



a Family Guide to  
**Special Education Services**

**HEARING IMPAIRMENT**

VOLUME 5



MISSISSIPPI  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

# Family Guides for Special Education Services

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## Other MDE Resources

### Parent Engagement and Support

📌 [mdek12.org/OSE/Information-for-Families](https://mdek12.org/OSE/Information-for-Families)

☎ 601.359.3498

### General Resources for Parents:

📌 [www.mdek12.org/OSE/Information-for-Families/Resources](https://www.mdek12.org/OSE/Information-for-Families/Resources)

### Procedural Safeguards: Your Family's Special Education Rights

📌 [mdek12.org/OSE/Dispute-Resolution](https://mdek12.org/OSE/Dispute-Resolution)

# HEARING IMPAIRMENT (HI)

## Evaluation Requirements



When the evaluation team is considering eligibility under the Hearing Impairment category, which includes Deafness, the multidisciplinary team evaluation report and/or eligibility determination report must include:

- A.** An audiometric evaluation explaining each of the following items:
  1. type of loss;
  2. age of onset, if known;
  3. severity of loss;
  4. speech reception or speech awareness thresholds, if obtainable;
  5. speech discrimination scores, if applicable;
  6. recommendations regarding amplification; and
  7. other recommended interventions, if any, including the need for assistive technology.
- B.** A description of the follow-up examination and results, including:
  1. how the conditions noted during the examination might interfere with educational testing and performance; and
  2. recommendations for accommodations, modifications, and educational programming.
- C.** Acoustic Immittance measures;
- D.** An audiogram and/or measures of auditory evoked potential, such as Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR), Auditory Steady State Response (ASSR), and Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE) that would define the hearing loss;
- E.** How the hearing loss impacts educational performance; and
- F.** Communication abilities and needs, including the need for assisted communication.

## HI Definition

**Hearing Impairment (HI)** means an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Deafness means a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing with or without amplification that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

### NOTE:

The audiological examination must be conducted by one of the following:

- **an audiologist who holds MDE licensure in audiology,**
- **an audiologist who holds ASHA—CCC certification,**
- **a physician with expertise in conducting audiological evaluations using appropriate audiological equipment,**
- **a qualified audiologist who holds certification from the American Academy of Audiology (AAA), or**
- **a qualified audiologist who is appropriately licensed through the designated licensure authority for the State of Mississippi.**



## Helpful Vocabulary

**Accommodation**—Tool that enables a student with a disability to better access the general curriculum. Some accommodations are applicable to instruction only (for example, an assignment that is shortened but still addresses the state standard); others are permitted for both instruction and assessment (for example, change in formatting or timing).

**American Sign Language (ASL)**—A complete, natural language that has the same linguistic properties as spoken languages, with grammar that differs from English. ASL is expressed by movements of the hands and face. It is the primary language of many North Americans who are deaf and hard of hearing and is used by many hearing people as well.

**Assistive listening devices**—Personal technologies that can help you communicate in one-to-one conversations. They are hand-held amplifiers with microphones that bring the sound you wish to hear closer to your ears. These small devices capture the sound you want to hear and may filter some background noise.

**Basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS)**—The linguistic skills needed in everyday, social face-to-face interactions. For example, the language used in the playground, on the phone, or to interact socially with other people is part of BICS.

**Cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP)**—Focus on proficiency in academic language or language used in the classroom in the various content areas. Academic language is characterized by being abstract, context reduced, and specialized.

**Deaf**—Lacking the power of hearing or having impaired hearing.

**Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**—Foundational requirement of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) stipulating that special education and related services must be provided at public expense (that is, without charge to parents), meet state requirements, include an appropriate education that leads to outcomes such as employment or higher education, and conform to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) prepared for the student.

**Hard of hearing**—The term used to identify someone with mild-to-severe hearing loss.

**Inclusion**—The practice of educating children with disabilities in the general education classroom. Inclusion in special education programs is an important part of the continuum of special education placements required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In an inclusion classroom, a student with disabilities feels included, accepted, and makes friends, and the student's peers learn to better understand their classmate's disabilities.

**Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)**—A law that makes available a free public education to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to those children.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP)**—A document written for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with state and federal policies.

**Language acquisition**—The process by which humans acquire the capacity to perceive and comprehend language (i.e., gain the ability to be aware of language and understand it) and produce and use words and sentences to communicate.

**Modification**—Adjustment to an assignment, test, or activity in a way that significantly simplifies or lowers the standard or alters the original measurement. Modifications change what a student is taught or expected to learn, and most are applicable to students with significant cognitive disabilities.

**Pre-lingual deafness**—Refers to being deaf from birth or from a time in infancy before the development of the ability to speak.

**Post-lingual deafness**—The loss of hearing that occurs after you have learned how to speak and understand a language. A person who does not suffer hearing loss generally can hear sounds between 0-25 decibels. People with post-lingual deafness usually have an easier time communicating through spoken language because they have heard words spoken prior to their post-lingual deafness.

**Related services**—Additional support services that a child with disabilities requires, such as transportation, occupational, physical, speech pathology services, interpreters, medical services, etc.

**School-based services**—Special education services provided in the local school district. These services may be provided in a general or special education setting depending on the needs of the child and availability within the district.

**Significant cognitive disability (SCD)**—In order for a student to be classified as having a significant cognitive disability, all of the following criteria must be true:

- **The student demonstrates significant cognitive deficits and poor adaptive skill levels (as determined by that student’s comprehensive evaluation) that prevent participation in the standard academic curriculum or achievement of the academic content standards, even with accommodations and modifications.**
- **The student’s inability to complete the standard academic curriculum is neither the result of excessive or extended absences nor is primarily the result of visual, auditory, or physical disabilities, emotional behavioral disabilities, specific learning disabilities, or social, cultural, or economic differences.**
- **The student requires extensive direct instruction in both academic and functional skills in multiple settings to accomplish the application and transfer of those skills.**

**SimCom**—An abbreviation meaning simultaneous communication. It is the act of communicating using sign language and spoken language at the same time and is often used as a form of communication between people who are deaf and people who are hearing.

**Speech-language pathologist (SLP)**—A speech-language pathologist works to prevent, assess, diagnose, and treat speech, language, social communication, cognitive communication, and swallowing disorders in children and adults.

**Specially designed instruction (SDI)**—Universally required component that defines special education and stipulates that students with disabilities receive instruction that includes changes in content, methodology, and/or delivery. It is not dependent on setting and is a primary responsibility of special education professionals.



## Tips for communicating with someone who's hard of hearing

Adapted from [healthline.com/health/hard-of-hearing#tips-for-communicating](https://www.healthline.com/health/hard-of-hearing#tips-for-communicating)

If you have a child who's hard of hearing, you can communicate in ways that make it easier for her or him to understand you. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

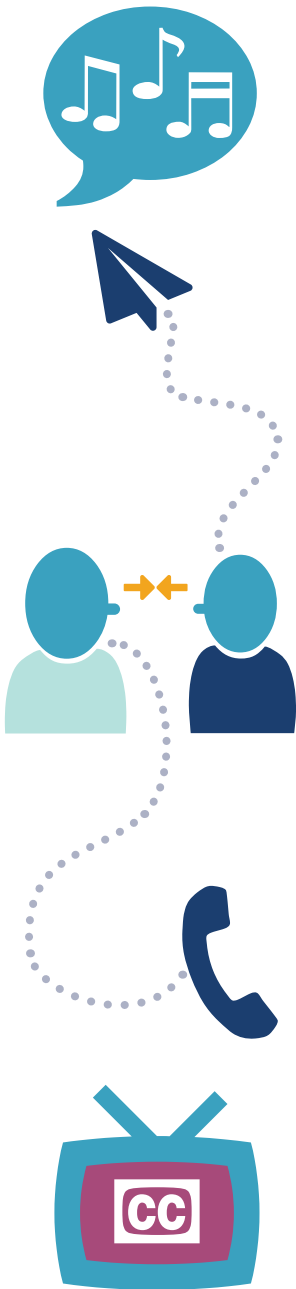
- **Try to talk in an area without a lot of background noise. In a group setting, make sure only one person speaks at once.**
- **Speak at a natural, steady pace and slightly louder than your normal volume. Avoid shouting.**
- **Use hand gestures and facial expressions to provide clues as to what you're saying.**
- **Avoid activities that can make lip-reading difficult, such as eating while talking and covering your mouth with your hand.**
- **Remain patient and positive. Don't be afraid to repeat something or to try different words if the child does not understand what you've said.**



