



STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Special education

Texas public schools are dedicated to providing a quality education for all children, including those with special needs who require specialized services, support, and programs to meet their education potential.

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) defines special education as “specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability.” IDEA specifies that all children are entitled to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

If your child has a disability (or you suspect your child has one but have not yet confirmed), contact the Special Education department or committee of the school your child will attend. The school will begin the process of evaluating your child to determine how to best meet his or her special education needs. Each school district is required to have an admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee for each eligible student with a disability and for each student for whom a full and individual initial evaluation is conducted.

The multi-step process will include the creation of an IEP (Individual Education Plan) for your child, which details in writing the special education and services—for example, specialized reading programs, speech therapy, modified equipment, and assistive technology devices—that must be provided to the student. The IEP is reviewed yearly and will be modified to fit your child’s changing needs.

Special health needs

If your child has a chronic health concern like asthma, food allergies, or diabetes that require ongoing monitoring and special provisions at school, make sure to work with the school nurse to develop a

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plan that accommodates the child's needs—for instance, keeping an inhaler, EpiPen®, or blood glucose monitoring kit accessible at school.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against anyone with a disability in an education setting that receives federal financial assistance. Further, Section 504 requires that the school make reasonable accommodations for the child to participate in the general curriculum. Chronic conditions, physical impairments, illnesses or injuries, and learning problems are protected under Section 504.

Good communication and teamwork between you and school personnel are the keys to keeping your child safe and learning at school, and importantly, making sure that your child has access to the same education as other children.



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