

## **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

The special education law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) says that children who receive special education services should be educated in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). According to Wyoming's Chapter 7 Rules Governing Students with Disabilities, LRE is the educational setting where students with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children without disabilities, to the maximum extent appropriate.

## **What is special education under IDEA?**

Special education is specially designed instruction, services and supports, provided at no cost, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. The educational setting where this occurs in the LRE is often referred to as placement.

## **Where Should Placement Be?**

Special education is not a place or a pre-packaged program. Special education services can be provided in different locations, as appropriate, depending on a student's individual needs. IDEA states a strong preference that students receive their special education services in the general education classroom alongside their peers without disabilities.

IDEA also states that, as appropriate and defined by the IEP, supplementary aids and services must be provided to a child with a disability to enable him or her to be educated in the general education classroom. Students receiving special education services should only be taken out of the LRE (general education setting) if the child cannot receive a satisfactory education with the use of use of supplementary aids and services.

## **Continuum of Alternative Placements**

A range or continuum of alternative placements or settings from the least restrictive to most restrictive should be available and considered to determine what is most appropriate for the student's needs.

## **Types or Options of Placements**

The continuum of alternative placements where a student may receive their education might be:

### **Least Restrictive**

- General education classroom – student is fully mainstreamed into regular classroom instruction.
- General education classroom with supplementary services and supports– student is in regular classroom and receives supports such as: tutor or aide, assistive technology, related services, accommodations, modifications or any combinations of these.
- Partial mainstream/inclusion classroom – student is in the regular classroom for most of the school day but spends some time in a special education classroom with special education teacher or is pulled out of the class for some services.
- Special education or resource room– student spends all day in a special education classroom and is provided specialized instruction by a special education teacher in this separate, self-contained classroom.
- Residential school or facility– student is in a residential care facility or school 24 hours a day, and is taught by a trained staff.
- Homebound or hospital – student receives special education services in hospital or at home.

## **Most Restrictive**

### **When and How is Placement Decided?**

In determining the educational placement of a child with a disability, including a preschool child with a disability, the school district or public agency must ensure that the placement decision is made by a group of persons, as part of the IEP team. The team that determines placement is the child's parents, personnel who know the variety of placement options due to the needs of the child, and individuals that understand the significance of the data used to develop the child's IEP. The team may agree to bring in outside professionals to provide further information and data if necessary.

Decisions about placement are to be made at least annually, based on the child's IEP and is close as possible to the child's home.

Unless the IEP of a child requires some other arrangement, the child shall be educated in the school that he or she would attend if nondisabled.

The child's placement decision is not to be made solely on the child's disability. In selecting the LRE, consideration shall be given to any potentially harmful effect on the child or the quality of services' that he or she needs.

A child with a disability shall not be removed from education in age appropriate regular classrooms solely because of needed modifications in the general curriculum. Determining LRE must be done on an individual basis considering each student's unique needs and services and the child's circumstances. Placement is driven by IEP goals. Therefore, if all your child's goals are based only on functional life skills like cleaning or making a bed, these could translate into a more restrictive environment for your child. IEP goals should be tied to, or aligned with, grade level standards.

## As a parent what is my role in my child's placement decision?

IDEA requires schools to ensure that the parents of a child with a disability are members of any group that makes a decision on the educational placement of their child. Parents should share other information and data with the team that they believe is relevant in making the placement decision.

## What if I don't agree with the placement decision for my child?

Parents and schools don't always agree about a child's special education eligibility, evaluation, program or placement. If parents and schools cannot come to agreement and find solutions, there is a dispute resolution process to help resolve any disagreement. Options in the process are:

- **Mediation**
- **Due Process hearing**
- **State Complaint**

See more at <http://edu.wyoming.gov/in-the-classroom/special-programs/dispute-resolution/> or call Wyoming Department of Education at (307) 777-2961.

Sources: Wyoming Department of Education Chapter 7 Rules Governing Students with Disabilities.

[www.parentcenterhub.org](http://www.parentcenterhub.org)

[www.understood.org](http://www.understood.org)

[http://www.wpic.org/images/PDF/PIC\\_Keys\\_Final2016.pdf](http://www.wpic.org/images/PDF/PIC_Keys_Final2016.pdf)

## For more information on Least Restrictive Environment

### CONTACT:



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## Understanding Placement in the Educational Setting

**Parent Information Center**  
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