IEP Basics

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Matrix Parent Network

We **empower** families of children with special needs to successfully understand and access the systems that serve them.

We want **you** to become successful advocates and role models for your children.

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Who am I?

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You will leave here knowing:

- What is Special Education?

- What are the Special Ed laws and processes?

- Who is Eligible?

- What is an IEP?

- How can parents contribute?

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What is Special Education?

What do you think?

Is Special Education:

1) A place where students who need extra help go?

2) Instruction tailored to meet the needs of individual students?

3) Only available to students who need 1-to-1 support?

4) A classroom for students with disabilities?

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What is Special Education?

Special Education is:

Specialized academic instruction

educational programs and practices,

related services…

What is Special Education?

… for students whose identified disability (cognitive, physical, or emotional) functioning requires special teaching approaches, equipment, or care within or outside a regular classroom.

not a specific classroom!

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What is Special Education?

Specialized instruction refers to a range of services that can be provided in *different ways* in *different settings* to *different learners*.

What is important is to give students the resources they need to make progress in school.

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What is Special Education?

According to the Supreme Court decision in Endrew F:

"Special education programs must be appropriately ambitious"
for the individual student…

*…***and** *"every child should have the chance to meet challenging*
objectives."

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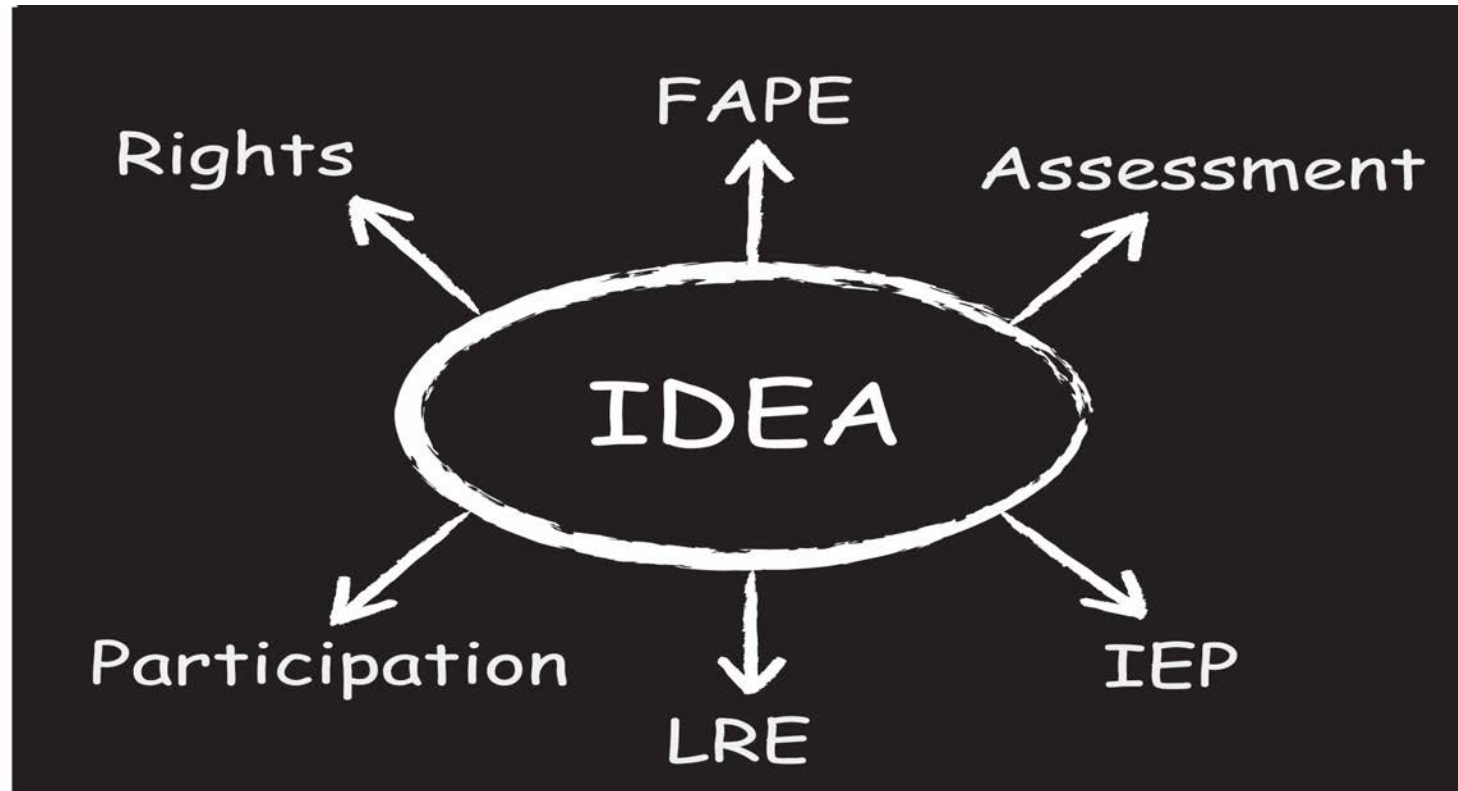parent network
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What is Special Education?

