

The Law

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act reauthorized in 1997, states in section 612(a)(5), that "In general. - To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily."

Ok...so what does LRE mean?

So, we've read the definition, but what does it really mean? Basically, it states that to the maximum extent possible, students with disabilities must be educated with non-disabled kids. The IEP team, which includes the parents, must carefully consider all of the placement options for a student with disabilities. They must choose the least restrictive setting in which the student can be educated, while still making sure that the he or she has the opportunity to interact with students who do not have disabilities.

So how do we decide what the best placement should be?

Placement in the regular education classroom must always be the first option considered by the IEP Team. Look at the student's strengths, educational needs, and academic requirements. Consider what supplementary aids and services could be provided to allow the student to be educated satisfactorily in the regular classroom. Also consider any possible harmful effects of a more restrictive placement. The IEP team must clearly document that a variety of options have been considered, and must base the decision solely on the needs of the student. Administrative factors, such as availability

of programs, category of disability or availability of service providers should not be a determining factor. If it is determined that the student cannot be educated in the regular classroom environment with supplementary aids and services, then alternative service delivery models may be considered.