Support for Caregivers Navigating the IEP Process
An Offering of the Chris Walsh Center for Educators and Families of Metrowest
Week 2: March 9, 2023

Welcome

Mission statement of Chris Walsh Center

To provide information for families and educators about the continuum of educational support available to students with disabilities, students who are gifted, and students with unmet needs. The center will offer support, workshops and other programming for families, educators, student support professionals, administrators, and advocates in the MetroWest area. The center also will engage in scholarly research, educator preparation, and professional development.

Purpose of the Group

Provide accurate, objective information for people to learn and use or apply to their own individual situation. We welcome questions about the process or the information presented but please refrain from asking questions about how the information we present should or might be applied to individual circumstances.

Group guidelines and expectations

- Confidential safe space
    - ➢ Don't expect answers to specific questions
    - ➢ Respect each other's confidentiality
    - ➢ Share ideas not names
    - ➢ It's expected that we have different experiences. We're here to listen, inform, not advise or judge
    - ➢ Assume good intentions

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Topic: Eligibility and Accommodations

Introductions
Ice breaker
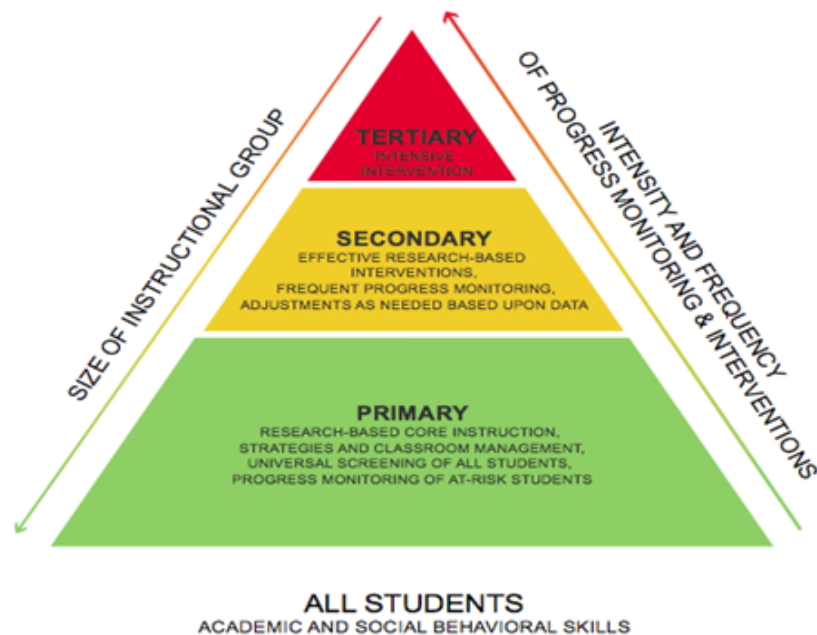Questions and Review of Last Week: Laws, Identification and Referral
Outstanding Questions

Response to Intervention/ **Multi Tiered Support Systems**

Tier 1 all students(80%)
Tier 2 targeted, research based interventions (15%)
Tier 3, specialized instruction (3-5%)

Behavior Intervention Plans
- Team
- Possible evaluation performed - Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)
- Plan implemented
    - Problem behaviors
    - Why they are happening
    - Goals
    - Strategies to help
- Reviewed periodically unless it is part of an IEP in which case it is reviewed as part of the IEP review

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Preface to Eligibility to Discussion

    A Parent's Guide to the Special Education Process

    Federation for Children with Special Needs

    FCSN Parent Training and Information Center

The Process of Determining Eligibility for a 504 Plan:
(US Dept of Ed FAQs about Protecting Students with Disabilities)

- **Referral/Request**
- **Evaluation**
- **Team Meeting**
  - **Team members** (minimum):
    - parent, student (14 yo or older), gen ed teacher, 504 coordinator; May also include: guidance counselor, school psychologist
  - **Eligibility for a 504 Depends on the Answers to 3 Questions**
    1) **Does the student qualify as an individual with a disability under Section 504?**
       - ➢ Unlike with an IEP, there is no list of specific conditions or disabilities that can qualify a student for a 504 because it could not be all-inclusive
       - ➢ Rehab Act of 1973 defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment

    2) **Does the impairment *substantially limit* one or more major life activities?**

Most likely to impact in school:
- ➢ Speaking
- ➢ Seeing
- ➢ Hearing
- ➢ Learning
- ➢ Eating
- ➢ Reading
- ➢ Sleeping
- ➢ Concentrating
- ➢ Communicating
- ➢ Thinking

Less likely to impact in school:
- ➢ Standing
- ➢ Working
- ➢ Lifting
- ➢ Caring for oneself
- ➢ Bending
- ➢ Performing manual tasks
- ➢ Breathing
- ➢ Walking

3) **Are services or accommodations necessary to provide the student a free and appropriate public education?**
   - ➢ Yes - eligible for a 504

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➢ No - Not eligible - The team can talk about tier 2 interventions or supports

- **Creation of a 504 Plan, if Eligible**
  - ➢ **Accommodations**
    - ■ **What Are They?**
      - Accommodations remove barriers to learning that allows an individual with a disability to gain access to content of the curriculum and/or complete assigned tasks.
      - They are not changing the expectation for what a child will learn or making modifications to the curriculum or what the child is expected to do
        - ➢ Changes to the environment (like taking tests in a quiet space or providing necessary equipment)
        - ➢ Changes to instruction (like checking in to ensure assignments are recorded or a student sits in the front row for attention or vision needs)
        - ➢ Changes to how the curriculum is presented (like in braille or audible instead of written)
      - **Examples:**
        - ➢ Note taker or access to teacher notes
        - ➢ Extended time
        - ➢ Reduced number of problems
        - ➢ Reduced visuals on a page
        - ➢ Text to speech
        - ➢ Speech to text
        - ➢ Access to audiobooks
        - ➢ Preferential seating – should be specified
        - ➢ Breaks – requested and suggested
        - ➢ Visuals paired with auditory information
        - ➢ Auditory information paired with visuals
        - ➢ Testing outside the classroom
        - ➢
  - ➢ [Sample form](#)

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The Process of Determining Eligibility for Special Education ([flowchart](#)):
- **Child Find/RTI/Referral**
- **Evaluation**
- **Team Meeting [(Eligibility Determination (ED1)](#)**
  - **Team members:**
    - parent, student (14 yo or older), gen ed teacher, special education teacher, team chair. May also include guidance counselor, school psychologist, and any other evaluators or people who have knowledge of the student
  - **Eligibility for an IEP Depends on the Answers to 4 Questions**
    1) **Does the Student Have a Disability?**
       - There are Explicitly Defined Categories of Disabilities
         - Autism, communication, developmental delay, emotional impairment, health, intellectual, neurological, physical, sensory (hearing, vision, deaf-blind), SLD
       - If Yes - continue to Question 2
       - No- May be eligible for other services
    2) **Is the student making effective progress?**
       - If No - continue to Question 3
       - If Yes - May be eligible for 504 or other services
    3) **Is the student not making progress because of the disability?**
       - If Yes -continue to Question 4
       - If No - May be eligible for 504 or other services
    4) **Does the student require specialized instruction to make effective progress?**
       - If Yes - the student is eligible for an IEP, the Team writes an IEP
       - If no - talk about what next steps may be
         - 504, Accommodations, DCAP, SET, inform teachers
  -

[**What is the difference between an IEP and a 504?**](#)
Content
Accommodations
Specialized instruction/Related services

Timelines

Next Week, March 16th: All About Developing The IEP

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Notes: