

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): Fact Sheet

Adapted from www.understood.org

IDEA is...

A federal education law originally passed in 1975. IDEA requires states to offer special education and related services to kids with disabilities who need them. It covers kids from birth through high school. Children ages 3-21 are served by the public school system.

IDEA protects people who...

Have one of the disabilities listed in the law and need specially designed instruction. Not all children with disabilities get services.

Eligibility:

In North Carolina, there are 14 different disability categories under which those ages 3-21 may be eligible for services. See the back of this sheet for the full list.

IDEA requires public schools to...

- ✓ Find and evaluate kids with disabilities—at no cost to parents.
- ✓ Provide kids who qualify with an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

IDEA services and supports

Schools must provide kids with a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). That happens through an IEP with services and supports tailored to a child's unique needs. An IEP may include...

Specialized instruction, to improve academic, functional or developmental skills

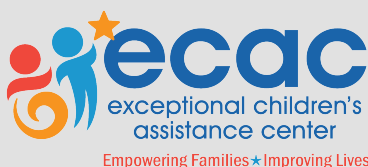
Related services, like speech, occupational or physical therapy

Accommodations, like extended time, sensory breaks or modified assignments

Assistive technology, that can be either high or low tech

IDEA gives parents rights, too...

One is the right to participate in the evaluation and IEP process. Others rights include the right to prior written notice before IEP meetings and when major decisions are made. If parents disagree with the school, IDEA provides several ways to resolve special education disputes.



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Categories of Eligibility under IDEA

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires schools to provide special education and related services to eligible students. There must be a need for specially designed instruction. To be covered in North Carolina, a child's educational or functional performance must be "adversely affected" as a result of one of the 14 conditions below.

1. Specific Learning Disability

The conditions in this group affect a child's ability to read, write, listen, speak or do math. Examples include dyslexia and dysgraphia.

2. Other Health Impairment

This covers conditions that limit a child's strength, energy or alertness. This may also include ADHD or some mental health conditions.

3. Traumatic Brain Injury

This is a brain injury is caused by a physical force or internal event.

4. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

ASD refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, language and nonverbal communication.

5. Emotional Disturbance

Children who have significant difficulty with relationships, behavior, feelings and/or anxiety. Diagnosed mental health conditions may be involved.

6. Visual Impairment

A child who has vision problems is considered to have a visual impairment. This condition includes both partial sight and blindness. If eye wear can correct a vision problem, then it doesn't qualify.

7. Intellectual Disability

Includes children who have intellectual ability that is significantly below average along with similar weaknesses in their daily functional skills.

8. Speech or Language Impairment

This covers a number of communication problems. Those include stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment or voice impairment.

9. Hearing Impairment

This refers to a hearing loss not covered by the definition of deafness. This type of loss can change or fluctuate over time. This includes those who are "hard of hearing".

10. Deaf-Blindness

Children with a diagnosis of deafblindness have both hearing and visual impairments. Their communication and other needs are so great that programs for the deaf or blind can't meet them.

11. Orthopedic Impairment

A severe physical impairment that impacts educational performance.

12. Developmental Delay

This refers to a child ages 3-7, whose development is delayed in one or more of the following areas: physical, cognitive, communication, social or emotional, or adaptive.

13. Deafness

Children with a diagnosis of deafness have a severe hearing impairment. They aren't able to process language through hearing.

14. Multiple Disabilities

A child with very complex educational needs caused by more than one condition covered by IDEA.