



Special Education Do's and Don'ts For Charter Schools

DO start with a commitment that all children deserve a quality education, especially children with disabilities.

DON'T exclude children with disabilities in your enrollment process.

DO involve parents in finding out the child's history and what works best for their child at school to enhance learning.

DON'T leave the school district out of the process. They are the Local Education Agency (LEA) and they are ultimately responsible for the education of children with disabilities in charter schools and traditional public schools.

DO ask for the child's cumulative record from the school district. Make sure the record includes the ESE file. In many districts, there is a form to complete to request the records.

DON'T forget to look at the ESE records to determine the services that the students with disabilities will need at your school.

DO think "outside" the lines on how to provide the best instructional services to your children with disabilities. Many charter schools are able to make significant improvements for children with disabilities because of small school size, individual attention and innovative instructional strategies.

DON'T leave out your colleagues. Contact other charter schools in your district; they can give you advice on how to get ESE services such as speech, occupational, and physical therapy. Many charter schools are pooling their resources and hiring ESE staff between a number of charter schools.

DO let your teachers know what is needed to provide an appropriate education for children with disabilities.

- Ask for help from your ESE department in your school district.
- Send your teachers for training.



DO include your students with disabilities in “baseline testing” and other accountability measures.

DON'T ignore technology as a resource to help your students with disabilities improve.

DO understand the funding requirements.

- Make sure the IEP is current (within 12 months).
- Make sure there is a matrix on file.
- Make sure appropriate procedures are followed before placing a child in a special education program.

DON'T exclude students with disabilities from opportunities at your school in social, extracurricular, and academic activities.

DO provide classroom-based supports that ensure the student with disabilities is successful.

DON'T change a student with disabilities placement without following appropriate procedures, especially in discipline situations.

For Assistance:

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