## Ways to Help at Home

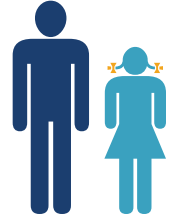
Identifying ways to help children feel successful communicating is key to their becoming more confident and using more language. Whether children are talking, signing, cueing, or using a combined approach, there can be times when communication seems challenging.

Consider using some of the following tips to enhance family interactions:



- **Stay within 3-5 feet to increase the auditory and visual cues for your child.**
- **Talk, sing, and read to your child for shared communication throughout each day.**
- **Notice your child's interests so you can play together and talk about what you do.**
- **If your child uses a hearing aid or cochlear implant, keep it on during waking hours.**
- **Hold an awake baby in positions close to your face or looking outward so it can hear and see better.**
- **Get down on your child's eye level for your voice and face to be clearer.**
- **Use typical facial expressions to illustrate your meaning (e.g., surprised, nervous, happy, etc.).**
- **Add natural gestures to illustrate your intent (e.g., come here, line up, stop, etc.).**
- **Obtain your child's attention before interacting so the entire message is communicated (e.g., call your child's name, get into your child's view, wave your hand, etc.).**
- **Talk away from running appliances (e.g., dishwasher, coffee grinder, air conditioner, etc.) to reduce the noise while listening.**
- **Close windows to reduce outdoor sounds (especially in cars).**
- **Avoid calls on speaker phones where weak audio reduces communication clarity.**
- **Use circular furniture arrangements to improve group interactions.**
- **Obtain fire, smoke, and clock alarms with lights or vibration for the child's independence and safety.**
- **Include closed captioning for TV, video, and internet viewing even before your child is reading.**

# How can you help your child with hearing loss understand better or facilitate communication?



Adapted from Hearing Like Me "7 tips for helping your child hear if they have hearing loss"—[hearinglikeme.com/helping-your-child-hear](http://hearinglikeme.com/helping-your-child-hear)

