the Student Study Team process and engage in interventions prior to referring. Preschools should consult with and, when appropriate, invite the county office special education administrator for preschool programs to attend student study team meetings prior to referral. Please see Preschool Multi-Tiered Support System Consultation/Screening Process Flowchart (Appendix A). Once all pre-referral requirements have been completed, the preschool can initiate a referral for consultation/screening (Appendix B) to the TCDE Special Schools and Services office. The TCDE administrator will assign the screening to the appropriate service provider. The service provider will write up a Consultation Report outlining next steps (Appendix C).

**Referrals from Day Care Centers** – Concerned individuals should encourage parents to initiate the referral process. However, representatives from day care centers may contact the TCDE Special Schools and Services to express concerns and engage in the consultation process described above for preschool programs.

**Regional Tehama County Department of Education Referral Process:**

The TCDE Special Schools and Services Administrator will receive the referral and follow the guidelines described below:

* The Administrator will call the referring party to determine the referral questions and the assessment parameters
* If the only suspected disability is speech/language, the TCDE Administrator will forward the referral to the appropriate assessment team. If it is a preschool located in a program operator district (Antelope Elementary, Corning Elementary, Evergreen Elementary, Los Molinos Unified, Red Bluff Union Elementary) boundaries, the TCDE Administrator will forward the referral to the district located in those boundaries.
* If District of Residence receives a request for assessment for speech/language only directly, they will inform the TCDE Administrator for Special Education Preschool immediately upon receiving the request.
* If the only suspected disability is speech/language impairment and the preschool is located outside of the District boundaries of those listed above, in a direct services district/LEA (Elkins, Flournoy, Kirkwood, Lassen View, Reeds Creek, Richfield) the TCDE Administrator will forward the referral to a designated TCDE Speech Therapist.
  + If the student does not attend any preschool, an assigned SLP based on the student’s DOR will assess and provide services if needed.
  + If the referral questions or suspected disabilities include more than just language concerns, the referral will be forwarded to the Regional TCDE preschool assessment team.
* An assessment plan will be developed with the parents within 15 days of receipt of referral.
* If a new referral is received for a preschooler who will qualify for T-K or K the following year on March 1st or later, the DOR may join the TCDE assessment team. The DOR may consult with the County Preschool team regarding any technical assistance they may need during this transition period.

**Assessment**

Based on the referral, consultation from parents, and input from the assessment team, an assessment plan will be developed. The evaluation will be sufficiently comprehensive to address all areas of suspected disability. A variety of tools and strategies will be utilized such as play based assessment, parent interview, standardized testing, developmental scales, speech/language assessment, observation, interviews, screening/diagnostic instruments, file review, and consideration of any outside assessments (pending a release of information). In the case of an initial evaluation, it will address eligibility. In every case, the assessment will identify student needs, whether or not those needs are typically related to the disability and provide practical information that will assist the IEP team in writing goals and objectives.

**Continuum of Services Options**

Each special education local plan area (SELPA) shall ensure that a continuum of program options is available to meet the needs of individuals with exceptional needs for special education and related services as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The continuum of service options shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, all of the following or any combination of the following:

* Regular education programs.
* Mild/Moderate and Moderate/Severe Specialized Academic Instruction in the LRE:
  + Itinerant Specialized Academic instruction in the regular education classroom
  + Co-teaching (with either an instructional aide or a ECSE Special Education Teacher in the regular education program)
  + Self-Contained Classrooms with inclusive opportunities
* Related Services
* Nonpublic, nonsectarian school services.
* State special schools.
* Instruction in settings other than classrooms where specially designed instruction may occur.
* Instruction using telecommunication
* Instruction in the home, in hospitals and in other institutions.

The IEP team will determine the least restrictive environment (LRE) for the student based on the results of the assessment.

**Communication with District of Residence (DOR)**

When students receive special education service/s outside of their District of Residence (DOR) by another District of Service (DOS) in Tehama County, the DOS may enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the DOR. The MOU shall, at a minimum, outline the period of the agreement, the duties and responsibilities of each district for all service/s, and any costs associated with service/s. This situation should only occur when program operator districts provide only speech/language services for a student who attends a preschool within their district boundaries, becoming the DOS. All other related preschool services and assessments are provided by the TCDE Regional Preschool Continuum of Services. TCDE Regional Preschool Operator will not offer transportation as a related service unless DOR is in attendance of the IEP. When a student receives services from TCDE Special Schools and Services or another DOS, the DOR will receive reports from the programs outlining numbers of students being served, number of referrals, dates of upcoming IEPs and any pertinent financial information. The

SELPA office provides finance reports to LEA superintendents and CBOs at First and Second Interim. Final counts for Estimated Actuals occurs in April and Estimated Actual Reports given to LEAs by the end of May of the fiscal year.

**Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) Assessment**

All primary service providers, must complete the DRDP assessment twice a year for all children. All children with IFSPs or IEPs are assessed regardless of type or level of service and regardless of education setting. The primary service provider may complete the assessment with input from others. TCDE and/or LEA service providers should work collaboratively with the primary service provider (usually the preschool teacher of record). One DRDP should be completed with input from all providers.

**Local Forms**: Consultation/Screening Form, Consultation Report Form, Referral for Special Education Form

**FAQ’s**

**If a preschool student is attending a preschool in the Corning Elementary District of Residence, but the student does not live within the Corning Elementary district boundaries, does Corning Elementary still assess the student for a speech only assessment?** Yes. Corning Elementary, Los Molinos Unified, Antelope Elementary, Red Bluff Elementary, and Evergreen Elementary are responsible for doing speech/language only assessments for preschoolers enrolled in a preschool within their district boundaries. The District of Service has the option in engaging in a MOU with the District of Residence for the cost of this service/s.

**If a District has a preschool aged student with a speech referral that does not attend a preschool, who will assess and who will provide services if found eligible?** If the student is in a program operator district (Antelope, Corning Elementary, Evergreen, Los Molinos Unified, or Red Bluff Elementary) they will assess and provide services. All other students will be assigned by a TCDE Administrator.

**Don’t Forget**

* **All** “full” assessment go through the County Office Special Education Department
* Students who attend preschool, are expected to be given interventions and run through an SST/preventive process, before being referred for special education
* Districts should notify the appropriate TCDE Administrator if they receive a referral for assessment of a preschool-aged student
* Program Operators provide Speech/Language Services for students attending preschools in their attendance boundaries and can seek reimbursement for students receiving these services who live in another DOR (if they live within Tehama County SELPA boundaries)
* Preschool Multi-Tiered Support System Consultation/Screening Process Flowchart outlines the process for LEAs
  + Referral for consultation/screening can be made by local preschools, daycares, etc.
  + Parents can make direct referrals at the SELPA office and/or with their DOR
  + Consultation Report will be provided to referring agency for next steps