

Learning Disability

Learning disability is a general term that describes specific kinds of learning problems. A learning disability can cause a person to have trouble learning and using certain skills. The skills most often affected are: reading, writing, listening, speaking, reasoning, and doing math.

SLD is found within the Title 6A Chapter 14 – Special Education - 14-3.5 Determination of eligibility for special education and related services the term SLD is defined on page 58 # 12 of SLD – corresponds to “perceptually impaired” and means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

A specific learning disability can be determined with a severe discrepancy is found between the student’s current achievement and intellectual ability in one or more of the following area:

1. Basic reading skills
2. Reading comprehension
3. Oral expression
4. Listening comprehension
5. Mathematical calculation
6. Mathematical problem solving
7. Written expression
8. Reading fluency

ii. Specific learning disability may also be determined by utilizing a response to scientifically based intervention methodology as described in N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.4(H)6.

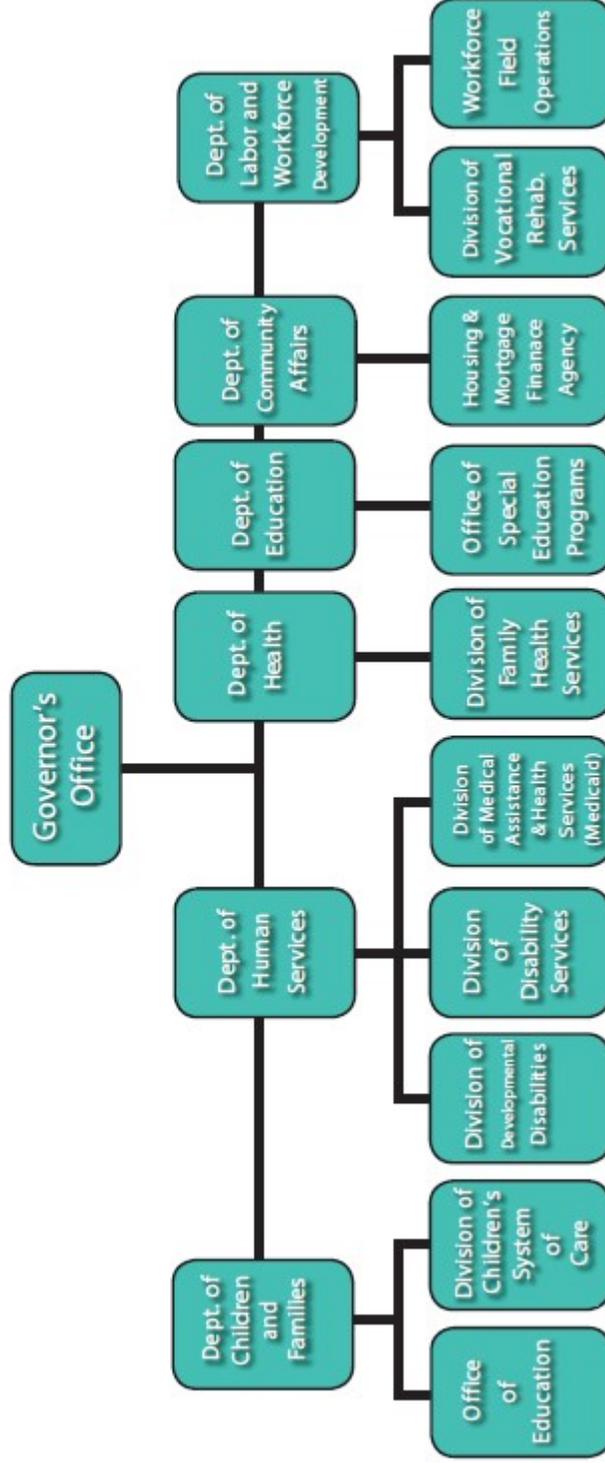
iii. The term severe discrepancy does not apply to students who have learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, general cognitive deficits, emotional disturbance or environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.

iv. The district shall, if it utilizes the severe discrepancy methodology, adopt procedures that utilize a statistical formula and criteria for determining severe discrepancy. Evaluation shall include assessment of current academic achievement and intellectual ability.

**State of New Jersey Departments
with Primary Responsibility for Providing Services to**

Developmental Disabilities

Organization Chart - April 2014



■ **Department of Health (DOH)**

<http://www.state.nj.us/health/>

The mission of the Department of Health (DOH) is to improve health through leadership and innovation. DOH works to prevent disease, promote and protect well-being at all life stages and encourage informed choices that enrich quality of life for individuals and communities. In addition, DOH provides special needs assistance to children with special health needs through the Early Intervention System and Title V programs, including Special Child Health Services Case Management Units (SCHS CMU). DOH's Autism Registry directly connects families with these case management units. Funded in part through the county Boards of Social Services, there is a SCHS CMU in each county, staffed by nurses and social workers who can provide information and guidance regarding:

- _ your child's medical/dental, developmental, rehabilitative, educational and socioeconomic needs,
- _ development of an individual service plan and periodic monitoring,
- _ referrals to related services; i.e., Social Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, transition, Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund, family support, Child Evaluation Centers and Early Intervention Services.

