

MISSED THERAPY SESSIONS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Over the last several years, there has been a lot of discussion concerning missed therapy sessions in the public schools and how these need to be handled. The answer depended upon which entity a district consulted with. Over a two year period, the Public School Committee researched the “missed therapy” issue. The committee reviewed information from IDEA, Department of Education (Federal), ASHA, TEA, and Due Process hearings. In summary, it did not matter whether or not the missed therapy session was due to the student’s absence or the speech/language pathologist’s absence, but did depend on the progress the student was making. Below is a chart that outlines the findings of the Public School Committee.

IDEA	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (Federal)	ASHA	TEA	DUE PROCESS HEARINGS
<p>2006 IDEA Part B Final Regulations do not address missed therapy sessions.</p> <p>Alexa Posney, previous Director of the Office of Special Education Services (OSEP)</p>	<p>“The Department encourages “public agencies to consider the impact of the provider’s absence or a child’s absence on the child’s progress and performance and to determine how to ensure the continued provision of FAPE in order for the child to continue to progress and meet the annual goals of his/her IEP. Whether an interruption of services constitutes a denial of FAPE is an individual determination that must be made on a case-by-case basis”</p> <p>Alexa Posney, previous Director of the Office of Special Education Services (OSEP) March 8, 2007</p>	<p>ASHA does not have a specific policy on missed therapy sessions, but issued a brief after discussions with the Department of Education.</p> <p>“ASHA interpretation is that all missed session do NOT need to be made up. If, however, the missed sessions prevent adequate progress from being made, which may happen when multiple sessions are missed in a row, then the sessions should be made up.”</p> <p>Deborah Adamczyk Dixon, M.A. CCC-SLP Director, School Services ASHA</p> <p>ASHA’s response can be found on: ASHA’s IDEA Action Center school@asha.org</p>	<p>“If a student’s performance becomes negatively impacted due to frequent absences, an ARD committee should address the schedule of delivery of services and consider the appropriateness of compensatory services.”</p> <p>Question was addressed to Susie May who directed us to the TEA website:</p> <p>TEA Monitoring Report Section: “Related Services for Students with Disabilities-Q & As</p>	<p>Texas and California: Compensatory services must equal the number of minutes of missed sessions. In each of the cases listed a SLP was not available to deliver the services.</p> <p>February 2007: Doc. # 067-SE-1106 November 2007: Doc. # 142-SE-0207 October 2011: Doc. #241-SE-0611</p> <p>California: OAH No. 2005060639</p> <p>Commonwealth of Massachusetts- Division of Administrative Law Appeals Bureau of Special Education Appeals: Three missed session considered a denial of FAPE.</p> <p>Lynn P.S. BSEA #10-3947</p>
<p>In summary, public school districts need to consider the progress the student is making as well as the number of sessions missed in determining whether missed therapy sessions need to be made up. The public school task force recommends that each speech/language pathologist consider the student’s progress when determining make up therapy sessions. Professional judgment and code of ethics should be taken into consideration for each individual case.</p>				