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THIS GUIDEBOOK IS BASED ON STATE AND FEDERAL SPECIAL EDUCATION LAWS, WHICH WERE CURRENT AT THE TIME OF PUBLICATION AND INCLUDES STANDARD ARKANSAS SPECIAL EDUCATION FORMS. HOWEVER, LAWS AND FORMS CAN CHANGE. FIND THE LATEST UPDATES ON THE ADE Special Education website AND IN THE ADE Special Education and Related Services Procedural Requirements and Program Standards.
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A MESSAGE FOR ARKANSAS FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Other Family Members,

This guide has been written for those of you with children ages 3-21, who have disabilities and have not yet graduated from high school. Children with disabilities may receive special education services in Arkansas public schools. This guide will help you understand the special education process, the importance of your participation in your child’s education, and if your child is eligible for special education services, your role in developing your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

This guidebook will help you understand how the special education process is carried out in Arkansas public schools, including charter schools. If your child qualifies for special education and attends a private school or is home schooled, call your local school district for more information on special education services.

When used in the guide, the term parent means a child’s parent or a person acting in that role. The parent may be the biological or adoptive parent, a foster parent, a legal guardian, a person acting in the place of the parent such as a grandparent, a surrogate parent, or the child who is 18 or older. A legal guardian is a person appointed through court procedures. A surrogate parent is a person appointed by the school through special education procedures to represent the child in decisions involving special education services.

Important terms are listed and defined at the beginning of each section of the guide. Terms are listed in the order they first appear the section. So that you can use each section as you need it, important terms are repeated at the beginning of multiple sections. An alphabetical list of terms and definitions is found in the glossary at the end of the guide. Links to additional resources are located after the glossary.

Parents and families are essential partners in shaping the services and outcomes in their children’s education and lives, and we hope this guide is helpful to you.

Sincerely,
The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) Special Education Staff
Does My Child Need Special Education?

Terms used in this section, in order of first use

**Parent** means a child’s parent or a person acting in that role. The parent may be the biological or adoptive parent, a foster parent, a legal guardian, a person acting in the place of the parent such as a grandparent, a surrogate parent, or the child who is 18 or older.

**Evaluation** refers to the data gathering process in which procedures are used selectively with an individual child to determine special education eligibility or programming. It does not include basic tests administered or procedures used with all children in a school, grade, or class.

**Appropriate** is suitable or fitting. IDEA specifies the procedures for determining the appropriate education for an individual child. Evaluations are done to identify your child’s needs. From those needs, the IEP team will determine the appropriate educational services so your child can make meaningful educational progress.

**Related services** are any specially designed services that enable a child to benefit from special education instruction. Some examples include psychological services, assistive technology, interpretive services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, audiology, and mobility training.

**IDEA** is the acronym for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This is the federal law that guarantees the rights of children with disabilities to a free appropriate public education.

A parent, other family member, teacher, or other individual who is worried about a child’s development, academic progress, or behavioral needs, and concerned a child may have a need for special education services, can make a referral for a special education evaluation. Parents in Arkansas can begin the referral process by talking with school staff such as: a principal, counselor, or teacher, who will complete a “Special Education Referral.” When making a referral, you may choose to talk about your concerns while a staff member writes what you say on the form. Following is the first page of the referral:
The written referral starts timelines for a meeting that must happen within 21 days after the referral is received by district staff. The school must schedule a referral conference with you, the parent, within seven days of the school’s receipt of the “Special Education Referral.”

The referral conference is a team meeting which includes the parent, the principal or a district representative, and one teacher directly involved in the education of the child. Others may attend as necessary. Team members review the data and concerns about your child then use the data to decide if an evaluation is appropriate to determine if your child is eligible for special education and related services under the IDEA. Conference decisions are noted on the “Referral Conference Decision” page of the referral.

If the team decides that your child needs an evaluation, you will be asked to give written consent for the evaluation. Your written consent begins the process and timeline for the evaluation. If you choose not to provide written consent, your child will not be evaluated. You will receive a copy of Your Rights Under the IDEA and a “Notice of Action.” Your Rights Under the IDEA describes special education procedures and regulations to ensure students receive services in a timely manner. The “Notice of Action” outlines what decision
was proposed, why it was proposed, the data used to make the evaluation decision, other options considered, and other factors that may be related to the decision. If it is determined your child needs an evaluation and you agree, you will sign consent for evaluation on the “Notice of Action.” If the team decides not to evaluate your child for special education and related services, you do not sign consent, and your child will not be evaluated. More information and a picture of the “Notice of Action” is included in a later section of the guide.
**Evaluation**

*Terms used in this section, in order of first use*

**Evaluation** refers to the data gathering process in which procedures are used selectively with an individual child to determine special education eligibility or programming. It does not include basic tests administered or procedures used with all children in a school, grade, or class.

