



HOMESCHOOLING YOUR SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD

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SPECIAL NEEDS HOMESCHOOL SUCCESS

As a parent, can you home educate your special needs child?
You sure can!

We're going to share information & resources to inform you of your options when planning and considering special needs homeschooling.

There are approximately 38,000 students out of every 100,000 special needs children being homeschooled. That is almost three times higher than the number of students being served in public school special education programs. 50% of special needs children do better in a homeschool environment than in school.

The four major types of disabilities include physical, developmental, behavioral or emotional, and sensory impaired disorders. While many disabilities fall under one of these four umbrellas, many can fall under two or more.

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STATISTICS

Did you know? 61% of homeschooled special needs children were withdrawn from school because they made inadequate progress.

34% were in public school making adequate progress, along with 5% who were withdrawn – for other reasons.

38% of homeschooled children being special needs, is more than two and half times the number being served in public school and is one of the eye-opening homeschooling statistics. That is almost three times higher than the number of students being served in public school special education programs.

WHY?

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WHEN DISTRICTS FIGHT PARENTS

“Walsh, Gallegos, Trevino, Kyle & Robinson is a law firm deeply entrenched in the Texas education landscape. They are often hired by school districts to fight parents advocating on behalf of their students with special needs. Districts use taxpayer dollars to lawyer up against parents who demand services under the law which are FAPE and IDEA rights. More than 70% of school districts in Texas enlist the help of Walsh Gallegos to undermine parental rights.

Walsh Gallegos was also a primary player in helping school districts uphold an arbitrary cap on special education students that was set in 2004. The Houston Chronicle did an exposé on the cap in 2016 called Denied.

In October, Mary Lowe of Families Engaged went before the Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) to alert them about Walsh Gallegos. She uncovered a presentation given to Region 15 Education Service Center (ESC) by Walsh Gallegos. The presentation was designed to teach districts how to skirt Senate Bill 3. Her testimony can be found here.”

<https://socialimpactpodcast.buzzsprout.com/2039551/11603709?fbclid=IwAR0kN4ghYCVak1mc57hqFaLkpDJFb3rf7DdilMb1U8aER3GwEnM7sJSyrY>



WHAT ARE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT 'PUSH-OUTS'?

CHN and NHELD speak with many parents who are just beginning to homeschool – including their special needs children. We hear very similar stories, time and time again, about the child's needs going unmet despite PPT meetings. IEPs not followed, or inappropriate for meeting a child's needs. On it goes. It's sometimes intentional.

"Pushout refers to practices that contribute to students dropping out. These include unwelcoming and uncaring school environments and over-reliance on zero tolerance school policies that push students out of school. Historically, factors (e.g., suspension, expulsions, systemic inequality) that result in school pushout have disproportionately impacted students of color, students from low-income families, LGBT students and students in the juvenile justice and alternative education settings. Research demonstrates that the dropping out of school that is a product of pushout has severe and lasting consequences for students, schools, and communities. Students who are pushed out experience diminished academic opportunities and social alienation. They are pushed into substandard alternative schools and GED programs, which may compromise future academic and job success."

Excerpted from: <https://supportiveschooldiscipline.org/push-out>

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WHAT SPECIAL NEEDS?

This is a list of the more common services and supports a homeschooled special needs child might need. Very often, parents have a wide choice of providers to choose from in their area, under their insurance policy. Having more choice in finding a provider that is a good fit, with the amount of time for services that is really needed, is much easier to obtain. There is no fighting with PPT meetings in districts that seem more interested in game playing, than meeting a child's needs.

- * Speech-language and audiology services
- * Psychological counseling services
- * Occupational and/or Physical Therapy
- * Orientation and mobility supports
- * Social work services
- * Dyslexia & other learning disabilities
- * Reading Support

To see the CT Dept. of Education Special Education website: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Special-Education/Bureau-of-Special-Education>

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CT STATUTES RECOGNIZING DYSLEXIA

Dyslexia is a condition that could qualify a child as having a specific learning disability under the IDEA. Further, **State and Local Education Agencies cannot prohibit the use of the term dyslexia in evaluations, eligibility, and IEP documents. It is often ignored.**

2017; 2016; 2015 Dyslexia Assessment & Instruction; Teacher Training
Connecticut general statutes 10-14t (Reading Assessment), 10-145a (Teacher Training), 10-145d(Teacher Training),10-220a (In-service training)
2021, 2019 [Dyslexia Law Implementation Task Force, Public Act No. 21-168](#) | Special Act 19-8

Sec. 10-14t. Reading assessments for students in kindergarten to grade three. (a) On or before January 1, 2016, the Department of Education shall develop or approve reading assessments for use by local and regional boards of education for the school year commencing July 1, 2016, and each school year thereafter, to identify students in kindergarten to grade three, inclusive, who are below proficiency in reading, provided any reading assessments developed or approved by the department include frequent screening and progress monitoring of students. Such reading assessments shall (1) measure phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, (2) provide opportunities for periodic formative assessment during the school year, (3) produce data that is useful for informing individual and classroom instruction, including the grouping of students based on such data and the selection of instructional activities based on data of individual student response patterns during such progress monitoring, (4) be compatible with best practices in reading instruction and research, and **(5) assist in identifying, in whole or in part, students at risk for dyslexia,** as defined in section 10-3d, or other reading-related learning disabilities.
https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_163c.htm#sec_10-14t

