



NEW DIRECTIONS

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Early Childhood Direction Center

c/o Women and Children's Hospital
219 Bryant St.
Buffalo, NY 14222
PHONE (716) 880-3875 or
1 800 462-7653
FAX (716) 836-1252

Vickie Rubin
Manager

vrubin@kaleidahealth.org

Tracey Banks
Coordinator of Early Childhood Programs

tbanks@kaleidahealth.org

Ruth Malinowski
Special Needs Outreach Liaison

rmalinowski@kaleidahealth.org

Stacie Ricioppo
Special Needs Educator

sricioppo@kaleidahealth.org

Lauren Savino
Special Needs Outreach Liaison

lsavino@kaleidahealth.org

ECDC is a regional clearinghouse that provides free information, referral, technical assistance and support to families, professionals, and community agencies concerned with children birth to five with suspected or diagnosed delays or disabilities.

We provide ongoing community training programs for both parents and professionals.

ECDC is funded by the New York State Education Department, hosted by Women and Children's Hospital and provided in-kind support from People Inc.

If you would like to be included on our listserve to receive the latest federal, state and local updates, please send an email to ecdc@kaleidahealth.org and indicate whether you are a parent or a professional.

Cultural Difference or Delay?

By Vickie Rubin M.S. Ed.



A child care provider plays an important role in a young child's life. The daily interactions to encourage developmentally appropriate social/ emotional, literacy, play, motor and other skills is the foundation for the child's later success in school and community. Keen observation of a child's development is an important part of the child care provider's role. If a child refuses to give you eye contact, or has difficulty using food utensils, struggles with speaking or understanding language; one may correctly assume that the child needs a referral for early intervention or preschool special education services but are you sure the child in your program needs an evaluation?

Imagine this: A small child from Mexico enrolls in your child care and you try to engage with the child but he refuses to give you eye contact. Or a young child who recently moved from China has difficulty using a fork during snack time. How about a two year old from Burma who enters your child care and has a lot of difficulty drinking from a cup, she continues to ignore your request to drink her juice. Do these children need an evaluation or is it something else?

Think first: When you are working with adults and children from other cultures, there are often behaviors and developmental timelines that are different from what we have learned to expect; this may be a result of cultural practice and not necessarily a developmental delay. If a particular culture such as Burmese, has a longer period of breastfeeding (up to 2-3 years), does that child have fine motor delay or is it lack of experience using a cup. What about the child from Mexico who refuses to give you eye contact, does he have early warning signs of Autism or does his culture look at eye contact as an act of defiance to adults? And the young girl from China does she have a problem holding a fork or is it lack of experience using a fork.

It's so complicated! Are you expected to know the cultural differences of every culture? Well, not exactly – but if you are aware that a child from another country is entering your child care, it is important to do some research about the unique cultural practices. Doing a bit of investigating before jumping to conclusions will save you and the family a lot of time and aggravation!

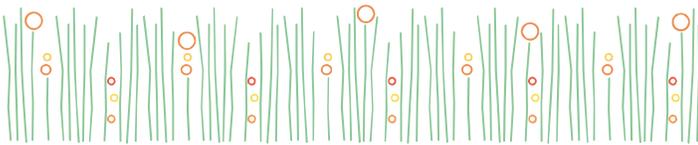


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I will close with a funny story that happened to me. I am Jewish and was introduced, when I was in my early 20s, to a VERY religious Hasidic (very observant sect of Judaism) Rabbi. I extended my hand to shake his hand as a greeting. He said hello and was very pleasant but refused to shake my hand. I tried again and was a bit perplexed. Finally, his gracious wife came to the rescue and told me that Hasidic men do not touch, even in handshake, women that are not family members. I was embarrassed considering I was Jewish and didn't know this! So I guess the moral is that there is a lot to learn and even if you think you know the culture of a particular group, it doesn't hurt to do a bit of research



When Services End What's Next?

By Vickie Rubin M.S. Ed.



What happens when you hear that your child no longer needs preschool special education services? Is this a good thing? Yes, it is a good thing; no longer needing services is a cause for celebration!



Your child went through the preschool special education system; they received services and programs that addressed their unique needs, reached their goals and now they are ready to move on to the next step.

The intention of receiving preschool special education for most children is to help them catch up to their peers. When a child accomplishes their goals you can celebrate that the services worked!

Preschool special education or school age special education is not a permanent support for most students.

Who decides that your child no longer needs services and how do you know if they are correct? Declassification means that your child no longer needs special education programs and services. The decision is made by your Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE), only after reevaluation has taken place. In other words, documentation must support that your child no longer needs services. Parents are members of their child's CPSE team and have input into the decisions that are made at the meeting. The decision to declassify is not taken lightly. Once the decision is made, you will receive a letter from your district (prior written notice) explaining the outcome of the meeting. You will also receive a copy of the evaluation report.

If your child is going to Kindergarten they may receive declassification support services to help the transition from special education to school-age general education. Declassification services can be provided directly to your child and/or your child's teacher and can last for up to one year after declassification. School districts have Academic Intervention Services (AIS) which may include assistance with math and reading as well as other supports. Call your district to see what AIS supports they provide.

Declassification does not mean that your child used up their opportunity for special education services. If you notice that your child is struggling without services, you can ask for another evaluation to see if they still need support. If you have questions about your child's programs, declassification or need any other information about the CPSE process please contact ECDC by phone or email.

Declassification can be scary but it is also a cause for celebration. All the hard work has paid off! You and your district gave your child the supports they needed to succeed!

Congratulations!

