

What is FAPE ?

FAPE is the acronym for a Free and Appropriate Public Education. It is one of the most misunderstood concepts of the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA). And it often causes the greatest conflict between parents and schools. A required component of IDEA, FAPE mandates that school districts provide access to general education and specialized educational services. It also requires that children with disabilities receive support free of charge as is provided to non-disabled students. It also provides access to general education services for children with disabilities by encouraging that support and related services be provided to children in their general education settings as much as possible.

Over the years, the courts have helped define what FAPE is and is not. In short, it is vital for parents to understand that IDEA is not an entitlement program that provides disabled children with a better education than is provided to non-disabled students. Use the chart below to help you learn what FAPE can mean to you and your child, and to dispel the many myths about FAPE.

<u>FAPE Myths</u>	<u>FAPE Facts</u>
<p>Children with disabilities cannot be charged for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials • Student fees • Any other costs that are requested of general education students 	<p>Special education and related services are provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At public expense • Under public supervision and direction • Without charge to the parent or guardian
<p>Children with disabilities are not required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete basic requirements for graduation • Pass state-approved assessments that demonstrate State standards 	<p>Children with disabilities are provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifications • Accommodations • Support services under their IEPs <p><i>(These allow them to have access to and benefit from instruction so they can meet the standards of the State Education Authority.)</i></p>
<p>The district must provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A specific specialized program or school setting that is chosen by the parent • A program that provides the child greater access to educational materials than their non-disabled peers <p><i>*FAPE also does not require that a school provide educational services that are superior to those provided to non-disabled peers.</i></p>	<p>The district must provide a program that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complies with the procedural requirements of IDEA; • Addresses the child's unique needs as identified by evaluations, observation, and the child's educational team • Is coordinated to ensure the child is able to make adequate progress in the educational setting. <p><i>*FAPE requires that the quality of educational services provided to students with disabilities be equal to those provided to non-disabled students.</i></p>

<u>FAPE Myths</u>	<u>FAPE Facts</u>
<p>The student with a disability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be provided preferential treatment or guaranteed placement in extracurricular activities • Does not have to meet the basic requirements of participation that are required of non-disabled peers 	<p>The student with a disability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have access to nonacademic and extracurricular activities equal to those provided to non-disabled peers

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