**IDEA** is the acronym for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This is the federal law that guarantees the rights of children with disabilities to a free appropriate public education.

**General education curriculum** or grade-level curriculum refers to the curriculum that the school uses to teach all children in the school district, including children who have disabilities. The curriculum includes lessons, materials, and activities routinely used by the general population of children in the school and is aligned with state grade-level academic standards. The U.S. Department of Education defines general education curriculum as curriculum that is based on a State’s academic content standards for the grade in which a child is enrolled and includes instruction and supports that will prepare the child for success in college and careers.

**Parent** means a child’s parent or a person acting in that role. The parent may be the biological or adoptive parent, a foster parent, a legal guardian, a person acting in the place of the parent such as a grandparent, a surrogate parent, or the child who is 18 or older.

**IEP** is the acronym for Individualized Education Program. It is the written plan that guides your child’s special education services.

After you sign consent for evaluation, the district has 60 calendar days to complete the evaluation, which is done at no cost to you. Within 30 calendar days after the evaluation is complete, the district will meet with you to review the results in an evaluation programming conference. The team will determine if your child has a disability, as defined in **IDEA**, and if there is a need for specialized instruction. There are times when a child may have a disability, but does not need specialized instruction to have access to and make progress in the **general education curriculum**. Regardless of the decision made in the meeting, as the **parent**, you will be a member of the team and receive a written copy of your child’s evaluation report.
In Arkansas, a child may be found eligible to receive special education services under the following **13 areas of disability**:

- autism,
- deaf-blindness,
- hearing impairment including deafness,
- emotional disturbance (ages 5-21 only),
• intellectual disability (ages 5-21 only),
• multiple disabilities,
• non-categorical (ages 3-5 only),
• orthopedic impairment,
• other health impairment,
• specific learning disability (ages 5-21 only),
• speech or language impairment,
• traumatic brain injury, and
• visual impairment.

When your child has a disability under IDEA and needs specialized instruction, the team develops an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP cannot be implemented without your written consent for initial placement given on a “Notice of Action.”

What is an IEP?

Terms used in this section, in order of first use

**IEP** is the acronym for Individualized Education Program. It is the written plan that guides your child’s special education services.

**Related services** are any specially designed services that enable a child to benefit from special education instruction. Some examples include psychological services, assistive technology, interpretive services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, audiology, and mobility training.

**General education curriculum** or grade-level curriculum refers to the curriculum that the school uses to teach all children in the school district, including children who have disabilities. The curriculum includes lessons, materials, and activities routinely used by the general population of children in the school and is aligned with state grade-level academic standards. The U.S. Department of Education defines general education curriculum as curriculum that is based on a State’s academic content standards for the grade in which a child is enrolled and includes instruction and supports that will prepare the child for success in college and careers.

The IEP is a legal document outlining the special education and related services that your child will get from the school at no cost to you. Services are based on information gathered through state and district assessments and other data, such as information about your child’s social, emotional, and communication needs. The IEP is designed to address your child’s strengths and needs and ensure your child has the services and supports needed in order to access and progress in the general education curriculum.
The initial IEP must be developed within 30 days of your child’s eligibility determination for special education. An annual meeting must be conducted within one year of the last IEP development date. The IEP must also be written so that the plan is in effect by the beginning of each school year, if not before. An IEP meeting can be held anytime to address concerns that arise.

**Families Need to Know**

According to **IDEA**, “the term individualized education program or IEP means a written statement for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in a meeting in accordance with” federal and state laws, regulations, and rules.

34 CFR 300.320

**How Can FAMILIES Participate in Developing IEPs?**

**Terms used in this section, in order of first use**

**IEP** is the acronym for Individualized Education Program. It is the written plan that guides your child’s special education services.

**Parent** means a child’s parent or a person acting in that role. The parent may be the biological or adoptive parent, a foster parent, a legal guardian, a person acting in the place of the parent such as a grandparent, a surrogate parent, or the child who is 18 or older.

