



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

# DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: March 5, 2025  
To: Local Educational Agency Leads, Directors of Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities  
Route To: Directors of Special Education  
From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Educational Services

## Speech-Language Services Guidance

The purpose of this broadcast memorandum is to provide clarification on the delivery of educational and related services in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14, and to delineate the specific role of speech-language specialists. In accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A: 14-5.1(a), each local education agency (LEA), independently or through joint agreements, shall employ or contract with child study teams, as set forth at N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.1(b), and speech-language specialists, and other school personnel in numbers sufficient to ensure the provision of required programs and services for students with disabilities. An LEA may supplement child study team services with additional teams through contracts or joint agreements. Joint agreements for child study team services may be entered into with other LEAs, educational services commissions, jointure commissions, and county special services school districts.

If a vacancy occurs on a child study team because of an absence of a team member for an identified period of time, an LEA may contract, for the duration of any such vacancy, with a clinic or agency approved by the New Jersey Department of Education, an individual, or another LEA for the services provided by the absent team member(s). As stipulated by N.J.A.C. 6A:14-5.1(c)1v, an LEA or Approved Private School for Students with Disabilities (APSSD) may contract with approved clinics and agencies to provide speech-language services only when it is unable to hire sufficient staff to provide these services.

In addition to providing speech-language services to students with disabilities, speech-language specialists are required to participate as an additional member of the child study team in specific circumstances as outlined below:

- When a preschool-age child is referred for an initial evaluation, a speech-language specialist is required to participate as an additional member of the child study team in the meeting to determine whether to conduct a speech-language evaluation and the nature and scope of the evaluation. [N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.3(e)]
- For students who are being evaluated for eligibility for speech-language services, the speech-language specialist who conducted the evaluation shall be considered a child study team member at the meeting to determine whether a student is eligible for speech-language services. The speech-language specialist shall be considered the child study team member, the individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results, and the service provider at the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting. The speech-language specialist shall not be excused from an IEP meeting pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(k)10. [N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.6]
- For students eligible for special education and related services under the eligibility category of communication impairment, the speech-language specialist shall be considered a child study team member. [N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.5(c)4]
- When a speech-language specialist serves as the case manager for a student with a disability, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.2, the speech-language specialist shall have an apportioned amount of time for case management responsibilities as required in N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.2(c)3.

Lastly, LEAs are reminded that the provision and implementation of services are to be determined by the IEP team and based on the individual student's needs, regardless of eligibility category or age. Articulation is recognized as a component of communication under IDEA, 34 C.F.R. (Code of Federal Regulations) §300.8: "Speech or language impairment means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment, that adversely affects a student's educational performance." Therefore, specifically for preschool-age students, if a student evidences a significant measurable delay in articulation (e.g., 33 percent delay when communication is the only developmental area impacted, or 25 percent delay when two additional areas are involved, N.J.A.C 6A:14-3.5(c)10), that could serve as the basis for consideration of eligibility. The IEP team is required to specify an adverse effect on the student's educational performance (inclusive of academic, as well as non-academic areas) resulting in a need for special education and related services within the routines of the preschool day.

Please direct questions to the Office of Special Education at (609) 376-9060 or [OSEinfo@doe.nj.gov](mailto:OSEinfo@doe.nj.gov).

c: Members, State Board of Education  
NJDOE Staff  
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network  
Garden State Coalition of Schools  
NJ LEE Group