

What is the legal purpose of special education?

- *Special education is a service, not a place, and the purpose of the service is to support learners in successfully achieving a general education.*

L.R.E.

(Least Restrictive Environment)

Important Considerations Relevant to Inclusion Decisions

KPI #7:

Least Restrictive Environment

- **Goal:** The admin team at each level will examine and analyze data related to determination of LRE settings throughout the district.
- **Purpose:** To ensure that the decisions made regarding placement and service delivery maximize the student's participation within the general curriculum and setting.
- **Product:** Written guidelines for procedures and practices.

Important Considerations Relevant to Inclusion Decisions

1. General education environments should be the presumed placement for all students with disabilities.
2. Removal should only occur if important learning goals cannot be achieved in the general education environment.
3. Removal should not occur simply because general education refuses to accommodate the needs of children with disabilities.
4. Social integration is important.
5. Inclusion should be purposeful.

1. General education environments should be the presumed placement for all students with disabilities.

- Burden is on school districts to justify removal.
- New developments in the field that demonstrate how students can be successfully supported in general education.
- Integration in general education classes is associated with better outcomes such as employment, postsecondary education, and income.

2. Removal should only occur if important learning goals cannot be achieved in the general education environment.

- The research does not support the proposition that all children with disabilities should be educated all the time in general education classrooms.
- A successful practice for one group may not be appropriate for another.
- There are justifiable reasons for removal and the law supports this as well with its requirements for a continuum of services (IDEA Regulations, 2006, Section 300.115)

3. **Removal should not occur simply because general education refuses to accommodate the needs of children with disabilities.**

- **Students with disabilities have the right to the accommodations, modifications, and supports they need to be successful in general education classrooms, and no teacher or administrator should be allowed to abridge that.**

4. **Social integration is important.**

- **Fostering good citizenship is an important role of schools.**
- **Friendships for many of these students may not happen as naturally as they do for other children.**
- **Some advocates of inclusion do not seem to understand the importance of disabled children developing friendships with other disabled students.**

5. **Inclusion should be purposeful.**

- **High-quality education for all students.**
- **The decision to integrate a child should be a deliberate one with clear instructional goals.**
- **The goals should be those contained within the curriculum.**

5. **Inclusion should be purposeful. (cont'd)**

- **Factors to consider** when making decisions about integrating students within the general education classrooms:
 - chronological age of the child
 - natural environments such as general education classes or job sites vs. need for privacy
 - demonstrate skills in different environments
 - importance of contact with general education students as a means to develop social relationships.

Discussion

- Please respond to:

“Special education is a service, not a place, and the purpose of the service is to support learners in successfully achieving a general education.”
- Susan

Discussion

- Please respond to:

“America has created a system whereby learners with special education needs are, in many cases, identified, tested, labeled, and segregated before they ever have a chance to function in a general education environment. This practice violates the concept of *least restrictive environment* and misinterprets what *continuum of services* means.”
- Anthony

Least Restrictive Environment Process

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE) PROCESS

This is a guide to help the IEP Team systematically make decisions about LRE and program/services to address the student's needs.

Key points to remember as the team decides the best location for programs/services:

- General education environments must be the presumed location for all students with IEPs first.
- Students with IEPs have the right to the accommodations, modifications and supports they need to be successful in general education classrooms.
- Removal should not occur simply for administrative convenience (ie: scheduling problems). The burden of proof is on the school district to justify removal from general education setting (student specific reasons).
- Integration in general education classes is associated with better outcomes such as employment, postsecondary education and income.

Questions each IEP Team must ask and document when considering program/services location and LRE:

- Review each need identified in the demonstrated need section
- Review each supplemental aide and service in the IEP - alignment to support the student in general education classrooms
- Review the goals/objectives - alignment to general curriculum
- Review program/service location options:
 - What opportunities and resources already exist in the general education setting (co-teaching, LRE aides, etc)? Describe: _____
 - If they do not currently exist, how might these opportunities and/or resources be established and provided to the student to allow the student to be in the general education setting? Yes; No; explain: _____
 - The team should discuss any barriers academically, socially or behaviorally that would impact the student to be successful in the general education setting even with supports and services for each need area. Explain for each need area: _____

Please review...

- Individually
- At your tables...
- Whole group

Next Steps...

- Facilitate conversations related to LRE with the “Five Considerations” in mind.
- Pilot the draft document in your building.
- Make note of needed modifications and be prepared to share in February.

In summary,

The reality is that no individual can or should assume full responsibility for a student's success.



In summary,

Teachers, parents, administrators,
related services personnel,
counselors, students,
and the general
school community
must accept the
shared responsibility



to provide equal educational opportunities
to all students,
regardless of their
ability levels and
individual needs.



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