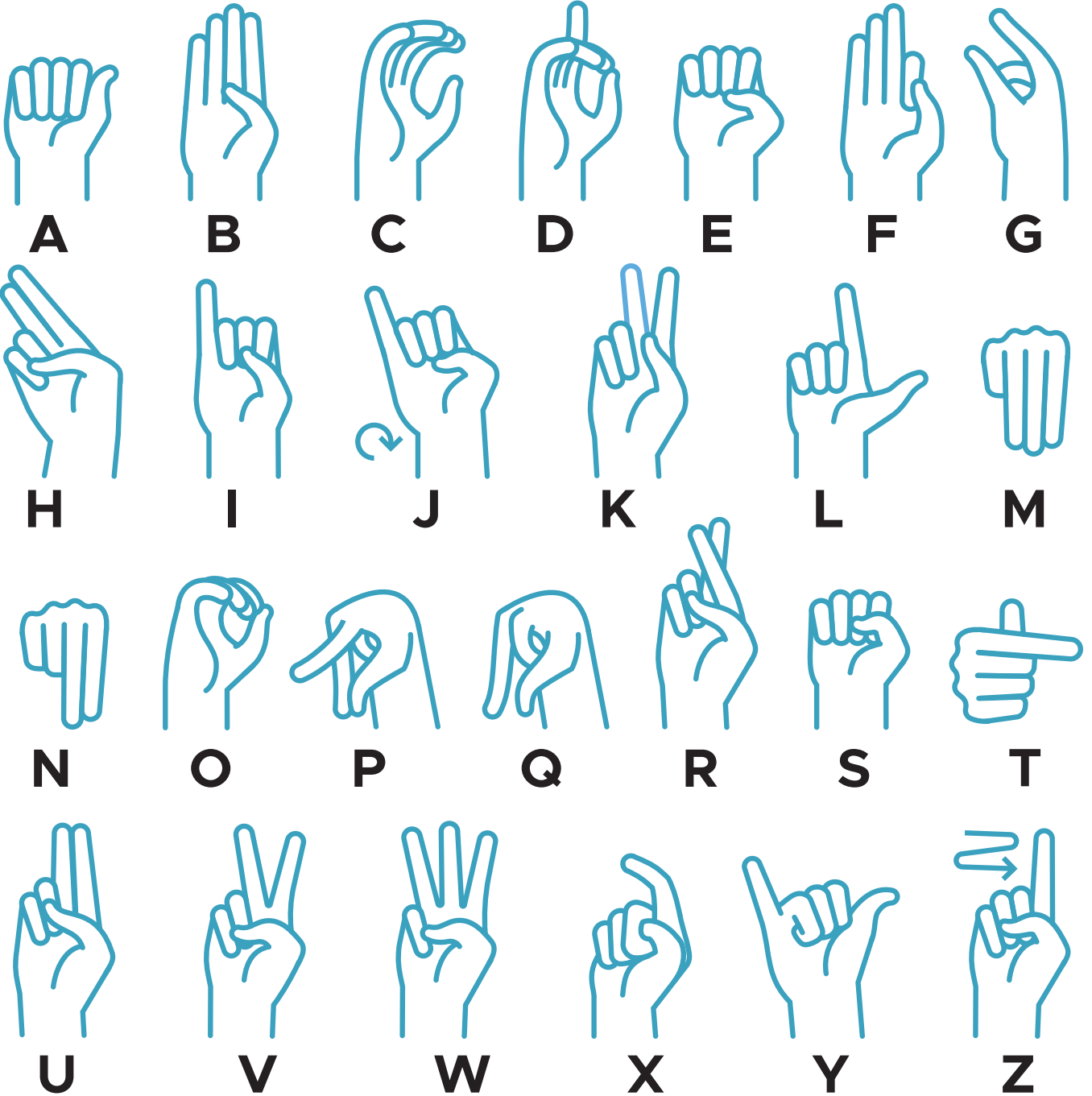
Author: Angela Pelosi, director of global audiology at Phonak HQ in Switzerland

Here are seven tips for helping your child hear:

- 1 Start young. Encourage your child who has hearing loss and has been fitted with hearing technology to wear her or his hearing aids or cochlear implants as much as possible. Young children are especially notorious for removing their hearing devices, but it's important that you keep putting them back on and encourage them to wear them as much as possible during the waking day. This will ensure they have optimal access to your voice and other stimulating sounds.
- 2 Provide a calm environment. If your child is having difficulty focusing on a conversation, try to reduce the level of background noise. This could mean turning off the TV, music, or other noises.
- 3 Utilize additional devices. Hearing aids or cochlear implants allow most children to understand speech from about 6 feet or less. There are additional devices that can be used to improve your child's listening ability over distance. For example, a Phonak Roger or FM system is proven to be significantly beneficial in improving speech understanding across distance and in noise. The Roger/FM microphone can be worn by a teacher, placed on a table for small group discussions, or passed between students to ensure the child is able to fully participate and interact in classroom discussions. These solutions can also be useful at home, in the car, at the park, when playing sports, at restaurants, or when shopping. Roger, FM, and other wireless devices can also connect to multimedia devices like a TV, MP3 players, and mobile phones, allowing the child to hear those devices clearly.
- 4 Be patient and repeat if necessary. Hearing loss makes it so certain sounds are more understandable than others. It's important that everyone around the child remembers this, practices patience if the child doesn't understand, and is prepared to repeat key points or rephrase sentences using different words.
- 5 Inform others. Ensure your child has a good relationship with her or his teachers or caretakers, and they understand the needs and expectations of your child. This may mean facilitating communication techniques, such as setting up a signal for your child to let the teacher know when she or he is struggling to hear. This allows the teacher to change techniques without interrupting the entire classroom.
- 6 Encourage independence. Encourage your child to become her or his own hearing technology specialist. As your child grows older and gains independence, she or he should be able to identify when devices are not working and to do basic troubleshooting.
- 7 Continue advocacy and awareness. Stay in frequent contact with the teacher or professional who specializes in working with the students with hearing loss in your school or school district. Ensure the communication needs of your child are supported.



