

## **SECTION 23N**

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

#### **POLICY**

It shall be the policy of each LEA in the SELPA that all children from birth to five years of age with disabilities have access to the full range of educational programs and services options in individual or small group activities that are developmentally appropriate and specially designed to meet their unique educational needs.

State Ed. Code Reference: 56426.2 and 56441.2 – 56441.4

## **SECTION 23N**

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

#### **PROCEDURES**

##### **Infant (ages 0 through 2.11) Program Services and Options:**

Home-based options will be provided by special education teachers with consultation and/or direct service from DIS providers such as speech-language specialists on staff and/or contracted OT/PT providers, for children with all disabilities, including low incidence. Home visits occur from 1-4 times monthly, depending upon the child and family needs. The focus of the home visits is on facilitating discussion and demonstration of activities with the child, and the provision of materials, handouts, and resources. Targeted skills include outcomes to be addressed in naturally occurring play activities and child-family interaction patterns. These services may also occur in childcare, community or private programs, or other natural environments.

Every effort is made to provide consulting special education staff in a family – selected program, i.e., community preschool, parent-child playgroup, etc. However, because of the nature and severity of some of the children's disabilities, their educational/developmental outcomes cannot be satisfactorily achieved in typical environments that have a large number of children, a high degree of distraction, or lack of specialized equipment and materials. For these children, small groups at the Me Too Center are available to address intensive developmental skill acquisition and private parent training so that the children will become more successful in other natural environments.

School-based group service options typically begin at 18 months of age (although children may remain on home program until age 3). Several classroom group options are available to toddlers and their families in all disability categories, including low incidence. Classes meet either one hour once per week, two hours twice per week, or one and a half hours three times per week. Parents are encouraged to attend with their child. This has proven to be a very effective method of providing parent education because parents learn effective teaching and behavior management strategies and have an opportunity to interact with other parents. When families cannot participate in class, periodic home visits are made. Siblings are encouraged to attend to provide peer models. One class is located on a campus that also houses a community services toddler class that provides full inclusion opportunities. Some students receive one-to-one instruction with the parent at school when appropriate. Contracted OT/PT staff also provide consultation and direct service to appropriately address identified IFSP outcomes.

Me Too/Solano County Office of Education is the payor of last resort for all solely low incidence children and provides services under age three because the

children are not NBRC eligible. Children with solely low incidence disabilities are provided with additional early intervention services (e.g., respite care) as appropriate.

A contract has been developed with Blind Babies Foundation to service children with visual impairments. These services may be provided in the home or classroom as appropriate and may include consultation or direct services.

Deaf and hard of hearing children are served by an SDC teacher who is a credentialed speech-language specialist and who has had training in working with hearing impaired infants and toddlers. The specialist may consult with the SELPA audiologist and itinerant teacher of the deaf as needed.

#### Preschool (ages 3 through 5) Program Services and Options:

The districts in the SELPA are responsible for assessing, and developing IEPs for all identified 3-, 4- and 5-year-old preschoolers with disabilities. Services may be provided for children requiring unduplicated DIS services, such as speech-language services or individual/small group preschool instruction, by the district of residence through itinerant or school-based programs. Services for preschoolers who require more intensive preschool programs, such as special day classes or home-based intensive intervention programs, are provided by the resident districts and/or county office of education if the local districts do not operate a program to meet the children's needs.

Program and service options are available to preschoolers in all disability categories. Base programs operate from a very minimal number of minutes/hours per week for unduplicated DIS programs up to 20 hours or more per week for intensive classroom programs, with individualized related services added to any child's primary program as determined by the child's individualized needs. Mainstreaming opportunities vary as outlined in child's IEP, and may include, but are not limited to, reverse mainstream opportunities, supported mainstreaming activities, as well as full inclusion opportunities for some preschoolers. The early childhood special education programs focus on the young child and his/her family and may include both individual and small group services with opportunities for active parent involvement. As the preschool child approaches the age to enter an elementary school environment, the child's preparation shall be geared toward a readiness for kindergarten and later school success.

Prior to transitioning from preschool to kindergarten, an appropriate reassessment (using formal or nonstandardized instruments) is done to determine which, if any, special education services the child may still need.