

Question & Sample Answers / ECHO TV **updated 6/16/08**
“Special Education Help for Young Children”

1. **What** do we mean by “special education” and **why** is it important to identify special education needs early?

Sample Answer:

- Special education programs are designed to meet individual learning needs.
- Special education is individualized help for young children and their parents
- Learning and development skills are the most rapid in the time from birth to age 3.
- The earlier a child gets help for special education needs, the better for overall learning and development.
- Parents are not to blame for special education needs in their children but rather are wise to seek help early in a child’s life.

2. What might be some of the signs that a child needs help with learning and development?

Sample Answer:

- Signs could include if the child has trouble hearing, seeing, walking, talking, playing or getting along with others.
- The signs can help make parents aware of learning and developmental concerns that when addressed early, can improve a child’s learning ability.
- These signs may not mean your child has mental health concerns but should be checked early so help is available to benefit the child’s health and learning abilities.

3. Besides a parent who else might notice if there are special education needs?

Sample Answer:

- First time parents might not be aware of special education needs but grandparents, friends and other relatives might notice learning and development concerns because they have experience with children.
- Sometimes child care providers notice if a child is not developing like others.
- When children turn three-years-old, the Early Childhood Screening program in school districts will check for learning and development skills.

4. What can parents do if they suspect their child has special education needs?

Sample Answer:

- Ask your child's health care provider or public health nurse if you notice your child is not growing, moving, talking or playing like other children that are the same age as your child.
- In Minnesota, schools can offer free help with special education needs with services for eligible families beginning at birth.

5. How and where are a child's special education needs evaluated by professionals?

Sample Answer:

- Teachers will meet with you and your child at school, child care center or if needed, babies may be visited in the home.
- Parents will be asked about their concerns and they will also watch to see how well the child moves, listens, and makes sounds.
- Teachers usually watch for the child's ability to speak, crawl or walk, follow directions and see how well a child plays by himself and with others.

6. Do special education programs cost anything?

Sample Answer:

- Special education services are free of charge if a child qualifies. To find out if your child is eligible, parents should contact their local school district.
- Children that do qualify will most often get help at home or in their child care center or in a preschool.

7. Special education programs are targeted to help children and families. What benefits are available for parents and caretakers?

Sample Answer:

- Special Education provides you with knowledge and skills to work with your child. What works well with one child may not work with another.
- The programs provide information, ideas, materials and support for families to nurture a child's learning and growth.
- Parents may learn games they can play (or may learn things to do) to help their child's development as part of everyday family activities and routines in their homes

8. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about special education programs that may benefit our families and our community?

- (Guest expert may choose to expand on information here)

