



# *Information Alert for Parents of Special Education Students*

## **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS**

**“Are you kidding? My special needs child can’t handle regular school attendance!”**

School attendance is mandatory in California, for all children ages 6-18 including those with disabilities and emotional and/or medical needs. Students with disabilities often learn differently, or may have difficulty retaining and applying information. This makes regular school attendance even more important for our special education students.

However, parents know that it is those disabilities that often make it difficult to get our kids with special needs to school on time every day. There may be emotional difficulties such as anxiety, phobias, mood swings, or behavioral rigidities that make getting our kids to school in the morning a major challenge. Also, medical needs including allergies, recurring illnesses, seizures or heightened susceptibility to infections may impact regular school attendance.

Schools are required to enforce compulsory attendance laws and will use the resources of their school Attendance Review Boards (SARB) to attempt to get kids into school, which may be a surprise to special education parents. If your child has issues related to his or her disability that impact attendance, work with your IEP team to specify those issues and make a plan to address them. Strategies may include:

- Shortened school day
- Course credit for work done at home
- Independent study
- Home/Hospital Instruction
- Behavior Plan monitored or implemented by family and school staff for student attendance
- Support from the child’s therapist
- Extra attention from school nurse or health aide

If strategies are written into the IEP, school staff and parents can avoid controversies about school attendance and work together to get the child the best access to education possible.

For more information on this issue, go to the SELPA website at [www.venturacountyselpa.com](http://www.venturacountyselpa.com) click on Information for Families/Information Alerts for Parents.