Keep in mind:

The IEP addresses educational needs resulting from the child's disability.
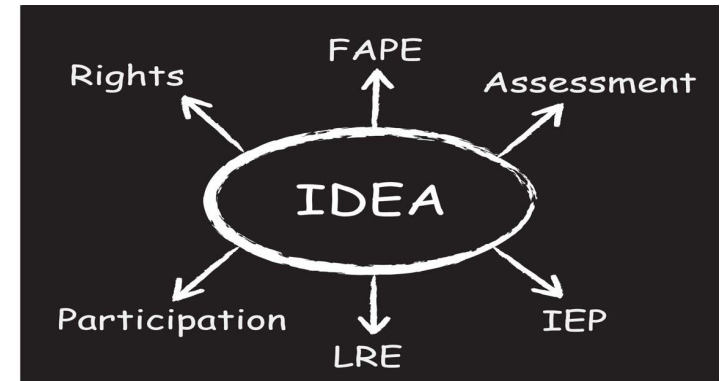
Education is more than academics!

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It's a good idea to know IDEA!

There are six principles of IDEA

1. Assessment
2. IEP
3. FAPE
4. LRE
5. Participation
6. Rights

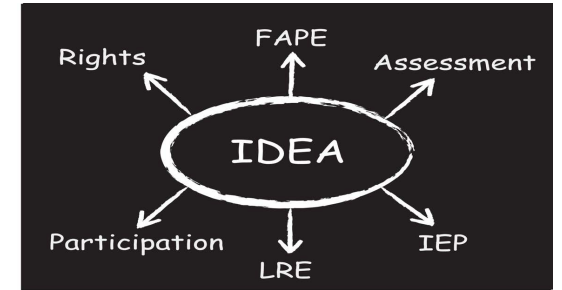We'll go through each one, briefly.

Special Education Principles:
1. Assessment

The special education process starts with appropriate, non-discriminatory **Assessment** in all areas of suspected disability.
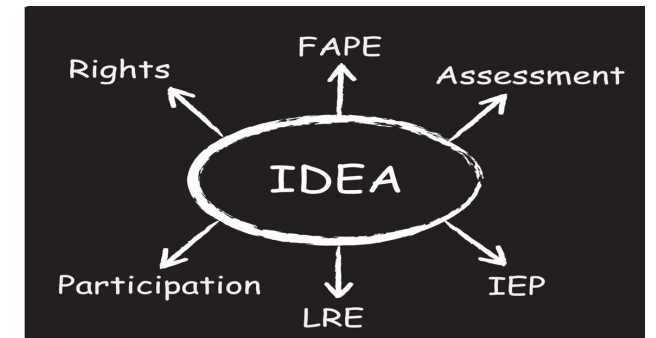
If your child does not yet have an IEP, and you suspect a disability, you should request an assessment in writing.

