

WHAT ARE FAPE AND LRE?



The **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** is a federal law that gives students with disabilities the right to a **Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) possible. Understanding how these terms apply to your child is crucial to obtaining the best available education.

FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION

Each student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education.

- The IEP must determine which combination of special education services and programs a student needs in order to learn.
- The IEP must be “appropriate,” or created to meet a student’s needs so s/he can benefit from his/her educational program.
- Parents are IEP team members, and should expect to fully participate and advocate for services and programs that are appropriate for their child. Parents who understand their child’s disability, needs, and strengths can help IEP teams make appropriate decisions.
- FAPE and LRE go hand in hand and must be considered together.

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

IDEA states that “children should be educated to the maximum extent possible alongside non-disabled peers, have access to the general education curriculum, and attend the same schools they would if they did not have a disability.”

- The IEP team will favor placing a student in a general education learning environment, if appropriate.
- The IEP team must consider the full continuum of supports and services, including assistive technology, accommodations, and behavior intervention support.
- Large numbers of students with IEPs are educated in general education classrooms with supports and services. However, if a student’s needs are not met in this environment, other programs must be considered.
- If a student can only benefit in a full time special education environment or a very restrictive environment (such as a year-round or hospital day treatment program), that setting is their LRE.