



IDEA: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

This is the federal law that addresses most special education issues.

The term 'individualized education program' or 'IEP' refers to a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with federal law. The IEP guides a special education student's learning. It is created for children between the ages of 3 and 22. It describes the amount of time that the child will spend receiving special education services, any related services the child will receive, and academic/behavioral expectations.

The IEP team meets at least once a year to talk about the child's progress and make any needed changes to the plan.

IEP Team

The IEP Team, or Individualized Education Program Team, is a group of individuals including:

The parent(s) of the child;

At least one general education teacher of the child;

At least one special education teacher;

A representative of the Local Education Authority (LEA) who is qualified to provide, or supervises the provision of, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities, and is knowledgeable about the general curriculum and the availability of resources of the LEA;

An individual who can interpret assessment results and the related instructional implications;

Other individuals, at the discretion of the parent or the LEA, who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel, if appropriate; and

The child, if appropriate.

The IEP team is responsible for identifying and evaluating children with disabilities, developing, reviewing, or revising an IEP for a child with a disability, and determining the placement of a child with a disability in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

IN CONNECTICUT, THIS TEAM IS REFERRED TO AS THE PPT TEAM, OR PLANNING AND PLACEMENT TEAM.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Special education and related services that:

Are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge;

Meet the standards of the State Educational Agency, including the requirements of this party

Include an appropriate preschool, elementary school, or secondary school education; and

Are provided in conformity with an Individualized Education Program

Inclusion

Inclusion is a mindset that encourages providing all children, including those with significant disabilities, with an equal opportunity to learn alongside their non-disabled peers in the general education classroom to the maximum extent possible with the necessary supports and services students need to make the most of their education.

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

An FBA is a process used for students who have behavioral or emotional problems that are believed to be interfering with their educational progress or the progress of other students. During this process, the child's IEP team identifies specific challenging behavior, the purpose of that behavior, and whether the behavior is interfering with the child's educational progress.

The FBA leads to the development of a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) plan to teach acceptable alternative behavior. The BIP focuses on teaching new behaviors and skills, but also can require:

Modification of the school or classroom environment and activities;
Adaptation of curriculum and instructional delivery; and
Changes to the teacher-student relationship that has been promoting undesirable behavior.

Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)

An independent educational evaluation is an evaluation of a child that is done by a qualified examiner who does not work for DCPS. According to IDEA, parents have the right to an IEE administered at public expense when a parent disputes the results of the school's evaluation.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Children with disabilities must be educated in the least restrictive environment that can meet their needs. This means that children with disabilities must be educated with their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent that is appropriate for their needs and abilities.

Prior Written Notice (PWN)

According to IDEA, parents must be notified in their native language before a school district makes or denies any changes to a child's IEP. This includes before a child is evaluated, moved to or out of non-public placement and before changes in services are made. The purpose of this notice is to give parents an opportunity to respond to the proposed changes before they occur.