**Appropriate** is suitable or fitting. IDEA specifies the procedures for determining the appropriate education for an individual child. Evaluations are done to identify your child’s needs. From those needs, the IEP team will determine the appropriate educational services so your child can make meaningful educational progress.

The **IEP** is the cornerstone of the special education process and the key to services your child receives. Unless it is clearly not feasible to do so, as the **parent**, you have the right to receive written information as follows:

- in language that can be understood by the general public, and
- in your native language or another mode of communication you use.
You know your child’s strengths and needs and should discuss them with the rest of the IEP team. Each IEP is developed based on the child’s individual needs; therefore, one child’s IEP should look different from a brother’s or sister’s IEP or even from the same child’s IEP developed the previous year.

To develop goals that enable your child to become as independent and productive as possible, you may want to ask yourself:

- What long term goals do I have for my child?
- What can my child do now?
- What do we need to do so my child will gain new skills?
- Is this skill an appropriate step toward a productive and independent life for my child?

There is no blueprint or prescription for an IEP. The IEP team, which includes a parent, will develop a program that meets individual, specific needs. By understanding your child’s IEP and taking an active role in developing it, you can help make sure that your child receives needed services.

Families Need to Know

The purpose of special education is “to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living.”


IEP Purpose

*Terms used in this section, in order of first use*

**IEP** is the acronym for Individualized Education Program. It is the written plan that guides your child’s special education services.

**Parent** means a child’s parent or a person acting in that role. The parent may be the biological or adoptive parent, a foster parent, a legal guardian, a person acting in the place of the parent such as a grandparent, a surrogate parent, or the child who is 18 or older.
**Evaluation** refers to the data gathering process in which procedures are used selectively with an individual child to determine special education eligibility or programming. It does not include basic tests administered or procedures used with all children in a school, grade, or class.

**Initial IEP**

When your child has been evaluated and found to be eligible for special education and related services, an initial **IEP** must be developed before services can begin. The school must make sure that this first IEP meeting is held within 30 calendar days after your child has been found eligible for special education services.

**Annual IEP**

Every child’s IEP must be reviewed on an annual basis. Within a calendar year of the previously developed IEP, the IEP team must meet, review and update information, and develop new goals. The annual IEP is commonly known as the annual review. Some districts hold annual review meetings in the spring semester while others hold “anniversary IEP” meetings based on the date the IEP was originally put into place. Annual reviews can be held earlier than the anniversary date, but not later. You must receive a copy of your child’s annual IEP.

**Amended IEP**

Anytime a **parent**, another IEP team member, school staff, or the child has a concern about progress, the child’s needs, or other issues that may affect the child’s progress on the IEP, an IEP meeting may be held. A child may have more than one IEP meeting per year if needed. The parent may consent to make minor IEP changes without a meeting. Changes to the IEP are called amendments.

Amendments are made to an initial or annual IEP and do not change the anniversary date of the annual IEP. All IEP team members and district personnel responsible for implementing the IEP must be notified of any amendment made to the IEP. Amendments can happen with or without a meeting, but the parent must consent if an amendment is made without a meeting. Each time an amendment is made, you must receive a copy of your child’s IEP if you request it. It is a good idea to keep a copy of your child’s current IEP.
Temporary IEP

This is an IEP developed as a result of a referral conference when the committee decides a child requires immediate intervention or diagnostic data. The decision to develop a temporary IEP is carefully considered because if your child’s evaluation shows that your child does not have a disability and/or does not need special education services, the services that were in place under the temporary IEP cease. Your consent is required for a temporary IEP. A temporary IEP is in place for 60 days while the evaluation is being completed.

IEP Meeting Topics

Terms used in this section, in order of first use

**IEP** is the acronym for Individualized Education Program. It is the written plan that guides your child’s special education services.

**General education curriculum** or grade-level curriculum refers to the curriculum that the school uses to teach all children in the school district, including children who have disabilities. The curriculum includes lessons, materials, and activities routinely used by the general population of children in the school and is aligned with state grade-level academic standards. The U.S. Department of Education defines general education curriculum as curriculum that is based on a State’s academic content standards for the grade in which a child is enrolled and includes instruction and supports that will prepare the child for success in college and careers.

