

# LRE and Your Child's IEP

Least restrictive environment (LRE) is a guiding principle in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). LRE plays a critical role in determining not only where your child will spend their time in school but also how special education services will be provided.

Specifically, the LRE requirement ([IDEA, Sec. 300.114 \(a\)\(2\)](#)) requires that, “to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities...are educated with children who are nondisabled; and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.”

## LRE & Your Child's IEP

LRE is determined on a case-by-case basis during the development of your child's individualized education program (IEP). During this process, the ARD committee, including you the parent or guardian, discuss what individualized program of instruction and related services (also referred to as services and supports) your child requires based on their present levels of performance and areas of strengths and needs. These services and supports should enable your child to:

- Make progress toward meeting identified academic or functional annual goals,
- Be involved and make progress in the general education curriculum, as well as participate in extracurricular (e.x., drama club) and other nonacademic (e.x., a school football game) activities, and
- Take part in these activities with other students, both with and without disabilities.

Your child's IEP must include:

- [IDEA, Sec. 300.320\(a\)\(5\)](#) “an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with nondisabled children in the regular class.”
- [IDEA, Sec. 300.320\(a\)\(4\)](#) “a statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services...and a statement of the




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## Partners Resource Network

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program modifications or supports for school personnel” necessary for your child to be educated with their nondisabled peers.

## Continuum of Alternative Placements for Services

Because LRE is determined by your child’s individualized program of instruction and related services rather than by setting, IDEA requires ([IDEA, Sec. 300.115\(a\)](#)) that school districts create a continuum of alternative placement options. This continuum represents a range of educational placements in which an IEP can be implemented to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities. These placement options range from the least restrictive setting (i.e., general education classroom) to the most restrictive ones (e.g., residential facility).

Examples of different placement options include:

- A general education class,
- A special education class,
- A special education school,
- At home, or
- In a hospital or other public or private institution.

Placement options are fluid. Your child might receive some services in one setting and other services in a different setting. Further, placements can change over time based on factors such as changes in your child’s progress or needs.

### Educational setting decisions should be...

- Made by the ARD committee that includes you, as the parent or guardian,
- Determined at least annually,

- Based on your child’s individual needs, which may change over time, and
- As close as possible to the school your child would attend if they did not have a disability.

### Educational setting decisions should not be...

- Made by one individual,
- Determined once in your child’s educational career or only when determining eligibility,
- Based on your child’s disability category,
- Predetermined based on easily available programs, funding, or the convenience of the school district, or
- One size fits all

## Tips for Success

- Provide your child access to nondisabled peers and the regular education curriculum to the maximum extent appropriate.
- Consider your child’s participation in both academic and other extracurricular and nonacademic activities.
- Start with your child’s present levels of academic achievement and functional performance statement, goals, and special education services and aids when determining their educational setting.
- Understand that the services and aids your child needs may vary based on the educational setting and their unique needs.
- Revisit placement options when your child’s progress data and needs indicate a change in placement may be required.



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