

Transition from CPSE to CSE: What Parents Need to Know

Overview

New York State provides free services to children with disabilities under the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE), which must transition to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) when children approach school age (typically by age 5). This process ensures continuity of services and support as the child enters kindergarten.

When Should Parents Begin the Transition?

- The transition process typically begins in the fall or winter of the year before the child is eligible for kindergarten (around age 4).
 - The transition conference must be held before the child’s 5th birthday, often between January and June , before kindergarten starts.
 - Parents should receive a notice from their school district’s CPSE office initiating the transition process.
 - Alternatively, parents can contact the school district themselves to initiate the CPSE process.
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CPSE vs. CSE: What’s the Difference?

CPSE (Preschool- Pre-K, ages 3–5)	CSE (K-12, 5–21)
Oversees special education services for preschoolers and pre-kindergartners with disabilities	Oversees special education services for school-aged children (K–12)
Services often include speech therapy, OT, PT, SEIT, etc., usually in home or preschool settings	Services are delivered within the public school system, including IEP supports, classroom accommodations, related services. such as ST, PT, etc.
Focus is on developmental delays	Focus shifts to educational impact of the disability
Administered by CPSE within the district, often with a county representative	Run by the district’s CSE team, often with more staff (school psychologist, special ed teacher, etc.)

Common Challenges During the Transition

- Eligibility Changes: Some children who qualified for CPSE may not qualify for CSE, due to different criteria (educational vs. developmental needs).
 - Service Reductions: Parents may see a decrease in services (e.g., loss of SEIT or more individualized support) when moving to school-age programs.
 - Limited Program Options: Not all districts have diverse special education placements, leading to placement concerns or disagreements.
 - Navigating a New Team: Families must now work with a different committee, which may be less familiar with their child’s history.
 - Parental Uncertainty: The shift to a more structured academic environment can be overwhelming for both child and parent.
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Tips for Parents

- Be proactive: Ask your CPSE representative about timelines and what to expect.
- Keep thorough records: Bring evaluations, progress reports, and therapy notes to the transition meeting. Make a copy of your CPSE application.
- Know your rights: Learn about the IEP process and procedural safeguards under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).
- Ask questions: Don’t hesitate to ask about services, placement options, or request further evaluations if needed.