

# Six Principles of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

## **A Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**

A child's education must be appropriate to meet his or her unique needs. Appropriate is defined in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and is based on the unique needs of the child. Appropriate also means the student makes progress.

## **Appropriate Evaluation/Assessment**

A student must have a complete assessment to decide if the student is eligible for Special Education. Assessment is the foundation to write an IEP. Once in Special Education, a re-evaluation is offered at least every three years. Assessments must address any area of suspected need. There must be a variety of assessment methods. Assessment also includes information on development and how a child functions in school. Assessment can only be done with written permission of the parent(s) and must include parent input.

## **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**

An IEP includes goals, supports, and services to address the student's individual educational needs. It includes statements about how the child will be involved in and will progress in the general education curriculum. The IEP must have parent consent before a service can begin or be changed. Any part of the IEP that has parent consent can be put in place. The IEP is reviewed by the IEP team at least once a year and can be adjusted during the year if needed.

## **An Education in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

Students in Special Education are to be educated as much as possible with peers who do not have disabilities. The first option the IEP team must consider is educating the student in the general education classroom. The decision must be based upon the child's unique needs. Students should only be removed to separate or more restrictive settings when education in the regular class with the use of supports and services wouldn't work.

## **Parent and Student Participation in Decision Making**

Parents are members of the IEP team. They give input during the whole IEP process, including evaluation, eligibility, services and placement. Parents must be given regular written reports about their child's progress. Students are to participate in their IEP meetings when appropriate. They must be part of the meeting when the topic is transition to adulthood.



## **Procedural Safeguards**

The law requires that the rights of children and their parents are protected. There are ways for disputes to be resolved, which includes due process. The law also states that students with disabilities and their parents are given the information they need. During the entire Special Education process, schools must get written parent agreement based on the parent being informed. Another safeguard is called Prior Written Notice. This means if a district says no to a parent request, they must give the parent a document explaining why they are saying no.