SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM
CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS

This checklist has been developed by the Massachusetts Association of 766 Approved Private Schools (maaps) to provide parents with a means of evaluating various special education programs that may offer services for their child. It is meant as an objective guide, to help in the decision-making process of selecting a program their child may attend. Please keep in mind the following:

- All programs are unique and offer positive educational options for the students they serve.
- As parents, you are encouraged to visit a number of programs that may offer the type of program that will best meet the needs of your child.
- When you arrange for a visit, request in advance that copies of the program’s handbooks, policies, and procedures be mailed to you, or be available when you arrive.
- You may want to visit a program more than once. You can request a second visit to observe the students in the program.
- Take your time to learn about the program, realize that as you know more about the differences in programs, you can work with the staff and request the services be tailored to meet your child’s needs.
- You will also work in partnership with the staff, and the options offered to your child may be adjusted after your child is in the program.
- You can use the following checklist to help you evaluate each program that you visit.
In comparing programs and facilities that serve exceptional children, the following are suggested questions and topics to be considered.

WHERE IS THE PROGRAM LOCATED?

Travel time from home?

Is it a day program? Number of days a year? Length of school day?

Is it a residential program? Number of days a year?

Does the program have a summer program? How long?

Does the program have an extended day option? Days of the week? Hours? Number of days per year?

WHAT STUDENT POPULATION(S) DOES THE PROGRAM SERVE?

Ages of students?

Does the program serve males and females?

What stated populations does the program serve?

_____ Acquired Brain Injury
_____ Asperger's Syndrome
_____ Anxiety Disorder
_____ Attention Deficit Disorder
_____ Autism
_____ Behaviorally Disordered
_____ Bi-Polar
_____ Blind
_____ Cerebral Palsy
_____ Deaf
_____ Deaf with Cochlear Implants
_____ Depressive Disorder
_____ Developmentally Disabled
_____ Dual Diagnosis
_____ Dyslexic
_____ Emotionally Disturbed
_____ Fire Setters
_____ Hearing Impaired
_____ Juvenile Offender

_____ Language-based Learning Disability
_____ Language Impaired
_____ Learning Disabled
_____ Medically Fragile
_____ Multiple Disabilities
_____ Mentally Ill
_____ Mental Retardation
_____ Mild Learning Disabled
_____ Mood Disorder
_____ Neurological Disorder
_____ Non-Verbal Learning Disabled
_____ Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
_____ Perceptually Handicapped
_____ Pervasive Development Disorder (PDD)
_____ Physical Disability
_____ Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
_____ Prader-Willi Syndrome
_____ Psychotic Disorder
_____ Reactive Attachment Disorder
_____ Severe Maladaptive Behavior
Severe Mental Retardation  Tourette's Syndrome
Sex Offender  Visually Impaired
Sexually Reactive  Other
Traumatic Brain Injury

Licensure: Is the program licensed by state agencies?
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Department of Early Education and Care (Residential Programs)
Other

Accreditations:
What accreditations does the program have?

Affiliations:
What local, state, or national affiliations does the program belong to?
Massachusetts Association of 766 Approved Private Schools (maaps)
National Association of Private Schools for Exceptional Children (NAPSEC)
Other

History of the Program
Is the program or school part of a larger organization?
What is the organizational structure?
How long has the program been providing services to exceptional children?
When was the specific program your child needs established?

Related Services
What related services does the program offer?
Transportation
Speech-language pathology
Audiology services
Psychological services
Occupational Therapy
Counseling services
Orientation and mobility services
School health services
Social work services
Parent training and counseling

Additional Services
What additional services does the program offer?
Recreation
Vocational training
Family counseling
Transitional services
Remedial academic services
Career planning
Hands-on training experience
Other

PROGRAM SETTING
Program services provided in what type of setting?

NOTES
What part of a typical week would your child be in:
Regular classes (Number)
Grade level
Special classes (Number)
Special school
Home program
Hospital

STAFF CERTIFICATIONS:
What is the overall program staff/student ratio?
What are the Administrator’s Certifications?
Regular education teachers
Grade and Subject?

Special education teachers

Vocational teachers

Adapted physical Ed. Teachers

Residential child care staff

Social Worker

Physical therapist

Physical therapist assistant

Occupational therapist

Occupational therapist assistant

Speech pathologist

Speech assistant

Medical director

Physician

Registered Nurse

Licensed practical nurse

Orientation and mobility specialist

Caseloads
Vision specialist   F____ PT______  
Behavioral specialist  F____ PT______  
Psychologist    F____PT______  
Psychiatrist      F____ PT______  

FACILITY AND EQUIPMENT

Size of the classrooms  NOTES

Therapy areas

Materials and equipment

Specialized equipment

Computer and Technology access

Food services

Cleanliness

Lighting

Handicapped accessible

Recreational areas (inside & outside)

Air-conditioned areas

Fire safety equipment

Security precautions

Living setting (Dorm – Group Home)

Bathrooms

Staff ratios (day-overnight)

Personal space and belongings
PROGRAM SPECIFICS: (Information on many of these topics should be available in writing from the school)

Mission statement of the program

NOTES

Program philosophy

Academic curriculum - grade levels
- subjects offered
- state curriculum frameworks

Student Assessments - MCAS testing/alternatives

Vocational Curriculum

Parent involvement

Visiting procedures

Transition services

Community experiences and options (frequency)

Behavior management

Medication procedures

Staff training for specific population served

Emergency procedures

Personal care procedures

Restraint procedures

Communication

Between programs (school-therapies-residential)

Programs to parents

Parents to child (phone-cell phones-mail-email)

Media guidelines (restrictions on books, movies, music)

Typical daily student schedule

Confidentiality – privacy policy

Admissions procedure

Parent references

Future visits or contact:

When:__________________________________________

With:__________________________________________