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Special Education Principles:
2. IEP – Individualized Education Plan

The IEP is:

- A program

- A document
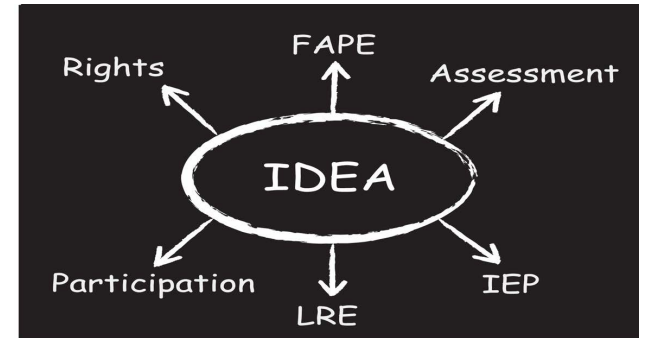
- A meeting

Special Education Principles:
3. Free Appropriate Public Education

Every child is entitled to **FAPE.**

Appropriate does not mean best or ideal!

It means that the student is receiving the resources and services needed so that they can access the curriculum, and make educational progress.

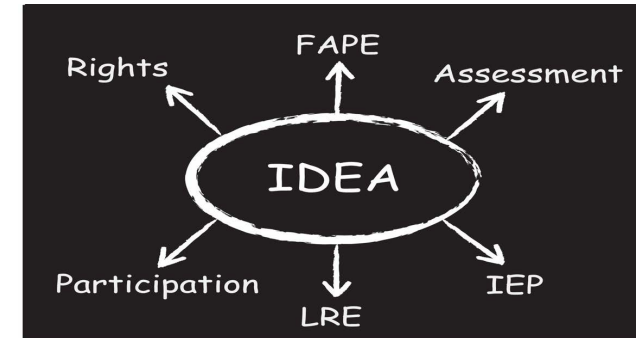As part of the IEP, the school must make and offer of FAPE.

Special Education Principles:
4. LRE – Least Restrictive Environment

Least Restrictive Environment or LRE means to the extent possible, a child should be educated:

- at their home school
- in a general education classroom
- with typically developing peers
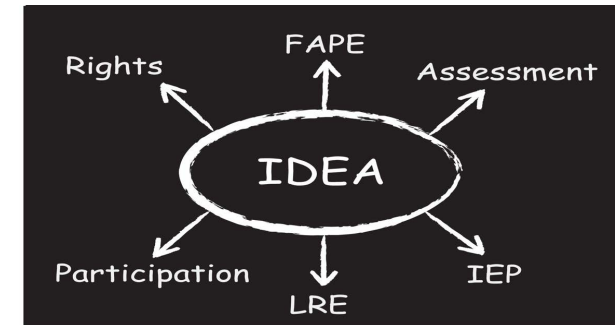- with needed services and supports

A special day class is considered more restrictive, and non-public schools or home instruction are considered much more restrictive.

Special Education Principles:
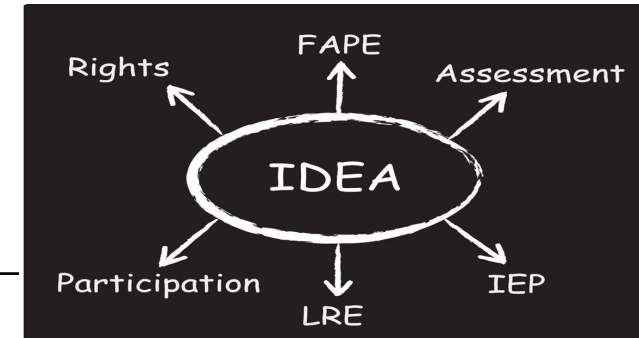## 5. Parent and Student Participation

- As a parent, you are a vital part of the IEP team that develops your child's education program.

- Students should be allowed to participate to the extent they can.

- At age 16, students must be invited to participate in IEP meetings.

Special Education Principles: 6. Rights

There are procedural safeguards developed to protect your rights spelled out in IDEA.

You will receive a copy of the Procedural Safeguards at every IEP meeting. **READ THEM**!

Becoming familiar with your child's rights will empower you as an advocate. **Knowledge is power!**

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Pop Quiz #1

1) Education is more than just academics. School is to prepare your child for life after school.

      True   False

2) A parent tells a teacher that she thinks her son is struggling in school, but doesn't know why. She wonders if the teacher can test him. The teacher says "Sure." Nothing happens for 2 months. The parent is getting frustrated and angry. Did the parent ask for an assessment in the appropriate way?

      Yes   No

   What is the appropriate way?

3) The school district has ten (10) days to respond to a parent's written request for an assessment.