**Evaluation** refers to the data gathering process in which procedures are used selectively with an individual child to determine special education eligibility or programming. It does not include basic tests administered or procedures used with all children in a school, grade, or class.

**Parent** means a child’s parent or a person acting in that role. The parent may be the biological or adoptive parent, a foster parent, a legal guardian, a person acting in the place of the parent such as a grandparent, a surrogate parent, or the child who is 18 or older.

**IEP** discussion topics include the following:

- progress or lack of expected progress toward the special education goals and/or objectives,
- progress or lack of expected progress in the general education curriculum,
- new information from evaluations,
- information given by the parents, family, or the school staff,
- the child’s anticipated needs, and
- other matters.
Progress toward the goals is the overall expectation for children with IEPs. When a child is not progressing toward meeting goals, the IEP team needs to meet, discuss this lack of expected progress, and determine what changes to the IEP, if any, are needed.

After the IEP meeting, you may receive a “Notice of Action” which outlines specific decisions proposed or refused during the meeting. Another section of this guide discusses and includes a copy of a “Notice of Action.”

The IEP Team

Terms used in this section, in order of first use

IEP is the acronym for Individualized Education Program. It is the written plan that guides your child’s special education services.

Parent means a child’s parent or a person acting in that role. The parent may be the biological or adoptive parent, a foster parent, a legal guardian, a person acting in the place of the parent such as a grandparent, a surrogate parent, or the child who is 18 or older.

Specially designed instruction is instruction that meets the needs of a child with a disability who is eligible for special education services. The content, methodology, and/or the delivery of instruction is adapted, as appropriate, to address the child’s unique needs, resulting from the disability. Specially designed instruction ensures students with disabilities can access the general curriculum and meet educational standards that apply to all children.

General education curriculum or grade-level curriculum refers to the curriculum that the school uses to teach all children in the school district, including children who have disabilities. The curriculum includes lessons, materials, and activities routinely used by the general population of children in the school and is aligned with state grade-level academic standards. The U.S. Department of Education defines general education curriculum as curriculum that is based on a State’s academic content standards for the grade in which a child is enrolled and includes instruction and supports that will prepare the child for success in college and careers.

Evaluation refers to the data gathering process in which procedures are used selectively with an individual child to determine special education eligibility or programming. It does not include basic tests administered or procedures used with all children in a school, grade, or class.

Related services are any specially designed services that enable a child to benefit from special education instruction. Some examples include psychological services, assistive technology, interpretive services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, audiology, and mobility training.
**Transition** is the change from high school to your child’s future. The IEP team begins transition planning when your child is 16 or earlier.

The IEP team members are different from the referral conference team members. Your child’s IEP team must include the following:

- a **parent**,
- at least one of your child’s special education teachers who will be responsible for implementing the IEP,
- at least one of your child’s regular education teachers, if your child participates or may participate in the regular education environment,
- a local education agency (school) representative who is licensed to teach or supervise **specially designed instruction**, knows about the **general education curriculum**, and knows about the resources of the school district, and
- a person who can interpret **evaluations** and their educational implications.

The educational professionals must attend IEP meetings with the following two exceptions:

- Their areas of curriculum or **related services** are not being changed or discussed, and the parent agrees, in writing, that the member need not attend all or part of the meeting.
- Their areas of curriculum or related services are being changed or discussed; the team member provides written input into the development **of the IEP prior to the meeting**; and the parent consents, in writing, **that the member may be excused** from all or part of the meeting. When a team member is excused from an IEP meeting, the excusal is documented on the front page of the IEP.

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<th>Excusal(s):</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<td>If yes, Name(s) of Team Member(s) Excused:</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent Agreement to Excusal:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is excused member’s area of curriculum being discussed?</td>
<td>Yes, written input was provided.</td>
<td>No</td>
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**Translation/Interpretation Needed:**

- Yes
- No

If yes, Specify:
In some situations, IEP team members also may include the following:

- people you invited or school staff invited due to expertise or knowledge regarding your child,
- the child, whenever it is appropriate,
- the child by age 16 and thereafter, or younger if appropriate, whenever transition* is discussed, and
- a representative of another agency, if that agency is likely to provide or pay for some services, such as transition services or mental health services.

* If a transition-age child does not attend the meeting, the school must find other ways to make sure that the child’s desires and interests are considered. Arkansas transition planning is discussed in another section of the guide.

