

# ***COUNSELING SERVICES***

## **LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Schools are to ensure that students with disabilities have access to regular guidance and counseling programs to the same extent as their non-disabled peers. Counseling as a related service offered by an IEP team is considered a supplement to the regular guidance and counseling program when it is necessary for the student with disabilities to benefit from his or her special education program.

### ***INTERVENTIONS***

Interventions that can ameliorate the student's behavioral symptoms should be considered and implemented if appropriate, prior to considering a referral for Counseling as a related service. A review of the student's records and conferences with the parent and teachers will provide information to assist in determining appropriate interventions.

These interventions may include:

- Modifications to the instructional program or curriculum
- Modifications of classroom environment
- Development of a behavior intervention plan
- Consultation with the parent
- Participation in Tier 2 interventions, such as general education social skills groups
- Counseling services available within the school or community

### ***COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE***

If interventions are not effective in improving the student's behavior and adjustment so that the student with disabilities can benefit from the educational program, a referral for a social-emotional assessment to determine the need for counseling and guidance as a related service may be considered. Counseling as a related service offered by an IEP team is considered a supplement to the regular guidance and counseling program when it is necessary for the student with disabilities to benefit from his or her special education program.

### ***PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES, EDUCATIONALLY-RELATED INTENSIVE COUNSELING SERVICES (ERICS)***

When counseling and guidance services have proven ineffective for a student with disabilities to benefit from his/her special education program or the student's social-emotional/ behavior data indicates a need for more intensive counseling services (increase in frequency and/or duration), a referral for a Psychological Services, Educationally-Related Intensive Counseling Services (ERICS) assessment may be considered.

### ***IEP TEAM PROCEDURES***

The determination of counseling as a related service is based on the results of an assessment conducted by a credentialed school psychologist or psychiatric social worker employed by the District.

An assessment plan must be generated that reflects social-emotional development as the proposed area of assessment. Prior to the assessment, the assessment plan must be reviewed and approved by the parent or guardian.

Within 60 days of school's receipt of the signed assessment plan from the parent, the assessment shall be completed and an IEP meeting convened.

The assessment will be based on information collected from, but not limited to, the following sources:

Review of existing data	Student Interview
Observation of the child in a variety of settings	Teacher/Parent Surveys
Parent Interview; Teacher Interview	Standardized Rating Scales

NOTE: The parent has a right to request a copy of the assessment report be sent to them 4 days in advance of the IEP meeting. (See signed assessment plan submitted by the parent.) It is recommended that the report be completed in advance to ensure timely adherence to the request.

### ***THE IEP TEAM MEETING***

The IEP team will review the assessment results and determine whether counseling services are necessary to assist the student with a disability to benefit from his/her special education program. The IEP team, which includes participation by the parent, shall determine whether the student needs counseling as a related service based on the assessment results, present levels of performance, information provided by the parent, and any additional information provided by other IEP team members.

If the IEP team has determined that counseling, as a related service is needed to assist the student access his special education program, the IEP team shall develop goals that correspond to the assessed needs of the student documented in the present levels of performance.

The goals and objectives must specifically address those social-emotional areas that limit the student's progress in the educational program. The goals must align to the needs identified in the present levels of performance.

The assessed and unique needs of the student determine the frequency and duration of the counseling goals and objectives. Because students vary in their responses to counseling interventions, the IEP team may consider establishing goals for a period of less than one year, if appropriate.

### ***DETERMINING GOAL ACHIEVEMENT***

The IEP team reviews the following information when determining student's progress in meeting previous counseling goals:

- Progress reports submitted by the service provider(s)
- Information provided by the teacher
- Information provided by the parent

If the student has not met his/her goal, the IEP team will modify the previous goals to more appropriately address the student's identified needs. If the student is not responsive to the counseling services provided by District personnel or demonstrates deterioration in behavior, the IEP team will reconvene prior to the anticipated next annual review date to discuss and consider one, or a combination of the following options:

- Referral for assessment to consider the need for Psychological Services, Educationally Related Intensive Counseling Services (ERICS) which may include the need for a comprehensive psycho-educational assessment by a credentialed school psychologist employed by the District.
- Change of eligibility when the behavior meets the criteria for the disability of emotional disturbance;
- Change to a more restrictive instructional setting.

**Note:** If a change in eligibility or placement is considered, a reassessment must be completed.

- When considering a change in counseling services, an IEP meeting must be held to determine to what extent counseling may be needed.
- If the service may no longer be needed, the team shall explore other services that are available to assist in the student's transition.
- When considering ERICS as a related service, an assessment must be completed and data collected that includes the interventions implemented and the student's response to the interventions. In addition, this data should include identification of any of the behavior(s) listed below that have existed over a long period of time and to a marked degree in frequency, duration, or intensity with the implementation of interventions:
  - Marked isolation and social impairment;
  - Self-injurious behavior;
  - Significant aggression toward people and/or animals;
  - Pattern of repeated negativistic and defiant behavior;
  - Significant negative impact on school performance by home and living environments;
  - One or more psychiatric hospitalizations;
  - Marked or major depression;
  - Frequency and duration of counseling (6 months to 1 year) have been insufficient for student needs.

### ***INFORMING PARENTS OF PROGRESS TOWARD GOAL ACHIEVEMENT***

It is a legal requirement that parents of students with disabilities must be informed of progress and achievement toward IEP goals at least as often as report cards are issued for general education students. Personnel responsible for goals must document student progress towards IEP goals on the *IEP Report of Progress and Achievement from Current IEP* located on page 5 of the IEP. Copies of the *IEP Report(s) of Progress and Achievement* must be provided to the parent or sent home with students when issuing report cards to general education students. See LAUSD Policy Bulletins, 2332.6 *Elementary School Progress Report Marking Practices and Procedures* and 1353.1 *Marking Practices and Procedures in Secondary Schools* for more information.