      True   False

4) A non-pubic school is considered a less restrictive environment that a special day class at a public school.

      True   False

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Who is Eligible for Special Education?

Students who:

- Meet eligibility requirements in one or more of 13 categories

- Have a disability that impacts education

- Require special education/related services to benefit from their education

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Who is Eligible for Special Education?

Students who:

- Are between the ages of 3 and 22, eligibility ends at 22nd birthday

UNLESS:

- Exited due to ineligibility (parent/guardian must sign in consent)
- Graduated with diploma

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Who is Eligible for Special Education?

Eligibility Categories

- Autism
- Deaf/Blindness
- Deafness
- Emotional Disturbance
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities

- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Speech/Language Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment (inc. Blindness)

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Who is Eligible for Special Education?

- Eligibility category is found on the first page of the IEP.

- There may be a primary and secondary eligibility category.

- Schools do not give a diagnosis.

- *Sensory Processing Disorder* and *ADHD* are not eligibility categories (may qualify under another category, such as *Other Health Impairment* [OHI]).

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Who is Eligible for Special Ed?

Some students who are not eligible for Special Ed do qualify for a 504 plan.

- Section 504 protects students from discrimination based on their disability

- The 504 plan provides for reasonable accommodations and services

- Matrix has a packet on 504 Plans

What is an IEP?

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Pair Share

Wow!

Really?

TURN & TALK

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The IEP Process

The IEP Process follows a certain order:

1. Assessment and Eligibility

2. Identification of strengths, concerns, needs, and present levels of ability

3. Goals

4. Services, accommodations, and modifications

5. Placement

IEP Process

ELIGIBILITY – OPENS DOOR

DATA - ASSESSMENTS

FORMAL

INFORMAL

STRENGTHS → CONCERNS

EDUCATIONAL NEED

PRESENT LEVELS

BASELINE - What is the student currently doing ?

GOALS

What will the student be doing in a year and how will it be measured?

SERVICES

ACCOMODATIONS & MODIFICATIONS

PLACEMENT

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What is an IEP?

The IEP **program** is developed at an IEP **meeting**, and is written down in an IEP **document.**

What is an IEP?

The IEP as a program

What is an IEP?

The IEP as a program

Remember our definition of Special Education

Specialized academic instruction educational programs and practices, and related services for students whose identified disability (cognitive, physical, or emotional) functioning requires special teaching approaches, equipment, or care within or outside a regular classroom.

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What is an IEP?

The IEP program consists of the

- Goals,
- Accommodations and Modifications,
- Specialized Instruction,
- Related Services, and
- Placement

that you child needs to make educational progress.

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What is an IEP?

The IEP as a written document

Understanding the elements of the *program*, and how they are laid out in the IEP *document*, will help you understand and prepare for your child's IEP *meeting*.

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What is an IEP?

The IEP as a written document

- Contains lots of information about your child and their program: present levels, goals, services, placement, and more

- Includes the district's offer of FAPE

We also have a training all about the IEP document! IEP Form: One Page at a Time

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What is an IEP?

The IEP as a written document

Present Levels are:

- Found in the beginning of the document
- A description of current abilities
- Summaries of teacher reports, therapist observations, assessments, etc.
- Also found on the left side of goal pages

What is an IEP?

The IEP as a written document

Goals:

- Are based on the student's needs as they are described in the Present Levels section

- Should be SMART- specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timebound – watch for our SMART Goals training in the spring

- Should be able to pass the "stranger test"

For a short video on Effective IEP Goals, click here

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What is an IEP?

IEP as written document

Related Services are:

- Based on the student's goals

- Described in frequency and duration

- May include: speech therapy (ST), occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), amended physical education (APE), educationally related mental heath services (ERMHS), transportation, etc.,

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What is an IEP?

The IEP as a written document

Placement is:

- Based on **needs** not a category of disability
- In the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) by law
- Discussed after assessment, goals, and services

Parents can visit any potential placement

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What is an IEP?

The IEP as a Meeting

What is an IEP?

The IEP as a meeting

- An IEP meeting is held at least once a year.

- Parents can request an IEP meeting at anytime, in writing, and it should be held within 30 days. Be sure to call for IEP meetings wisely, and with purpose.

