

December, 2011

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the federal law that outlines the requirements for special education for children ages 3 to 21, defines Special Education as "Specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with as disability." Special Education services can take many forms, including intensive academic and functional skill instruction, organization and study skill instruction, counseling, social skills training, behavior management, speech and language therapy, and physical and occupational therapy. The type and amount of specialized service is determined by a team of school personnel and parents who base the services on the specific needs of the student and the impact of their disability on their ability to participate in the general education school setting.

In an effort to minimize the impact of a student's disability in school, early intervention programs have proven to have a significant positive impact on the lives of our children. One of the largest and most successful early intervention programs in Plainville is our Special Education Preschool program. The Plainville school district offers a number of Preschool services including monthly developmental screenings, an itinerant speech and language program, an "integrated" preschool program with typical role model students included, an intensive preschool program, parent activities, and consultation with community daycare providers.

An important component of Preschool services in Plainville is a monthly developmental screening for three or four year olds conducted at Linden Street School. Our Preschool staff, as well as members of the Family Resource Center, are present at those times to discuss any questions or concerns that parents might have in regard to their child's development.

Once a child has been identified as needing Special Education services through a standardized evaluation, there are a number of programs available at Linden. The Itinerant Speech and Language program provides services to children who need speech and language services only. In this program, the speech therapist works with children either individually or in a small group for a number of 30 minute sessions per week. In addition, the speech therapist works with parents to implement therapy strategies at home. Another program, the Integrated Preschool program, services children with special

needs in a classroom setting alongside typically developing role model students. A third program at Linden is designed to meet the needs of three – five year olds who require more intense and specialized services. In all of our classes, teaching and learning is guided by the CT Preschool Curriculum Framework and the CT Preschool Assessment Framework. For Special Education students, we are also guided by each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), which focuses on specific educational needs. Preschool teachers also consult with community preschool staff when this service is requested.

Parent activities are also an important component of our services. Preschool staff plan a number of activities in which parents are able to participate with their children as they play and learn throughout the year. We also provide evening opportunities when parents can come to school to learn about helpful educational or parenting strategies, or to share their experiences with other parents.

As you can see, from the comprehensive Preschool services that we offer, Plainville is very committed to early intervention services and to offering all children the opportunity to become successful learners as they begin their school experience. If you have any questions or concerns in regard to your child's development or would like more information about our role model program please contact the Special Education Office at (860) 793-3214.