



Federal Programs



April 5, 2024 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education

Directors,

Did you know the eligibility category of Autism was not recognized until 1990? In the 1990 reauthorization of Public Law 94-142, the law's name was changed to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Two eligibility categories were added - Autism and Traumatic Brain Injury. The addition of the new eligibility areas did not mean that the disability areas were not served prior to 1990 but would have been included under another category best describing the presenting disability. I have included a number of resources below about Autism, some from the national level while others are from Emory Autism in Atlanta. Nationally, statistics from school year 2022-2023 reflect 12.8% of students with disabilities fall under the Autism eligibility area. More boys are identified than girls as compared to the rate for other disability areas. Students ages 14-21 identified with Autism were less likely to drop-out of school but more likely to only receive a completion certificate. Students with Autism are more

likely to be served in more restrictive environments than other students with disabilities. A review of just a few statistics should give pause to consider how children with Autism are served as well as the resulting outcomes.

April is [Autism Acceptance Month](#). Access the link to find great resources.

From the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee:

In celebration of Autism Acceptance Month, the Office of National Autism Coordination (ONAC) within the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) honors the contributions of people on the autism spectrum and the autism community to our nation and the world. We join the United Nations and the U.S. government in recognizing the needs of people on the autism spectrum and their families. Our office acknowledges the need to support, understand, accept, include, and empower people on the autism spectrum. Throughout the month of April, we will be updating this page with the latest news and events.

Emory University's Autism Celebration Month 2024 with kicks off with events on Thursday (at Oxford College) and Friday (at Atlanta Campus). Please see the [Events Website: Autism Celebration Month — Emory Autism Advocacy Organization](#).

OSEP Fast Facts: Children Identified with Autism

OSEP released a new [OSEP Fast Facts: Children Identified with Autism](#), which takes an updated look at data for children whose primary disability is autism.

[Highlights from 2024 OSEP Fast Fact: Children Identified with Autism](#)

In SY 2022-23, the percentage of students with disabilities identified with autism is 12.81%. States report a range from 5.76% to 17.28% of students with disabilities identified with autism.

In SY 2021-22, Students with disabilities identified with autism were less likely to be subject to a disciplinary removal than all students with disabilities.

In SY 2022-23, States/entities and LEAs were more likely to identify males with autism than females when compared to all students with disabilities.

In SY 2021-22, students identified with autism, ages 14-21, exiting school were less likely to drop out and more likely to receive a certificate than all students with disabilities.

In SY 2022-23, States/entities and LEAs are more likely to identify Asian students with autism when compared to all students with disabilities.

In SY 2022-23, students identified with autism were less likely to be served


inside the regular class 80% or more of the day than all students with disabilities.

OSEP Fast Facts is an ongoing effort to display data from the 12 data collections authorized under IDEA Section 618 into graphic, visual representations with the intent to present 618 data quickly and clearly.

Visit the [OSEP Fast Facts](#) page for existing and future Fast Facts.

Georgia Sensory Assistance Project (GSAP)

The Georgia Sensory Assistance Project (GSAP) invites all educators to join us for GSAP BOOT CAMP 2024. Chris Montgomery, Deafblind Specialist from Texas, will guide us "From Interaction to Formal Language - Becoming the Excellent Observer and Thoughtful Communicator with Children who are Congenitally Deafblind." While our focus is on deafblind students, these strategies are applicable for any student with complex learning needs. Please see the flyer for more details and the registration link: [View Here](#).



Submission Deadline: April 26, 2024

Exceptional Children's Week
April 14-20, 2024

Theme
Championing Tomorrow:
Embracing inclusive
technology for all
students

See a bright future

#ECWweek 2024
Don't miss it!

LEARN MORE:
<https://georgia.exceptionalchildren.org/events/exceptional-childrens-week>

This year, Exceptional Children's Week (ECW) will be held
April 14-20, 2024

Each year, GA CEC hosts Exceptional Children's Week (ECW) to provide a designated time and space for schools, districts, educators, and families to come together to acknowledge and celebrate students with exceptionalities.

One of the highlights of the week will be the annual art contest. Submissions must focus on this year's theme and may be presented in a format chosen by the student. This can be in an electronic format (i.e. video, PowerPoint, Google Draw, Prezi, Essay, etc.) or in the form of any other multimedia (original artwork, 3D, written work). Creativity is encouraged and the possibilities are endless. It's always exciting to see how students interpret the theme.

We hope you will look forward to this event and participate with enthusiasm! We can't wait to see photos and video clips of celebratory ECW events on social media using **#InclusiveTechnology #ECW2024**

Exceptional Children's Week is Coming!

Please join in celebrating Exceptional Children's Week (ECW) in Georgia on April 14-20, 2024. This year's theme is Championing Tomorrow: Embracing Inclusive Technology for all Students.

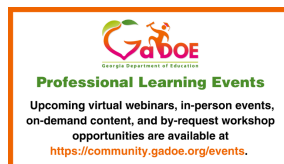
The Georgia Council for Exceptional Children is excited to see all the ways you and your students have celebrated ECW. Remember to share your celebrations with us by tagging GaCEC on X and Facebook. Art submissions are due by April 26th. The winning student and teacher will both receive a \$50 gift card and certificate.