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What is an IEP?

The IEP as a meeting

- It is best practice is for all the IEP team members to attend.

- Team members are the key players in your child's program.

- If a member cannot be there, parent must sign in acknowledgement.

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What is an IEP?

The IEP as a meeting

The IEP Team Members:

- Parent (and possibly the student)
- Classroom teacher
- Special Ed/Resource teacher
- Principal or District representative
- Others depending on related services

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What is an IEP?

The IEP as a meeting

Specialized meetings:

- Manifestation Determination
- Transition planning

  Preschool, Kindergarten, Middle School, High School, Adulthood

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What is an IEP?

During the IEP meeting

- You can ask for introductions and time constraints if not given.

- You can ask for clarification or specifics.

- Take notes and take breaks as needed.

- Acknowledge good effort, show gratitude.

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What is an IEP?

Signing the IEP

- Some signatures are for attendance only, others are for consent.

- You do not have to sign your consent at the meeting, you can take some time to review and consider.

- You can ask any questions you have before signing.

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What is an IEP?

Signing the IEP

- You can consent to all, part, or none of the IEP.

- If you have signed the IEP and it is not going well, you can request an IEP meeting, in writing, to discuss and problem-solve.

- You can call the Matrix Helpline!

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What is an IEP?

Collaborative Problem Solving

If there are disagreements:

- Solve close to the source of the problem

- Use clear and calm communication

- Document your process

- Utilize administrative hierarchy

Work to preserve relationships!

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Pop Quiz #2

1) Sensory processing disorder is one of the 13 eligibilities for Special Education

          True   False

2) A member of the IEP team can skip the meeting if everyone on the team agrees and signs the IEP indicating the absence.

          True   False

3) A parent should ask for an IEP meeting at least 2 times a year.

          True   False

4) The parent is an equal member of the IEP team.

          True   False

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How can parents contribute?

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How can parents contribute?

Parents Matter!

You are already contributing:

- You are here

- You care

- You want to be informed

- You are preparing for your child's IEP

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How can parents contribute?

Parents Matter!

Be prepared:

- You can request (nicely and in writing) to have copies of assessment reports and draft goals before the IEP meeting.

- You can request pre-meetings with therapists or teachers.

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How can parents contribute?

Parents Matter!

Be informed:

Understand your child's disability and how it manifests in them, be prepared to share this information.

Share a (no more than one page) synopsis, especially if your child has a rare condition, unfamiliar to the team.

You know your child best!

How can parents contribute?

Parents Matter!

Be organized:

- Organize records, reports, work samples, teacher notes, etc.

- Bring your written concerns to the meeting to be included in the Parent Concerns section of the IEP. (again – no more than one page)

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How can parents contribute?

Parents Matter!

Collaborate:

- Show your gratitude.

- Be a calm and informed member of the IEP team.

- Keep an open mind.

- Focus on your child's best **interest** rather than a fixed **position** or demand.

How can parents contribute?

Parents Matter!

Reach out:

- Call Matrix before the IEP meeting if you would like to go over reports (if time allows).

- Call Matrix after the IEP meeting if you would like to review before you sign.

Skills Checklist

- **What have you learned?**

- **Do you need more resources?**

- **Do you need more support?**

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Matrix Parent Network & Resource Center

We are parent advisors not attorneys or advocates

We *do not* give legal advice or advise a course of action. We provide support and information to help parents learn about their rights and options, find referrals and resources and help parents become the best advocate they can be for their child.

Matrix Helpline: **1-800-578-2592**

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Matrix Parent Network & Resource Center

Federal Parent Training & Information Center

designed by the *Office of Special Education, US Department of Education*, serving families of children birth through 26 in Marin, Napa, Sonoma & Solano counties

California Family Resource Center

designated by *CA Department of Developmental Services*, serving families of infants and toddlers

California Family Empowerment Center

designated by *CA Department of Education*

serving the underserved in Solano and Sonoma Counties

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Matrix is grateful for the Federal and State funding it receives, but it's not enough. We rely on other grants and on donations from people like you!

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Matrix Parent Network & Resource Center

Please consider supporting Matrix

in any way you can!

Help Us Help You: Donate

Thank you!!

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