



Illinois State Board of Education

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MEMORANDUM #05-4

TO: District Superintendents
Directors of Special Education

FROM: Christopher Koch, Ed.D.
Director of Special Education

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher Koch".

DATE: June 10, 2005

SUBJECT: Documentation of Services for Students Identified as Having Vision Impairments or Hearing Impairments.

This communication is intended to provide clarification and consistency regarding the documentation of services for students identified as having vision impairments or hearing impairments. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has received a number of requests for explanation regarding the documentation of these instructional services as related services on a student's Individualized Education Program.

Question: *Can instructional hearing impaired or vision impaired services for students with hearing impairments or vision impairments be documented as related services on a student's IEP?*

Answer: *No. It is the position of ISBE that instructional services for students with vision impairments or hearing impairments are direct services.*

Federal special education regulations define *special education* as: "specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability" Specially designed instruction is further defined as "adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this part, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction –

- (i) To address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability; and
- (ii) To ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that he or she can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children. [See 34 CFR 300.26 (b)(3)]

State special education regulations define *related services* as: “transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education, including speech-language pathology and audiology services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation (including therapeutic recreation), early identification and assessment of disabilities in children, counseling services (including rehabilitation counseling), orientation and mobility services, and medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes also including school health services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training.” [See 23 Ill. Admin. Code 226.75]

Special education provides specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. Related services are supportive services that are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education. A child identified with a secondary disability of vision impairment or hearing impairment would still require specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of the vision or hearing impairment. **Thus, the instructional services provided to such a child are direct services, and the school must state on the IEP that the student receives special education. This should ensure the full implementation of the necessary supports and services that would allow the student to receive a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.**

Question: *If the IEP team determines that another disability is the student’s primary disability, and a hearing impairment or vision impairment is a secondary disability, can these services be documented on the IEP as related services?*

Answer: No. Even in the case of meeting the student’s needs resulting from a secondary disability, these instructional services must still be documented as direct special education services.

Question: *Why is this different than the way speech/language pathology services are documented?*

Answer: The above documentation should not be confused with the documentation option available for speech-language pathology services. The federal special education regulations state that the term “special education” includes “[s]peech-language pathology services, or any other related service, if the service is considered special education rather than a related service under state standards”. [See 34 CFR 300.26 (a)(2)(i)] The state standard in Illinois defines speech-language pathology as either a disability or a related service. This option is not available for documenting instructional services for students with visual impairments or hearing impairments.

Question: *What services can be considered related services for students with hearing impairments or vision impairments?*

Answer: Services such as orientation and mobility, braillists, special readers, etc. would be considered possible related services for students with visual impairments. Services such as audiology, speech-language pathology and interpreters would be considered possible related services for students with deafness or hearing impairments. The FACTS code "P" for "other related services" would include less common services not specified in other related service codes, such as equestrian therapy, notetakers, aquatic therapy, etc.

Please share this information with your staff. If you have any questions, you may contact Paula Staderker (pstadeke@isbe.net) or Barbara Sims (bsims@isbe.net), Principal Consultants, Special Education Services at 217/782-5589 (voice) or 217/782-1900 (TTY).