



## **SPECIAL EDUCATION AND IEPS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

Children can have health issues, disabilities, and other issues that make it hard to learn or follow rules at school. We call these problems **Learning Disabilities**. Some children with learning disabilities may need extra help or time with specially trained teachers.

A school must create a plan to help a child with a learning disability. This plan is called an **IEP** or an **Individualized Education Plan**. The IEP is a plan for **Special Education Services** that will help the child learn better at school.

### **What does an IEP do?**

The IEP gives school employees instructions on how they must help your child. An IEP might include extra time to take tests, special equipment to help see or hear, or other types of help.

The school must teach your child in the **Least Restrictive Environment**. This means that the school must teach your child with other children as much as possible. In most cases, the school should place your child in a classroom with children who are receiving special education services and children who are not receiving special education services.

### **How do I get my child special education services?**

Ask the school to provide special education services. State the reason why you are making the request. Ask in person and write the school a letter or email. Put the date on the letter or email. Keep a copy of your letter or email.

The school must do a free **educational evaluation**. The school does this evaluation to learn whether your child has a learning disability. The school will talk with you and your child to learn why your child is having trouble learning.

The school must create an **IEP Team** for children with learning disabilities. The IEP team has teachers, parents, a school administrator, and others. The team must create a special plan for your child. The plan is called an IEP. Your child should be on the IEP team when you feel the child is mature enough.

The school must follow the IEP until the IEP team changes it.



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### **What if the school says that my child does not need Special Education Services or an IEP?**

- Ask the school for a Section 504 plan and a student support team. Learn more in our guides for [Section 504 Plans for Children with Disabilities](#) and [Student Support Teams](#).
- Talk to an education lawyer for advice. Parents and caregivers living on low-incomes can find free legal help at Atlanta Legal Aid Society (404-524-5811) or Georgia Legal Services Program (800-498-9469).