■ **Department of Human Services (DHS)**

<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/>

The Department of Human Services (DHS) serves more than one million New Jersey citizens in need of assistance (about one in eight). DHS serves individuals and families with low incomes; people with mental illnesses, developmental disabilities, or late-onset disabilities; people who are blind or visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, or deaf-blind; parents needing child care services, child support and/or healthcare for their children; and families facing catastrophic medical expenses for their children.

_ **DHS Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/home/index.html>

The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) funds a variety of services for eligible individuals with developmental disabilities in New Jersey. These supports and services are provided by more than 280 agencies in communities throughout the state, or in residential settings that are administered by DDD. Since its inception, DDD has changed and grown significantly. Today, nearly 29,000 adults are eligible to receive services funded through DDD.

_ **DHS Division of Disability Services (DDS)**

<http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dds/home/index.html>

The Division of Disability Services (DDS) is designated as New Jersey's single point of entry for people seeking disability related information. DDS provides information and referral services and administers programs designed to promote maximum independence and community participation for individuals with disabilities. Through the use of active information exchange, community outreach, and program advocacy, DDS works to support and foster the coordination of services among government and community agencies. Certified Information and Referral Specialists are available by phone to confidentially discuss issues, provide information, assist with problem solving, and refer to agencies or services as appropriate. Annually, DDS publishes New Jersey Resources, a comprehensive directory listing services available for individuals with disabilities throughout the state.

■ Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DLWD)

<http://lwd.state.nj.us/labor/index.html>

The Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DLWD) is committed to helping New Jersey's skilled and productive workforce gain the right job so that they can help high quality employers compete successfully in the world marketplace.

_ DLWD Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS)

The mission of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) is to enable eligible individuals with disabilities to achieve employment outcomes consistent with their strengths, priorities, needs, abilities, and capabilities. DVRS provides a wide range of vocational rehabilitation services to people with disabilities in order to assist eligible individuals in obtaining employment.

_ DLWD Field Services assists jobseekers with activities that raise occupational skill levels to increase the employment, retention, and earnings of participants and improve the quality of the workforce.

The School Age Years - 3 to 21

The New Jersey Department of Education (DOE) Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) OSEP is responsible for implementing state and federal laws and regulations governing special education to ensure that pupils with disabilities in New Jersey receive full educational opportunities. It provides statewide leadership through the development of policy and guidance documents, and provides technical assistance to school districts and parents regarding the implementation of special education programs and services. The office is responsible for administering all federal funds received by the state for educating pupils with disabilities ages 3 through 21. Visit OSEP at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/specialed>.

If you are concerned that your preschool child (ages 3-5) is developing differently or a physician has recently diagnosed your preschool child as an individual with an autism spectrum disorder, or other Developmental Disabilities, you can contact your local school district for educational evaluations and support. Each district has a Director of Special Education listed on the New Jersey Department of Education's School Directory web page at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/directory/districts.shtml>. If you have questions regarding a referral to access an evaluation for special education and related services, you can contact the district's child study team, which can include a school psychologist, a social worker and a learning disabilities teacher consultant (LDTC).

The process used to identify, refer, evaluate and determine a student's eligibility for special education and related services, as well as the required steps for developing an Individualized Education Program (IEP) can be found at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/specialed/info/process.pdf>. The IEP team is responsible for identifying appropriate programs and services for students who are eligible to receive special education and related services. The IEP team also determines where students with IEPs receive their education. The IEP team must ensure that a continuum of alternate placements is available, such instruction in general education classes, special education classes, specialized schools, home instruction and instruction in hospitals and institutions. The IEP team can consider placement in special classes or in a different school only when the nature or severity of the educational disability is such that education in the student's regular class, with the use of appropriate supplementary aids and services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

The office also has an Autism and Multiple Disabilities Specialist who provides supports and services statewide. This specialist provides technical assistance, support and training to teachers, administrators and parents

regarding autism programming, services and supports. In addition, this specialist is responsible for gathering and disseminating resources for families and educators in areas critical to improving instruction and positive outcomes for students with autism and multiple disabilities, including evidence-based practices, functional behavior assessment, positive behavioral supports and IEP development.