# American Sign Language Alphabet



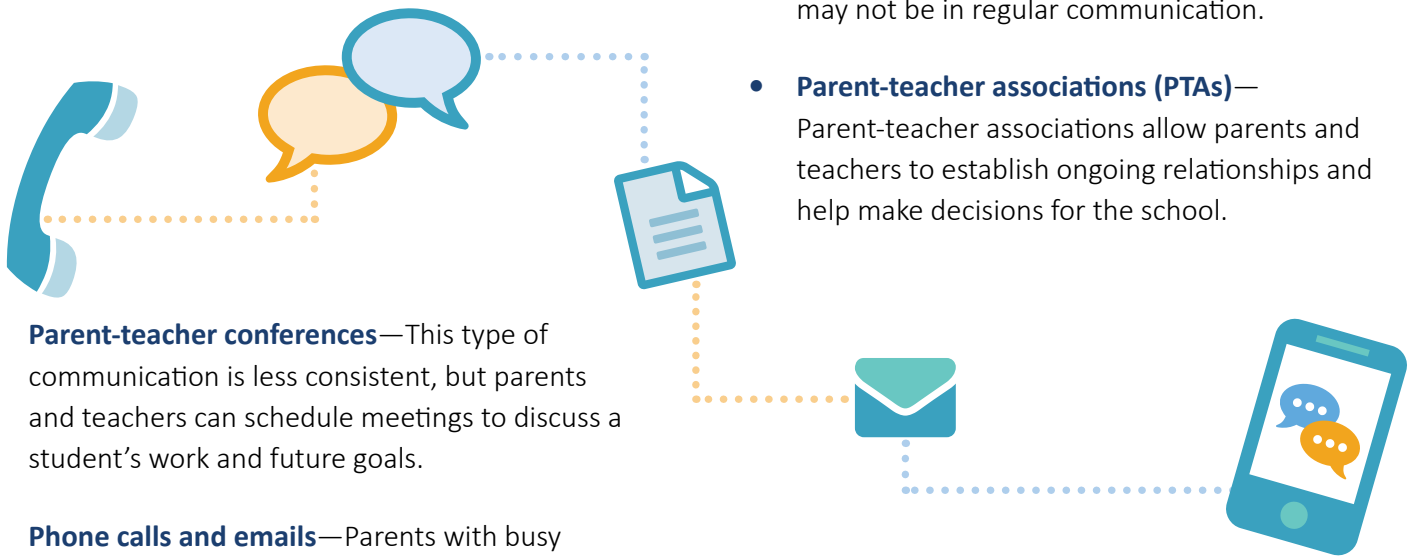
# Successful Parent-Teacher Communication



Adapted from American University "Parent-teacher communication: strategies for effective parent inclusion & engagement"—  
[soeonline.american.edu/blog/parent-teacher-communication](http://soeonline.american.edu/blog/parent-teacher-communication)

Communication is key to a successful inclusion classroom. Parents, general education teachers, and special educators can try the following tactics for successful parent-teacher communication:

