



Part 1:

What is a placement change in special education?

This tip sheet explains special education placement and how it is decided. Part 2 defines placement settings and what may cause a placement change for your child.

What determines placement

Your child's special education placement is decided by what services your child receives, how often they happen, and their right to education in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

When your child first qualifies for special education, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, consisting of school staff and parents, plans what services your child needs and how often to help them make meaningful progress in their education. Then, the team will determine where they can receive these services in the LRE.

What is Least Restrictive Environment?

LRE is an important part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a U.S. special education law. It states that a child with an IEP must be educated in the general education classroom *as much as possible*. An example of this is having a paraprofessional or special education teacher come into the general education classroom to support your child.

When your child spends time in a special education classroom, while often necessary, that is called a more restrictive setting.

IDEA requires that IEP teams first consider providing supplementary aids and services like modified schoolwork or paraprofessional support for a student in the general education classroom before considering a more restrictive placement.