

Technical Assistance Paper**312765****Counseling as a Related Service****Rationale**

Educators and service providers throughout Florida are working collaboratively to ensure that schools and school districts make counseling services available to special education students. This technical assistance paper (TAP) addresses the Department of Education's goal of seamless articulation and maximum access and is in response to the Office of Special Education and Programs (OSEP) correspondence received July 1, 2004, regarding findings of noncompliance related to the provision of psychological counseling services to students with disabilities. Specifically, through its monitoring of Florida's implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), OSEP found that school districts in Florida failed to provide psychological counseling as a related service to children with disabilities who need that service to benefit from special education, in accordance with the requirements of Title 34, Sections 300.24(b) and 300.300, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The purpose of this TAP is to clarify the nature of and need to provide counseling as a related service for students who exhibit emotional or behavior disorders and to document those services on the student's individual educational plan (IEP).

Students with disabilities who have emotional and/or behavioral issues which impact their learning may need counseling as a related service to ensure adequate academic engaged time. IEP teams should consider the student's presenting behavior on a case-by-case basis to determine if counseling is required. If counseling is determined to be necessary for the student to receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE), it should be included on the student's IEP and documented as a related service.

Students with disabilities are educated to the greatest extent possible with students without disabilities in the least restrictive environment. It is important that students with disabilities have the opportunity to be educated in a climate that is conducive to their educational progress. Therefore, students with disabilities should learn in environments that are well-managed, where stress and anxiety are minimized, where fellow students are supportive and understand their needs, where parents are actively involved, and where special education services are integrated well with general education services. Counseling services, therefore, include consultation regarding classroom and building discipline programs when it targets individual students, social skills training for individual students, classroom-based interventions that promote understanding of disabilities and health-related disorders, and coordination of regular and special education programs (e.g., management/discipline programs).

REFER QUESTIONS TO:

Lee Clark
ESE Program Development & Services
325 W. Gaines St., Room 601
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400
Lee.Clark@fldoe.org
850/245-0478



John L. Winn, Commissioner

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PAPERS (TAPs) are produced periodically by the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services to present discussion of current topics. The TAPs may be used for inservice sessions, technical assistance visits, parent organization meetings, or interdisciplinary discussion groups. Topics are identified by state steering committees, district personnel, and individuals, or from program compliance monitoring.

BUREAU OF EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION AND STUDENT SERVICES

