Criteria for Eligibility for Preschool Special Education Programs and/or Services

As stated in New York State regulations, “Eligibility as a preschool student with a disability shall be based on the results of an individual evaluation which is provided in the student’s native language, not dependent on a single procedure, and administered by a multidisciplinary team in accordance with all other requirements as described in the regulations.”

“To be identified as having a disability, a preschool student shall exhibit a significant delay or disability in one or more functional areas related to Cognitive, Language and Communication, Adaptive, Socio-Emotional, or Motor Development which adversely affects the student’s ability to learn.”

To qualify, a student must exhibit:

1. A 12 month delay in one or more functional area OR a 33 percent delay in one functional area.

2. A 25 percent delay in two functional areas.

3. A score of 2.0 standard deviations below the mean in one functional area.

4. A score of 1.5 standard deviations below the mean in two functional areas.
Preschool Student with a Disability

Cognitive – deficits in intellectual abilities beyond normal variations for age and cultural background which might include difficulties in the ability to acquire information, problem solve, reason, and generalize information. It may impact the child’s rate of learning, processing difficulties, memory skills, attention span, and organization skills.

Language and Communication – deficits beyond normal variation for age and cultural background that adversely affect the ability to learn or acquire skills in the primary language in one or more of the following areas: receptive language, expressive language, articulation/phonology, pragmatics, fluency, oral motor skills, or voice (sound quality or breath support).

Adaptive Development – deficits learning or acquiring skills necessary for daily living and learning through play. Adaptive behavior areas would include activities such as toileting, eating, dressing, and personal hygiene, development of play skills (pretend or exploratory), and peer and adult social play.

Social-Emotional Development – child demonstrates deviations in affect or relational skills beyond normal variation for age and cultural background. Child shows significant observable behaviors such as perseveration, inability to transition, overdependence on structure and routine, and/or rigidity. Child shows significant difficulties with trust building, aggressiveness, compliance, lack of age-appropriate self-control, oppositional/defiant behavior, destructive behavior, poor awareness of self and others or inappropriate play skills for age. Child demonstrates significant affect difficulties such as depression/withdrawal, limited range of emotions for a given situation, low frustration tolerance, excessive fear/anxiety, radical mood swings and/or inappropriate fears.

Motor Development – deficit beyond normal variability for age and experience in either coordination, movement patterns, quality, or range of motion or strength and endurance of gross (large muscle), fine motor (small muscle), or perceptual motor (integration of sensory and motor) abilities that adversely affects the child’s ability to learn or acquire skills relative to one or more of the following: maintaining or controlling posture, functional mobility (walking or running), sensory awareness of the body or movement, sensory-integration, reach and/or grasp of objects, tool use, perceptual motor abilities (eye-hand coordination for tracing), and sequencing motor components to achieve a functional goal.