

Related Services

Does your child participate in a social skills group at school? Maybe he goes for speech-language therapy once a week. Or perhaps his teacher works with an occupational therapist to find ways to improve his writing skills. If so, he's benefiting from what's called "related services."

Related services are most often part of an IEP. Kids usually get them along with some sort of specialized instruction, as part of special education. But in some schools, they are the special instruction. That may happen when a child doesn't get any other services.

The main goal of these services isn't to offer special education. It's to help kids benefit from general education. They help make it easier for kids to participate in class and in afterschool activities.

For some kids, that might mean transportation services. For others, it's the help the classroom teacher gets from a professional to create and use a behavior plan.

Often, related services go hand in hand with special education. But some kids might only need the related service.

Different states and school districts deal with this in different ways. The federal law says states can decide to allow related services to be the only form of special education a child gets. In that case, the related service is a child's specialized instruction.

There may be other cases where a child doesn't qualify for special education. But they can still get related services under Section 504. This might happen when a child's issues don't affect the way he learns.

Related services are as varied and individual as the kids who use them. The federal special education law, IDEA, lists the following as possible related services:

- Speech-language and audiology services
- Interpreting services
- Psychological services
- Occupational and physical therapy
- Recreation, including therapeutic recreation
- Early identification and evaluation of disabilities in children
- Counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling
- Orientation and mobility
- Medical services (but only for diagnostic or evaluation purposes, not for ongoing treatment)
- School health and/or school nurse services
- Social work services
- Parent counseling and training

It's important to know that if there's a service your child needs and it's not on the list, such as assistive technology, IDEA says the team should consider it.