

WESTMORELAND COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Daniel Wallace, Ph.D, Chairman
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141 Opal Lane
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Rebecca S. Lowry, Ph.D
Superintendent

The Westmoreland County Public School system offers a variety of free special educational programs which serve children between the ages of two and twenty-one. In order to locate children who are suspected of having a disability, the school system is conducting its annual Child Find Campaign. Children with a disability whose second birthday falls on or before September 30th of the current year and have not reached their twenty-second birthday on or before September 30th of this year may be considered for these programs.

Disabilities which may adversely affect a child's educational progress include the following:

- Developmental delay among children ages two through six who experience a significant delay in physical, cognitive, communication, social/emotional or adaptive development.
- Autism is a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social integration, generally evident before age 3. Other characteristics are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or changes in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.
- Deaf-blindness
- Deafness so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification.
- Hearing impairment, whether permanent or fluctuating.
- Intellectually Disabled or significant sub-average general intellectual functioning with deficits in adaptive behavior
- Multiple disabilities, including two or more impairments that are so severe that they cannot be served under one special education program
- Orthopedic impairment; including those caused by congenital anomaly, diseases and other causes such as cerebral palsy
- Other Health Impairment, such as limited strength, vitality or alertness due to chronic and acute health problems
- Emotional disturbance, with one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree; an inability to build and maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate behavior or feelings; a pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression or a tendency to develop physical symptoms of fears associated with personal or school problems. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted unless other serious emotional disturbances exist
- Specific learning disability, a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, that may manifest in an imperfect ability to listen, write, spell, or do math calculations

All, meaning ALL, students will achieve academic standards, demonstrate standards of the heart and make choices that result in a safe and healthy life.

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- Speech and Language impairment, a communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language or voice
- Traumatic brain injury, an injury to the brain caused by an external physical force resulting in total or partial functional disability, psycho-social impairment, or both. This can apply to head injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or brain injured induced by birth trauma.

Early warning signs of these disabilities include delays in reaching developmental milestones in early childhood such as trouble sitting, standing, walking, talking, seeing, hearing, learning or paying attention. Early intervention helps children with disabilities have a better chance to develop.

Special services for identifying and treating children suspected of having disabilities are free and available through Westmoreland County Public Schools. In order to identify and place a child with a disability, the county follows an evaluation process. A child is referred by a teacher, parent, physician, or outside agency to a special education administrator which then gathers information about the child from teachers and the person who made the referral.

The committee reviews the information and determines if there is a need to have a formal evaluation and if so, written consent is sought from the parent/guardian. A formal evaluation, which is free to the parents, may include educational and psychological assessments, medical and social histories, vision and hearing screenings and speech and language screenings. A committee, including school personnel and parents meet to consider the results of the evaluations. If a child meets the eligibility criteria and the disability is found a free, appropriate, public education, consisting of special services is provided.

If you think your know a child who may have a disability please contact Carole Kelley, Director of Special Education, Westmoreland County Public Schools at 493-8018.