Children's System of Care

The Department of Children and Families, Children's System of Care (CSOC) offers a wide range of services for children up to age 21 with behavioral health or developmental disability needs. These services include community-based services, in-home services, out-of-home residential services, and family support services. Individuals up to the age of 21 who receive a diagnosis of ASD may qualify for services established under CSOC and/ or the Office of Education. The DCF provides families with a single point of contact that registers, tracks and coordinates care for children who are screened – at any level - into its Children's System of Care. To provide this simplified access, DCF contracts with PerformCare which is a private entity that administers this service system. **24-hour, toll-free Access Line at: 1-877-652-7624**

The following services are available:

- Determination of eligibility for CSOC Functional Services* (formerly DDD eligibility)
- Family Support Services - are a coordinated system of on-going public and private supports, services, resources, and other assistance, which are designed to maintain and enhance the quality of life of a young person with a developmental disability and his or her family. Family Support Services are designed to strengthen and promote families that provide care at home for a child or young adult. Family Support Services fall into two main categories:
 1. Respite care for families, including recreational programs for youth and
 2. Assistive Technology.
- Comprehensive Waiver Demonstration Home and Community Based Services - Sections of the demonstration waiver will provide additional community support and coordination of services for individuals that meet the clinical criteria for services through the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Children's System of Care (CSOC). This includes services for certain NJ FamilyCare eligible individuals that have been diagnosed with a serious emotional disturbance (SED) or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities and a co-occurring mental illness (ID/DD-MI).
- Mobile Response and Stabilization Services – intended to help children and youth who are experiencing emotional or behavioral crises. The services are designed to defuse an immediate crisis, keep children and their families' safe, and maintain the children in their own homes or current living situation (such as a foster home, treatment home or group home) in the community.
- Care Management Organizations (CMOs) - agencies that provide a full range of treatment and support services to children with the most complex needs. They work with child-family teams to develop individualized service plans. The CMO's goals are to keep children in their homes, their schools and their communities.
- Family Support Organizations (FSO's) - family-run, county-based organizations that provide direct family-to-family peer support, education, advocacy and other services to family members of children with emotional and behavioral problems.

All services will be prior authorized through PerformCare.
Additional information may be found at: <http://www.performcarenj.org/families/>
** (Youth already determined eligible for Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) services need not re-apply for a determination of eligibility for CSOC functional services. CSOC will accept a DDD eligibility determination regarding a youth's developmental disability status.)*

Application for eligibility for functional services from CSOC for young adults between the ages of 18 and 21 should be made to DDD. CSOC will accept the DDD determination regarding whether the young adult has a developmental disability and meets the residency requirements for the receipt of functional services, but independently determines the most appropriate services. Services are provided until the young adult reaches 21 years of age.

Department of Children and Families, Office of Education

The Department of Children and Families, Office of Education (OOE) provides intensive 12-month educational services and supports to children and young adults ages 3 through 21. In some cases, the severity or uniqueness of individual needs requires removal from the public school setting for a period of time. A successful return to school and participation in community life are goals for all OOE students.

OOE regular and special education programs are individually designed and provided to students in the least restrictive environment. These education programs are designed for students who:

- exhibit severe cognitive, physical, behavioral and emotional disabilities;
- exhibit a variety of moderate to severe learning disabilities;
- are at risk of school failure; and/or
- are pregnant/parenting teens (programs are available for infant/toddlers of parenting teens).

Learn more about OOE at <http://www.state.nj.us/DCF/divisions/education>.

C. Transition Planning from School to Adult Life

Planning for your son's/daughter's successful transition from school to adult life requires a multiyear, long-range collaborative process that involves your son/daughter and other family members, school staff, agency staff, employers, and other community members. The first step in the transition planning process involves your son/daughter, school staff and family working together to develop and identify your child's strengths, preferences, and interests related to past and future activities and environments. While transition planning involves steps that can begin as early as birth, it begins to be addressed in the IEP during the school year in which your son/daughter reaches 14 years of age. Some youth start planning their transition when they are younger than 14, if determined appropriate by the IEP team. Transition planning continues to be addressed in your son's/daughter's IEP each year until graduation or exit from high school. Starting in the years prior to your son/daughter turning age 16, the school should use a variety of formal and informal methods (referred to as Transition Assessment) to identify your son's/daughter's post-secondary goals in the areas of education, training, employment, and independent living. When your son/daughter is age 16 and older, the IEP must include post-secondary goals based upon the results of transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, if appropriate, independent living. A combination of school courses and transition services (a coordinated set of activities and strategies) is planned for and provided to prepare your son/daughter to obtain his or her post-secondary goals. While still in school, your son/daughter should also be referred for eligibility determinations from agencies such as the New Jersey

Division of Developmental Disabilities and the New Jersey Division of Vocational