I hope your spring break was fabulous! Time to lace-up your running shoes as April and May are always super busy! Wrapping up the school year requires an extra burst of energy. End of year assessments, honor's night, field day, senior day, and yearbook day are among many of the end of school rituals we all enjoy. Add in annual reviews for IEPs along with planning for next year and it makes for a hectic time of year. Hang in there! Summer is coming with a slightly slower pace. Despite some of the challenges, the many rewards of your work become evident as you watch children progress in their achievement, grade level and even graduation. Your job is tough, but your rewards are greater. You make a difference each day! Some days are difficult to see but it is there.

Thank you for all you do for students with disabilities and their families. I am so proud of the support you provide each day!

Keeping students first,

Wina



*Professional Learning
Events*

Special Education Events & Due Dates

Please review the information below and the Due Dates Calendar for deadlines and key dates.

Coming Up

April 9 at 1 p.m. Special Education Directors' Webinar

April 9 - 12 at 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention: Metro West GLRS

April 25 at 1:30 p.m. FY24 Special Education Summer Data Collections

June 11 - 13 at 8:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. Federal Programs Conference: Teachers and Leaders Improving Outcomes

Reminders

Visit [GaDOE Community](#) for a complete listing of GaDOE Professional Learning Events.



New Director Spotlight: Anne Dirden, Atlanta Public Schools

The Georgia Department of Education's Special Education Services and Supports Division is excited to feature Anne Dirden for our New Director Spotlight this week.

Anne Dirden is the Special Education Director for Atlanta Public Schools and has been in the field of education for 22 years.

Beginning as a third-grade general education teacher in DeKalb County Schools in 2002, Anne's journey evolved as she transitioned into roles such as Special Education Teacher and Lead Teacher for Special Education.

Guided by dedicated administrators and an exceptional Special Education Lead Teacher, Anne's passion for special education flourished, propelling her into leadership roles.

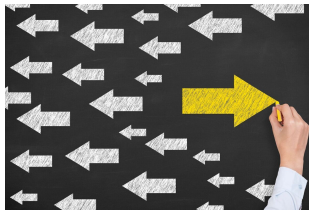
In 2014, Anne became a Special Education Coordinator in Atlanta Public Schools, advancing to Assistant Director, and now serves as the Director of Special Education.

In a career spanning two decades, Anne Dirden reflects on the influential figures who have shaped her into the leader she is today. From her aunt, Mrs. Annie Covington Floyd, to her first principal, Ms. Barbara Davis, and mentor Mrs. Vickie Cleveland, each person left an incredible mark on Anne's professional career. Anne also acknowledges the influence of her current Executive Director,

Mrs. Emmaundia Ford, and previous Executive Director, Dr. Katika Lovett, emphasizing their contributions to a positive and inclusive culture.

When Anne is not immersed in her work life, you can find her exploring the latest trends in interior design and fashion, curating stylish ensembles and creating inviting spaces that reflect her personality and aesthetics, or spending time with family and friends. She also serves as a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated.

Anne continues to champion inclusive education, creating environments where every student can thrive. Her impactful career is a testament to her dedication to the success of students and special educators.



Practice Pointers – Early Childhood Transition Conference and the Parent

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) has emphasized in a [Questions and Answers Document](#) that at the transition conference, local educational agency (LEA) personnel should explain to the family the Part B eligibility requirements and evaluation procedures and inform the family that they can request to invite their Part C service coordinator to the initial individualized education program (IEP) Team meeting. LEA personnel should also provide information about Part B program options, as appropriate, to inform parents in their decision-making. Part C personnel must provide parents with information about preschool services under Section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Additionally, to avoid duplication of effort, the LEA should consider all relevant Part C assessment information in the context of the evaluation and Part B eligibility determination process. Together, with the Part C personnel and the family, the LEA should identify any gaps in assessment information needed to determine Part B eligibility and decide who will be responsible for completing or gathering additional information. Further, the LEA should identify the next steps, roles, and responsibilities that are to be documented in the transition plan. If the LEA has not already provided the parent with procedural safeguards as required under [34 C.F.R. § 300.504](#), they should do so at the transition conference. Similarly, the LEA must obtain the parent's consent to conduct an initial

evaluation to determine the child's eligibility for services under Part B if consent has not already been obtained.

For more information, please see our [Preschool Special Education webpage](#), and the [OSEP Early Childhood Transition Questions and Answers Document](#)

Office of Teaching and Learning: March 28, 2024 Right Now Resources

Please review the [March 28, 2024 Right Now Resources newsletter](#) for Teaching and Learning Updates, or subscribe on the [Curriculum and Instruction webpage](#) to have them delivered straight to your inbox. You are in a place to purposefully impact teaching and learning in your districts, schools and classrooms.

As always, our teaching and learning team is here to serve and support. Continue to reach out as needed and thank you for your continued commitment to Georgia students and educators.



