

SPECIAL NEEDS RATE

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Is the “Special Needs Rate” applied to all children with special needs?

A: No, not all children with special needs require accommodations above ADA guidelines in the childcare setting. Some accommodations may be provided by different organizations outside of the childcare setting.

- The “special needs rate” must be requested by the provider.
- The parent and provider will work together to determine if the additional accommodations offered by the provider will meet the needs of the child.
- Once the parent and provider agree, the Special Needs Matrix tool will be completed, signed, and submitted to the coalition for consideration.
- The coalition must approve the rate prior to reimbursement.

Q: Will the documentation regarding the special needs child’s condition need to be updated at each redetermination?

A: The family services staff will review all eligibility factors at each redetermination. The documentation regarding a special needs condition is unlikely to change but should be reviewed annually. (Parent will not need to provide additional documentation if there has been no change in the child’s condition). IEP and FSP should also reviewed annually as they may have end dates and or expiration dates.

Glossary of Terms

Accommodations – changes that can be made in the way child accesses information and demonstrates performance. Accommodations involve the use of various strategies, assistive technologies, flexibility in the schedule or environment, or support from a person to increase, maintain or improve the performance of a student with disabilities working through the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five standards. Determining the intensity of the accommodations will be critical to determining the appropriate level of ratings.

Accessible instructional materials – instructional materials that have been formatted or adapted to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities.

Alternative or augmentative communication systems – any and all types of communication approaches that assist, suggest, supplement or substitute for the student’s language skills (speech). These systems may include manual communication (signing); electronic devices; or non-electronic devices, adaptations, and materials.

Assistance for activities of daily living and self-care – includes occasional reminders, cueing, direct instruction, and personal assistance. (Domain C: Independent Functioning)

Assistive technology – any item, piece of equipment or product system—whether acquired commercially off

the shelf, modified or customized—that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a student with a disability. It does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted or the replacement of that device. Examples of assistive technology devices include remote-controlled switches, expanded keyboards, and speech output devices.

Behavioral interventions – strategies, procedures, protocols and supports implemented to modify or maintain a student’s behavior.

Behavior management – includes services provided to meet identified social and emotional needs of children with exceptionalities. Services may include positive behavioral supports, behavioral interventions, social skills development, socialization, and counseling. (Domain B: Social or Emotional Behavior)

Classroom setting – general factors related to the educational setting, such as a student-to-staff ratio and degree of structure provided, as well as specialized environmental considerations such as acoustics.

Collaboration – a joint effort among teachers, families, agencies, and others. Collaboration involves cooperative, proactive work on the part of all participants, with all parties actively planning and carrying out interventions designed to meet a student’s needs. To be checked on the matrix, collaboration must be regularly scheduled and conducted face-to-face. At Level 3, written exchange among professionals or families does not constitute collaboration.

Communication systems – alternative and augmentative communication devices, electronic and non-electronic tools, and individual amplification systems. (Domain E: Communication)

Consultation – sharing of information between teachers, families, agencies, and others to address the student’s needs. To be checked on the matrix, consultation must be regularly scheduled and conducted face-to-face or virtually, as defined in each domain. Written exchange among professionals does not constitute a virtual meeting; however, written exchange with families is allowable for consultation at Level 2.

Continuous – uninterrupted, constant. (Generally used in Level 5)

Counseling – refers to individual or group activities provided by trained and credentialed or certified professionals to address the social and emotional needs of students or families.

Curriculum – includes materials and instructional plans that support the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five and developmentally appropriate practice.

Different – curriculum and needed instructional approaches, materials, or equipment that are generally or considerably different from the regular program; requires a great deal of customization for individual students. (Generally used in Levels 4 and 5)

Differential percentage rate – the percentage of rate differential, based on negotiated rate up to twenty percent (20%) above the infant care rate established by the early learning coalition.

Differentiated instruction – differentiated curriculum consists of flexibility in instructional methods, delivery, and materials to meet the learning needs of a highly diverse group; tailoring instruction to meet individual needs, focusing on differentiating content, process, and products for the learning environment.

Domain – one of five areas on the Matrix of Services intended to cover the special services and supports provided in an educational setting. The five domains are A: Curriculum and Learning Environment; B: Social or Emotional Behavior; C: Independent Functioning; D: Health Care; and E: Communication.

Electronic tools – a generic term for any type of powered device, such as computers, switches, and audio devices.

Extensive – broad and comprehensive changes are required. (Generally used in Level 4)

Frequency – the number of times a service occurs.

Functional behavioral assessment – a process for developing a useful understanding of how behavior relates to the environment. A functional behavioral assessment typically includes observations of the student and his behavior in one or more settings and at various times, interviews with individuals familiar with the student, review of records, and formal and informal measurement procedures.

Instruction – facilitates the student’s acquisition of knowledge or skills; commonly described as teaching, guiding, and scaffolding.

Instructional strategies – guidelines supporting the development of instructional activities, which for some students includes increasingly individualized approaches and methods for delivering instruction and learning activities, e.g., lesson planning and presentation routines, practice opportunities, monitoring procedures, group and individual work, and hands-on activities and projects. (Domain A: Curriculum and Learning Environment)

Interpreting services – visual presentation of oral language to students who are deaf or hard of hearing through communication modes, such as sign language, finger spelling or oral interpretation of the spoken message. Interpreters also voice the communication of students who are deaf or hard of hearing to individuals who are hearing.

Learning environment – includes assessment procedures, materials and equipment, and classroom setting.

Level – used to indicate the frequency and intensity of services and the qualifications of personnel required to provide the services. There are five levels in each domain. Level 1 represents the lowest level of service and Level 5 represents the highest level of service.

Majority – more than 50 percent.

Materials and equipment – regular, alternative, or modified textbooks, workbooks, media materials, references and resources, software, tools, supplies, and equipment required for learning and performing in the educational program. (Domain A: Curriculum and Learning Environment)

Modifications – alterations, transformations and variations provided to curriculum, instruction, materials, or equipment.

Monitoring health conditions – periodic checking of the status of the student’s health condition by a professional medical provider to keep track of, manage, or control the condition. (Domain D: Health Care)

Monthly – every month, e.g., one to three times a month. (Generally used in Level 2)

Orientation and mobility training – teaching concepts, skills, and techniques necessary for a student who has a visual impairment to travel safely and efficiently through any environment.

Personal assistance – direct help or aid to the student.

Related health care services – management of or specialized administration of medication, suctioning or tube feeding, or the provision of other types of needed school health services. Collaboration with agencies and families may be part of the required service. (Domain D: Health Care)

Services – work or duties performed for the assistance or benefit of students with exceptionalities. May be provided to students. Services include instruction, personal assistance, supervision, and monitoring.

Social skills development – includes individual or group instruction or counseling on relevant social and self-regulatory skills. (Domain B: Social or Emotional Behavior)

Socialization – includes social skills that may be acquired through specific training or the provision of opportunities for socialization that require substantial planning.

Special Considerations – the section of the matrix consisting of a checklist that is used to determine if additional points should be added to the total of the domain ratings before determining the special needs rate.

Substantial – considerable and sizable changes. (Generally used in Level 5)

Supervision or monitoring – a direct service used to oversee, maintain, regulate, or control a particular behavior or condition. In Domain C, this includes observing and reporting independent behavior, as well as the provision of direct supervision and assistance to ensure the student can benefit from the educational experience as well as to maintain personal safety and compliance.

Very small group – a student-to-staff ratio of 3-to-1 or less.