

# PRESCHOOL

## *Preschool Eligibilities*

There are three main preschool eligibilities categories: Speech Language Impaired (SLI), Developmentally Delayed (DD), Preschool Severe Delay (PSD). Additionally the sensory areas of Hearing Impaired (HI) and Visually Impaired (VI) are also used with preschool aged children.

**Note:** Even though at least one score must be from a standardized/normed test, the team has the responsibility and authority to make decisions regarding eligibility that also include observations, performance, and previous information and records – the standard score should not be the sole reason for eligibility.

No one person nor one test determines eligibility for special education services.

SLI - performance on a norm-reference test that measures at least one and one-half standard deviations below the mean for children of the same chronological age or whose speech out of context, is unintelligible to a listener who is unfamiliar with the child. (Typically a standard score of 77 or less)

DD – performance on norm-referenced test(s) that measures at least one and one-half, but not more than three, standard deviations below the mean for children of the same chronological age in two or more of the following areas: (a) cognitive development (b) physical development (c) communication development (d) social or emotional development (e) adaptive development.

PSD - performance on norm-referenced test(s) that measures at least three standard deviations below the mean for children of the same chronological age in one or more of the following areas: (a) cognitive development (b) physical development (c) communication development (d) social or emotional development (e) adaptive development. (Typically a standard score of 55 or less)

HI - The student has a loss of hearing acuity that adversely affects performance in the educational environment.

VI -The student has a loss of visual acuity (20/60 or worse) or loss of visual field (10% or less) that, even with correction, adversely affects performance in the educational environment. The term includes both partial sight (visual impairment) and blindness.

## **JO Combs POPS Programs**

POPS, the Program for Outstanding Preschoolers is a special education preschool program. Children can be served in a variety of settings and with a variety of services. IEP teams make the placement decisions based on the individual needs of the children. Related services, such as speech language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and or vision/hearing services are all available as appropriate. All of the JO Combs preschool classes are currently on the Ranch Elementary campus.

### Key Components

- Children must reside within the JO Combs District boundaries to be eligible
- Serves children having developmental delays who are between 2.9 and 5 years old (if not kindergarten eligible).
- Screenings are provided throughout the school year, at a minimum, within 45 days of a referral.
- If children are found to be in a need of more in-depth testing, they will be scheduled for an

- evaluation. The evaluation will determine if the child demonstrates a developmental delay that requires special education and/or related services.
- Preschool children may be referred by parents or agencies.
- Children must demonstrate delays in one of more of the five major developmental areas. Developmental areas are: speech and/or language, fine and/or gross motor, cognitive/academic, adaptive (self-help) and/or social-emotional. Children who have a hearing and/or vision delay may also be served.
- Service delivery can occur in a variety of settings. The IEP team will make the decision regarding specific needs, times, services needed and locations of those services.
- The special needs preschool classes are offered at Ranch Elementary and Simonton Elementary M-T and Th-F, there are no classes on Wed for preschool.
- Typically developing peers are also enrolled in the special need POPS preschool classes to act as role models for both behavior and communication skills.
- Peer models must be screened for their language and behavior prior to being recommended. Peer models must be independent in toileting. The peer model program is tuition-based. Peer models must have their own transportation. Peer models can be from outside of the district boundaries.

### **Placement option for POPS**

1. Self-contained reverse integration classroom. There are up to 12 children with IEPs and 3-4 typically developing peer role models. These classes have a dual-certified Early Childhood Teacher and at least one paraprofessional. The classes are offered AM & PM, 2.5 hours Mon., Tues., Thurs., & Fri. AM classes are 9:15- 11:45 and PM classes are 1:15-3:45.

2. Structured Classroom - The children in this class require a very structured and routine environment. The children that would qualify for this classroom would have significant communication & social interaction delays, and likely self-regulation delays. Additionally, they would likely be utilizing alternative methods of communication and augmentative devices/picture schedules. There are up to 8 children with two paraprofessionals. There are no typical peers in this program.

3. Preschool students with special needs may also be eligible to attend the JO Combs Community Preschool Kindergarten Prep classes. Children with IEPs that would most benefit this type of classroom would be those with mild to moderate delays and whose needs could be met with itinerant speech language and/or itinerant services from an Early Childhood Special Education Teacher. Children with special needs placed in Kinder-Prep by their IEP team DO NOT pay tuition, however if a parent chooses to place their child with special needs in the Kinder-Prep program outside of the IEP team process, the parent would be responsible for the tuition.

Other preschool Options:

Head Start – JO Combs annually joins in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Pinal-Gila Community Child Services Head Start. In that agreement JO Combs can place up to 4 preschool students in a Head Start program. The students receive their services from JO Combs staff, however the Head Start staff is responsible for their ongoing progress monitoring and are part of the children's IEP team.

Itinerant – For preschoolers with only articulation errors the therapy is typically provided through itinerant services. With itinerant services the parent brings the student to the home campus of the student, unless another campus is more convenient for the parent, and the student receives 30-45 minutes of 1:1 or small group articulation therapy. Although itinerant services are almost always for speech only, the IEP team can address other services if it is appropriate.

Transportation is offered for all preschool students receiving special education services in one of the District's program. Transportation to Head Start and itinerant services are provided by parents. For students who's IEPs established transportation as a related service, the parents may choose to contract with the JO Combs transportation department. In doing so they commit to a minimum of a quarter of the school year to provide transportation up and back to their child's program. In return JO Combs reimburses them on a quarterly basis at the state rate per mile. If parents choose this option they make the arrangements with transportation directly, not through the special education program.