- Regular in-person communication**—This type of communication works great for parents who typically drop off and pick up their children from school.
- Open houses**—Most schools host annual open houses where parents can visit their children’s classrooms. This allows teachers to meet parents for the first time or meet a second parent who may not be in regular communication.
- Parent-teacher associations (PTAs)**—Parent-teacher associations allow parents and teachers to establish ongoing relationships and help make decisions for the school.
- Parent-teacher conferences**—This type of communication is less consistent, but parents and teachers can schedule meetings to discuss a student’s work and future goals.
- Phone calls and emails**—Parents with busy work or personal schedules may not have the opportunity to go to the school or schedule conferences. These parents may be easier to reach via phone or email. Phone calls and emails can also be used by teachers to regularly communicate with parents between conferences.
- Text messages**—Some teachers use mass text messages or special messaging apps to communicate with parents. Several text services, such as Remind, cater specifically to teachers.
- Homework handouts and newsletters**—Teachers can create handouts containing information about homework and other tasks for students to take home. Teachers can also write weekly or monthly newsletters to update parents on what is going on in the classroom and how they can participate.
- Class websites**—Teachers can create classroom websites to post announcements, homework, and reminders to help ensure they don’t get lost in communication between the classroom and home. Similar methods of communication include social media sites or learning management platforms such as ClassDojo.





## Resources

- BEGINNINGS**—A nonprofit that helps parents and families understand hearing loss and the diverse needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, promotes early identification of hearing loss, helps families make informed decisions, and empowers families to advocate for their child’s needs.

↗ [ncbegin.org/for-parents](http://ncbegin.org/for-parents)

☎ 919.715.4092
- The Children's Center for Communication and Development (University of Southern Mississippi)**—Provides communicative and developmental transdisciplinary services to infants, toddlers, and preschoolers while educating, training, and supporting families, university students, and professionals.

↗ [usm.edu/childrens-center-communication-development](http://usm.edu/childrens-center-communication-development)
- Magnolia Speech School**—Enables children with communication disorders to develop their full potential through spoken language and literacy. By offering early intervention, extensive resources, and a nurturing community, families are provided the tools to help their child succeed.

↗ [magnoliaspeechschool.org](http://magnoliaspeechschool.org)
- Mississippi Hearing-Vision Project**—A federally funded project led by the University of Southern Mississippi College of Education and Human Sciences that provides technical assistance and training for individuals living in Mississippi between the ages of birth and 21 years with varying degrees of hearing and vision loss. Any parent, family member, or service/care provider of an individual, birth through 21 years of age with both vision and hearing loss, may request services.

↗ [usm.edu/education-human-sciences/mississippi-hearing-vision-project.php](http://usm.edu/education-human-sciences/mississippi-hearing-vision-project.php)

☎ 601.266.4568
- The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) Office of Special Education**—A service-oriented office that seeks to improve the education experience for children with disabilities

↗ [mdek12.org/OSE](http://mdek12.org/OSE)
- U.S. Department of Education**—Their mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

↗ [ed.gov](http://ed.gov)
- U.S. Department of Education-Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services**—The mission of the Office of Special Education Programs is to lead the nation's efforts to improve outcomes for children with disabilities, birth through 21, and their families, ensuring access to fair, equitable, and high-quality education and services.

↗ [ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers](http://ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers)

### MDE-specific resources include:

- General resources for parents:**

↗ [mdek12.org/OSE/Information-for-Families/Resources](http://mdek12.org/OSE/Information-for-Families/Resources)
- Parent Engagement and Support**

↗ [mdek12.org/OSE/Information-for-Families](http://mdek12.org/OSE/Information-for-Families)

☎ 601.359.3498
- Procedural Safeguards: Your Family’s Special Education Rights**

↗ [mdek12.org/OSE/Dispute-Resolution](http://mdek12.org/OSE/Dispute-Resolution)





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## Acknowledgments

