June 4, 2013

TO: Chief School Administrator
    Director of Special Education
    Administrator of a State Facility
    Administrator of a Charter School
    Administrator of an Approved Private School for the Disabled
    Administrator of a College-Operated Program
    Statewide Special Education Advisory Council
    Agencies or Organizations Concerned with Special Education

FROM: Peggy McDonald, Director
    Office of Special Education Programs

SUBJECT: Preschool Child with a Disability

I am writing to provide clarification with respect to the definition of "Preschool child with a disability" in N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.5(c)10. As stated in the memorandum from this office dated January 9, 2007, the definition of this term was amended in the September 5, 2006 re-adoption with amendments of N.J.A.C. 6A:14. That amendment inadvertently removed from the definition the provision that a child with an identified disabling condition also falls within the definition of a preschool child with a disability.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) defines a preschool student with a disability as a child with an identified disabling condition or a child experiencing a developmental delay as defined by state law (20 U.S.C. §1402(3) 34 C.F.R. §§300.8(b) and 300.111(b)). Although eligibility due to a "disabling condition" was omitted from the state regulations, the federal regulation continues to apply. Therefore, when determining whether a preschooler is a child with a disability, either factor (disabling condition or developmental delay) can be utilized pursuant to the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:14.

To date, the state regulations have not yet been amended to reflect the information set forth above. Thus, this memorandum is a reminder that the existence of a disabling condition and/or developmental delay may serve as a basis for determining a child eligible as a preschool child with a disability.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Kathy Ehling at 609-292-7602.

PM/JW/KE

c: Members, State Board of Education
    Commissioner Christopher D. Cerf
    Senior Staff
    Susan Martz
    Peggy McDonald
    John Worthington

Kathy Ehling
Executive Director for Regional Achievement Center
County Supervisor of Child Study
Members, NJ LEE Group
Garden State Coalition of Schools

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