

ESY: What Parents should know

BEFORE the Screening Letters Come!

What EVERY Parent of a Child Served by an IEP in Louisiana Should Know About Extended School Year Program

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Louisiana Parents and Advocates Need to Know More about Extended School Year Now, BEFORE the Screening Letters Come!

Extended School Year Program (ESYP)

- Screening Letters are NOT Final;
- Services Should be Individualized!

Is your child?

- exiting Early Steps and transitioning into preschool services;
- using an Assistive Technology Device;
- in need of continued work on academic or social skills in order to be more successfully included during next school year;
- exhibiting self injurious behavior (pinching, hitting, scratching or biting self, hitting head on wall, etc.);
- in need of support to be employed this summer;
- experiencing transition into adulthood
- on the verge of learning a skill that would be delayed if a break in instruction or support occurred.

Did your child?

- Enter school late;
- Miss many school days due to illnesses

These and other issues may be reasons for you to consider calling for an IEP to request Extended School Year Program services.

ESYP eligibility categories: Regression Recoupment; Critical Point of Instruction 1; Critical Point of Instruction 2; Self-Injurious Behavior; Employment; Transition; Excessive Absences; Late Entry and Extenuating Circumstances.

The Louisiana Parent Training & Information Center wants to support parents and advocates to better understand what could be possible through Extended School Year Program. It is essential for some children with disabilities to receive services beyond the typical 180 day school year if we want them to grow up to live, work and recreate in the community as independently as possible. The services provided in Extended School Year must meet each child's unique and individual needs.

According to the Louisiana Department of Education Bulletin 1872, Extended School Year Program

(ESYP) is the provision of special education and related services to students with disabilities in accordance with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) beyond the normal school year and at no cost to the parents of the student. The legal basis for extending the school year for certain students with disabilities is stated in §447 of Louisiana Bulletin 1706—Regulations for Implementation of the Children with Exceptionalities Act (R.S.17:1941 et seq.) and in court decisions relative to the 180-day rule. These decisions have reaffirmed the federal legislative intent to ensure an appropriate education based on the student's needs and on the individually designed educational program to meet those needs."

Students with disabilities should be screened each year for eligibility for services beyond the 180 days of the typical school year. Even students on interim IEP's should be screened for ESYP even though they are still just suspected of having a disability. It is important to know that there are multiple ways of being eligible for ESYP. Eligibility categories include Regression Recoupment; Critical Point of Instruction 1; Critical Point of Instruction 2; Self-Injurious Behavior; Employment; Transition; Excessive Absences; Late Entry and Extenuating Circumstances.

Parents report that each year they receive a screening letter which leads them to believe that their child is not eligible for Extended School Year Program (ESYP) and even if they were eligible the services provided will not meet their child's needs. The Louisiana PTI Center wants parents to become better informed about ESYP. Screening letters are not final determination letters. And services, even those offered during the summer, should meet the unique and individual needs of each child with an Individualized Educational Program or IEP.

When the screening letter arrives read it carefully. According to the ESYP bulletin this is a preliminary determination with which you may disagree. There should be copies of the forms used by the screening team to determine ineligibility in the letter. If you do not see these documents or you can not determine why your child was not considered eligible by the screening team: 1) try to recall your child's annual IEP meeting and review your copy of the IEP document 2) contact the school to ask for more information about the forms that were supposed to be included and why your child was not found to be eligible. When you participated in the IEP meeting there should have been a discussion about Extended School Year. As a member of the IEP team you likely participated in selecting some goals to consider for regression /recoupment. It is important that you recognize that there are multiple ways of being eligible for ESYP. Regression Recoupment is only one of them.

The ESYP Bulletin says that if regression-recoupment, critical point of instruction (1 and 2) and/or self-injurious behavior criteria were selected by the IEP team, (parents are important and equal member of the team) then the IEP team should have decided which IEP goals to target (i.e., the "Determination of Essential Skills" checklist assists the team in determining the most important objectives for the student); the IEP team discusses ways of collecting data and strategies for team functioning. The method of data collection will depend on the individual objective(s). Data may take the form of task analyses, checklists, grades in teacher grade book, teacher/parent observation logs, etc.