Parent Mentor Application Now Available

The Parent Mentor Partnership Application is now available and can be found on [Grant-Opportunities](#). The application is open until Tuesday, April 30 at 5 p.m. Our goal is to increase the number of mentors each year until each LEA has a Parent Mentor. If you have any questions about the application or about the partnership, please reach out to [Anne Ladd aladd@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:aladd@doe.k12.ga.us) or [Belinda Tiller belinda.tiller@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:belinda.tiller@doe.k12.ga.us).

Parent to Parent April 2024 Trainings

Webinar: Keys to Help Your Teen Get a First Job

This training will focus on the employer's perspective on hiring and employing individuals with disabilities, the current employment outlook for people with disabilities, workplace accommodations and practical tips for families to help their teen get a job.

Date: Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Time: 6 pm - 7 pm

Registration Link: [Register Here](#)

Flyer Link: [View Here](#)

Webinar: The Big Leap ... Moving from Elementary to Middle School

In this session you will learn the importance of preparing your child for the move to middle school, the keys to a successful transition and we will share some practical tips on what you as a parent can do to help your child adjust to this new milestone as smoothly as possible.

Date: Wednesday, April 10, 2024

Time: 6 pm - 7 pm

Registration Link: [Register Here](#)

Flyer Link: [View Here](#)

Webinar: WAZE Vocational Rehabilitation ... The Who, What, When, Where and How

This presentation is in partnership with PEATC and is for Parents and Professionals

This workshop will cover various aspects of Vocational Rehabilitation or VR including: What is VR, Why VR, How to connect to VR, Who is eligible for VR, Who is involved in VR, When can VR start and Where do you go for VR.

Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024

Time: 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Registration Link: [Register Here](#)

Flyer Link: [View Here](#)

Special Education Parent Survey

The Annual Special Education Parent Survey available for families to complete until May 31, 2024. At the present time, only 8% of our families have completed the survey. Please make sure to check your survey completion rate in the Special Education Dashboard by school for your LEA. Please reach out to Anne Ladd at aladd@doe.k12.ga.us if you have any question about the survey.

Drawdown of Funds Reminder

This is a reminder to follow your local procedures and GaDOE's general guidance for drawing down funds in accordance with your approved budget and grant expenditures. To ensure that local education agencies (LEAs) are appropriately drawing down available federal grant funds through the first 15 months of the 27-month period of availability, the Georgia Department of

Education (GaDOE) monitors the drawdown of funds. Additionally, each LEA's Consolidated Application (Con App) shows the real-time drawdown percentage for each grant. Through the first 15 months, the generally anticipated rate of draw for LEAs running full-year federal program-funded supports and services is as follows.

October 31	up to 27% funds used	April 30	up to 67% funds used
November 30	up to 33% funds used	May 31	up to 73% funds used
December 31	up to 40% funds used	June 30	up to 80% funds used
January 31	up to 47% funds used	July 31	up to 87% funds used
February 28	up to 53% funds used	August 31	up to 93% funds used
March 31	up to 60% funds used	September 30	100% funds used

If you have questions, please contact your IDEA Budget Liaison.

IDEA Carryover Amendments

Carryover for the IDEA 611 and 619 grants were loaded in December and finalized late January. If your LEA has carryover and has not submitted a carryover amendment, please submit an amendment as soon as possible.

2025 IDEA Documents Available for Public Review and Comment

In order to meet the requirements as set forth by IDEA 2004 for the annual state application of Georgia's grant award under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for federal fiscal year 2024 (2024-2025), the Georgia Department of Education is publishing the following documents for at least 60 days beginning March 18, 2024 with an opportunity for public comments on such plan to be accepted for at least 30 days.

Your comments should be forwarded to: Wina Low, Division for Special Education Services and Supports at wlow@doe.k12.ga.us

2025 IDEA documents

- Interactive Spreadsheet
- Part B Georgia Fiscal Application
- Notice to Applicants
- State Rules that Exceed IDEA 2004

DCMP: Resource for Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Visually Impaired Students and Teachers

Described and Captioned Media Program is a free resource that provides a streaming library of educational videos that are captioned, described, and interpreted in ASL. It is important that all media shown in classrooms is accessible to all students and this resource makes that possible. In addition to accessible media, they also have professional learning opportunities that support educational interpreters' use of academic signs, training and guidelines for creating accessible educational materials, and resources for families. Anyone who works with students with disabilities can sign up for this free resource at [The Described and Captioned Media Program](#)

A promotional graphic for Roosevelt Warm Springs (RWS) featuring a blue and white color scheme. It includes the GAVRA logo, a 'DON'T MISS OUT!' warning, application dates (April 1st to July 12), and contact information for the Admissions Department. A photo shows a student in a wheelchair being assisted by a staff member.

APPLICATIONS OPEN: APRIL 1ST
APPLICATIONS CLOSE ON: JULY 12

RWS NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR FALL SEMESTER 2024!

Slots are filling up fast!

For more info email:
Admissions Department
rws.csc.referrals@gvs.ga.gov
706-489-7985

Roosevelt Warm Springs (RWS) Now Accepting Applications for Fall Semester 2024

RWS is now accepting applications for this fall! Slots are filling up fast, so please act quickly. This program can truly change a student's life, so let's team up and fill the program to capacity!

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