



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed.D., *State Superintendent*

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DATE: November 17, 2016

TO: Directors, Exceptional Children Programs
Preschool Coordinators, Exceptional Children Programs

FROM: William B. Hussey, Director, Exceptional Children Division *WBH*
John R. Pruette, Director, Office of Early Learning *JRP*
Vivian James, Program Administrator & 619 Coordinator, Office of Early Learning

RE: Early Learning Sensory Support Program- Process for Requesting Services for the Visually Impaired

The North Carolina Early Learning Sensory Support Program (ELSSP) is administered by the Office of Early Learning and collaborates with the Exceptional Children Division. Approximately 800 children with visual and hearing impairments are served annually, with the majority of children falling into the birth through two years of age range. These children are eligible for services under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (NC Infant-Toddler Program). This is ensured by a Memorandum of Agreement between the North Carolina Departments of Public Instruction and Health and Human Services. Funding is provided by a special targeted set of state dollars, and is also supplemented with Medicaid dollars through allowable Infant-Toddler services.

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are responsible for providing special education and related services for eligible children ages three through five years of age supported through state, federal, and local funds. The ELSSP has traditionally served some preschool aged children with visual impairments, since this is a lower incidence population and LEAs do not always have the personnel resources to serve young children in this category. However, the program has never had capacity to serve all preschool children with visual impairments in NC. Over the past five years, significant funding reductions have impacted the ELSSP's ability to provide direct services when an LEA Exceptional Children Director requests that services be provided. In addition, LEA EC Directors working with ELSSP identified the need for a more standardized process for requesting services, and that a set of assurances be established when services were provided to ensure consistency of the delivery of services. To that end, a stakeholder group was assembled in the summer of 2016 to address these needs and develop a standardized process.

When requesting direct services from the ELSSP, please use the attached *Request for Services* form. Please contact the Lead ELSSP VI Manager, Lin Causey at lin.causey@esdb.dpi.nc.gov, 919-733-0533 ext. 214, or Bethany Mayo, Bethany.mayo@dpi.nc.gov, 252-969-0212.

c: Sherry Thomas
Tracy Riddle
Bethany Mayo
Ruth Anne Everett

Attachment

OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING

John R. Pruette, M.Ed., *Executive Director* | john.pruette@dpi.nc.gov | www.ncpublicschools.org/earlylearning/

2075 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2075 | (919) 807-3946

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