CT Mirror News – Education department ignoring legislative mandate on dyslexia, 1/20/2022 - Read [here](#)

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EVALUATING YOUR CHILD FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

Homeschooling presents a different pathway to obtaining evaluations, or “rule outs” for your child in order to determine if they qualify as having special needs and defining what those needs are, and including recommending specific services.

- *Meet and discuss with your family physician or pediatrician.
- *Explain your observations.
- *Request a referral for evaluation – they can write that on their prescription pad or via a letter.
- *Make sure your insurance provider will cover expenses for a physician requested “neuro-psychological evaluation”, or a “speech and language evaluation”, or whatever it is you are seeking.
- *Research who the neuropsychologists are in your area and see what their ratings are.
- *Your physician should be able to give some recommendations, too.
- *Talk to a few of the providers and tell them what you are seeking for your child, ask about appointment availability, as it can take weeks to get an appointment.

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/evaluation/>
<https://connpsych.org/find-a-psychologist/>

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HOMESCHOOLING SPECIAL NEEDS CURRICULA

There are no additional requirements for homeschooling children with special needs. According to the Connecticut State Board of Education, a student receiving home instruction is not enrolled in a private school so is not eligible for special education or related services. In Connecticut, homeschooled students are NOT eligible for special education services to be provided by their school district for free.

RESOURCES FOR HOMESCHOOLING SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

<https://cthomeschoolnetwork.org/special-education>

<https://www.time4learning.com/homeschooling/special-needs/>

<https://www.homeschool.com/how-to-homeschool-special-needs/>

<https://www.greenchildmagazine.com/homeschooling-special-needs/>

<https://thehomeschoolresourceroom.com/2021/03/15/homeschooling-special-needs-child/>

<https://www.understood.org/articles/en/the-pros-and-cons-of-homeschooling>

<https://spedhomeschool.com/>

<http://spedhomeschool.com/curriculum/>

<https://spedhomeschool.com/30-free-online-assessment-tools-for-evaluating-your-struggling-learner/>

CURRICULA OPTIONS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

<https://www.homeschool.com/curriculum-resources-for-special-needs/>

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STRUCTURING YOUR DAY: DO YOU NEED A SCHEDULE?

First of all, it's important for parents to find the strength and trust in their own ability to raise their own special needs child. What does that mean? It means that like any parents, it's not really helpful to compare your child, or yourself, to another family's child. Even within the same family, children can be very different. Finding out what will work for your child, and what it is that you can use for homeschool helps, that your child "buys in to", is what you want. It's about making and creating a positive day and monitoring for signs that flexibility and change need to occur from time to time. Stepping back, putting whatever you are doing away for another time, and choosing something – whatever it is that works in the moment – different, and go with it. Give your child choices and agree to "save this for another time".

Many sp-ed children thrive on routines. Here are tips for including them in your day in a way that is literally visible, while allowing for flexibility, into your child's daily routine.
<https://www.the-special-needs-child.com/Routines.html>

Identify the routines/rules.

Be as specific as possible.

Focus on specific behaviors. Avoid vague rules like "be good."

Start with one or two rules and add new rules as needed. A large number of rules will be difficult to follow and enforce.

Rules should be realistic and fit your child's age and development.

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HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD HAS A LEARNING DISABILITY?

Self-test websites (not intended in any way to replace a professional evaluation) offer parents a free questionnaire to give insight into various special needs.

ADHD with a learning disability? (18 Q's) <https://www.additudemag.com/learning-disability-symptoms-test/>

Dyslexia Symptom Test for Children (16 Q's) <https://www.additudemag.com/dyslexia-symptoms-test-children/?src=test>

Dyspraxia Symptom Test for Children (15 Q's) <https://www.additudemag.com/self-test-dyspraxia-symptoms-in-children/?src=test>

Dyscalculia Symptom Test for Children (16 Q's) <https://www.additudemag.com/screener-dyscalculia-symptoms-test-children/?src=test>

Full ADHD Symptoms Test for Children (17 Q's) <https://www.additudemag.com/adhd-symptoms-test-children/?src=test>

Executive Dysfunction Symptom Test for Children (13 Q's) <https://www.additudemag.com/screener-executive-function-deficit-symptoms-test-children/?src=test>

Learn How LDs Are Diagnosed – General - <https://www.ednc.org/how-would-i-know-if-my-child-has-a-learning-disability/>



VISUAL PROCESSING DISORDER

In Connecticut, a quick search for “CT vision processing disorder”, known as “VPD” will quickly show parents the providers that are in their area. From there, you can make the necessary outreach to providers that can evaluate and/or provide services for your child.