But there may be reasons to consider eligibility now under other eligibility categories that the IEP team

could not have anticipated then and the ESY screening committee may not have taken into account. Or you may simply disagree with the finding of the screening committee under the eligibility category/ies they considered. You can ask for an IEP meeting to make your case for why ESY should be provided.

Here are examples of some of the circumstances that may prompt a ESY request:

EarlySteps Transitions:

For children transitioning from EarlySteps to Part B Services who have spring birthdays, the teacher/instructional staff must consider all applicable criteria including regression/recoupment, critical point of instruction, late entry into school, and extenuating circumstances. The need for information to determine ESY eligibility should be addressed on or before the mandated transition meeting, which must be held 90 days before the child's third birthday.

Inclusion/Least Restrictive Environment:

Under Critical Point of Instruction 1 eligibility there are reasons to suspect there will be a loss of regular education classes or time or an increase in special education time because of a lack of academic or social skill development. This is an example from the ESY bulletin on one of many reasons to consider CPI1: A student in danger of losing time in general education because s/he is not keeping up in reading class. ESY-IEP team believes with intensive vocabulary drill and directed instruction on passage reading s/he would be able to continue in the general education class. In this case, the ESY for this student might be four or five sessions a week for several weeks for intensive teaching and drill.

Transition Into Adulthood:

Services provided through an IEP are not just about academics. The IEP should list the action steps that a person will need to accomplish in order to live, work, and recreate as an adult as independently as possible. All students with disabilities who have a transition services page on the IEP, and who are expected to exit the local education agency at the end of the school year should be considered.

Employment:

Students with an IEP; ages 16-22; engaged in paid employment prior to the ESY screening date. The job is expected to continue through the summer months. There are vocational or employment goal(s) on the student's current IEP. There is evidence that the student is in need of support in order to maintain paid employment.

Assistive Technology:

It may be essential that a student with an AT device use the system/technology through the summer to maintain his/her functioning level of the device. If so that student may be eligible for ESY under "Extenuating Circumstances."

Social Skills:

Critical Point of Instruction (CPI) 2 criterion should be considered for students for which there is reason to suspect that there will be a loss of significant progress made toward the acquisition and/or

maintenance of a critical self-help, community access, or social/behavioral skill.

Why consider eligibility for Extended School Year Program if the same services are provided at the same place and time for ALL students? Extended School Year Program Services must be offered in a variety of ways, in a variety of places that will meet each student's unique needs. If a student needs to work on better social skills in the community then support should be provided to help the student better understand how to properly participate in community based activities and events in the community. If the student needs a job coach that should be provided on the job in the community. Preschoolers could continue to receive services in the home or at the child care center if that is the appropriate setting in the least restrictive environment. Nothing requires the parents to accept a Extended School Year program that does not meet their child's unique and individual needs.

Parents who disagree with the finding of the screening team or disagree with other members of the ESYP IEP team are to be provided with an expedited hearing to quickly resolve disagreements.

Consultant to the Louisiana Department of Education have pointed out that while children with disabilities are not faring as well as they might in Louisiana they are surprised at how few students with disabilities receive Extended School Year Program services. They urged the Louisiana Department of Education to see to it that this changes. The consultants also urged the parent advocates to spread the word about ESYP. Please know that each school district receives additional state dollars for ESYP. These ESYP state dollars have traditionally gone unused by some school districts. Again, Extended School Year Program services may be the critical missing link to supporting children with disabilities to be succesful in reaching their goals and in someday living, working, and recreating as independently as possible in their community. It is the responsibility of parents and advocates to demonstrate to these students that they are valued by supporting them to achieve these goals by advocating on their behalf.

For more information on Extended School Year and a consultation regarding a child you are concerned about please contact the Louisiana PTI Center 504 888 9111, 800 766 7736, info@laptic.org.