There are 7 types of visual processing disorders and they are easily explained at this website. This could be a good resource to start or continue a conversation with a provider.

<https://www.optometrists.org/vision-therapy/guide-vision-and-learning-difficulties/guide-to-visual-information-processing/signs-of-visual-processing-information-dysfunction/>



HEARING & AUDITORY PROCESSING DISORDERS

Signs and symptoms of CAPD may include one or more of the following behavioral characteristics:

- | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty localizing sound• Difficulty understanding spoken language in competing messages, in noisy backgrounds, in reverberant environments, or when presented rapidly• Taking longer to respond in oral communication situations• Frequent requests for repetitions, saying “what” and “huh” frequently• Inconsistent or inappropriate responding• Difficulty comprehending and following rapid speech• Difficulty following complex auditory directions or commands | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty learning songs or nursery rhymes• Misunderstanding messages, such as detecting prosody changes that help to interpret sarcasm or jokes• Poor musical and singing skills• Difficulty paying attention• Being easily distracted• Poor performance on speech and language or psychoeducational tests in the areas of auditory-related skills• Associated reading, spelling, and learning problems• Difficulty learning a new language |
|--|--|

<https://www.asha.org/practice-portal/clinical-topics/central-auditory-processing-disorder/>



EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING: ATTENTION AND FOCUS CHALLENGES

Children with ADHD, ADD, or even just difficulties with focus and attention can have resulting struggles with executive functioning skills.

Individuals with executive dysfunction struggle with planning, problem-solving, organization, and time management. Children and adults with executive functioning problems struggle to organize materials, regulate emotions, set schedules and stick with tasks.

They misplace papers, reports, and other school materials.

Executive function and self-regulation skills are the mental processes that enable us to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully.

Children with EFD are not as impulsive and spontaneous as kids with ADHD.

The child with EFD has the ability to self-regulate and control his emotions, while the child with ADHD struggles to do so. A proper diagnosis is necessary to support the child with EFD or ADHD.

LOOKING AT SENSORY INTEGRATION FUNCTIONING

Sensory processing disorder (SPD) is a condition that affects how your brain processes sensory information – what you see, hear, smell, taste, or touch. SPD usually means you're overly sensitive to stimuli that other people are not. It can cause the opposite effect, too. In these cases, it takes more stimuli to impact you. They can be a mixture of oversensitive and under-sensitive. How do you know? <https://sensoryhealth.org/basic/identification-of-spd>

<p>Children may be oversensitive if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Think clothing feels too scratchy or itchy.Think lights seem too bright.Think sounds seem too loud.Think soft touches feel too hard.Experience food textures make them gag.Have poor balance or seem clumsy.Are afraid to play on the swings.React poorly to sudden movements, touches, loud noises, or bright lights.Have behavior problems	<p>Children may be under-sensitive (sensory-seeking) if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Can't sit stillSeek thrills (loves jumping, heights, and spinning).Can spin without getting dizzy.Don't pick up on social cues.Don't recognize personal space.Chew on things (including their hands and clothing).Seek visual stimulation (like electronics).Have problems sleeping.Don't recognize when their face is dirty or nose is running.



WHEN YOUR CHILD NEEDS A.B.A. THERAPY

ABA is a therapy based on the science of learning and behavior. It is typically used to help people with autism and other developmental disorders, to learn behaviors that help them live safer and more fulfilling lives. ABA therapy can help people living with ASD but also those who suffer from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, panic disorder, post traumatic stress disorder, and/or other intellectual disabilities. According to ABA therapy professionals, ABA should be stopped when: When the child has completed 2-3 years of intensive therapy followed by 2-3 more years in a focused approach.

The following are examples of what educational needs, SDIs, and Goals could look like for a child with autism who needs ABA.

This does not have to be an ABA or VB classroom!

The following is just so you can get a taste of what should be individualized in the IEP.

<https://www.nseai.org/blog/when-your-child-needs-aba>



A VIABLE SOLUTION: HOMESCHOOL

For homeschool advocate parents who have fielded phone calls, emails, in-person support group meetings, Info Nights, conferences, including speaking with the parents of special needs children who wonder if they can homeschool – know – that YOU CAN DO IT.

Some parents “try homeschooling” during the summer, which is an option, but it can also dip into your summer freedom which some people don't want to do. The main comment that most parents make once they find their homeschool groove, is how much the whole family loves it and how much they lament not doing it sooner. That one sentiment has been expressed many hundreds of times. BE one of those parents! Just do it. Try it. If you want to, you can always re-enroll your child in the district and start up with a fresh PPT meeting. That is your choice, as the parent who is driving the ship.

You'll never know, if you don't try. Reach out to other families with special needs children and plan a meet-up. Make it happen where you live. CHN and many parents are here to help you along the way.

We hope that this presentation has given you insight and resources to continue forward on your journey to setting your child up for his or her own unique homeschool success story!

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