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Families Need to Know

Every IEP team member has important information and expertise that affects the team's ability to make informed, appropriate decisions regarding your child’s special education program. You should consider carefully whether you want to excuse a required member of the team from the meeting.
Families Need to Know

- The school must ensure that the IEP team includes all required members.

- If a required team member is unable to attend and is not excused by you in writing, the meeting must be rescheduled.

- Regular education teachers are key team members, since they are familiar with grade-level and age-level expectations for all children. They can help decide if your child needs positive behavior interventions, supplementary aids and services, or program modifications in the regular education classroom.

- A team member also may fill the role of school district representative if the requirements of both roles are met.

- Including children in IEP meetings helps them understand their disabilities and speak up for their educational needs. Children experience teams working together to help them be successful.

- You can invite someone with special expertise about your child, such as a relative, friend, advocate, child care provider, medical professional, attorney, or someone knowledgeable about your child’s race, culture, or disability, to the IEP meeting. It is a good idea to inform the school if others will attend.

Parent Participation

Terms used in this section, in order of first use

Parent means a child’s parent or a person acting in that role. The parent may be the biological or adoptive parent, a foster parent, a legal guardian, a person acting in the place of the parent such as a grandparent, a surrogate parent, or the child who is 18 or older.

IEP is the acronym for Individualized Education Program. It is the written plan that guides your child’s special education services.

The school is responsible for making sure that one or both parents are present at each IEP meeting or are given the opportunity to participate. The school must do the following:
• notify you of the meeting early enough to give you the opportunity to attend (at least 14 days before the meeting unless you agree to meet sooner),
• schedule the meeting at a time and place mutually agreeable to you and the school, and
• if you cannot attend an IEP meeting, use other methods to help you participate, such as individual or conference phone calls, video conferencing, etc.

Each IEP meeting notice must inform you of the following:

• the meeting date, time, and location,
• the names and roles of people invited,
• your right to invite others, and
• the purpose of the meeting.

If you cannot attend or participate in the meeting, the school must document how it tried to involve you, whether through telephone calls, written invitations, or other agreed upon methods. If you receive notification of a meeting and cannot attend, contact the schools as soon as possible and propose a different time and/or date so that you and the district can schedule the meeting at a mutually agreeable time.

The school district must take whatever action is necessary to make sure that you understand what happens at the IEP meeting. This responsibility includes providing an interpreter or translator if you use sign language or your primary language is not English.

**IEP Accountability**

*Terms used in this section, in order of first use*

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**Related services** are any specially designed services that enable a child to benefit from special education instruction. Some examples include psychological services, assistive technology, interpretive services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, audiology, and mobility training.

**Service providers** are individuals the district hires to provide specific services for students.

**Accommodation** refers to a change to teaching or testing that removes barriers and provides equal access to learning. The learning expectation is to stay the same. Accommodations do not change what the child is learning. They change how a child is learning. The end result of the work is equal to that of children without accommodations. Examples include extended time for project completion, various types of assistive technology, and seating away from distractions.
**Modifications** change the learning expectations for the child. Children who receive modifications are not expected to learn the same material as their classmates. Examples include an alternate vocabulary test or focusing only on pre-selected main points.

The **IEP** is a written plan stating the specific supports and services for your child. It includes related services that will be provided and must be designed to enable your child to progress. The school district must follow the IEP and give your child the services outlined in it.

Your child will be assigned to a special educator who will work with you to schedule IEP meetings when needed. This special educator is often known as the case manager. Also, this special educator will likely be responsible for making sure information in the child’s folder is given to each of your child’s teachers and service providers (e.g., speech therapist or occupational therapist). All service providers must be informed of their specific responsibilities for providing a service, accommodation, modification, or support for the child or staff.

**Development of the IEP**

**Terms used in this section, in order of first use**

**IEP** is the acronym for Individualized Education Program. It is the written plan that guides your child’s special education services.

**Evaluation** refers to the data gathering process in which procedures are used selectively with an individual child to determine special education eligibility or programming. It does not include basic tests administered or procedures used with all children in a school, grade, or class.

**Re-evaluation** refers to the review of a child’s special education needs. Every three years after a child is determined to be eligible for special education services, the IEP team must consider evaluation needs. At that time the team must decide what, if any, testing is needed for the committee to determine if the child continues to be eligible for special education services. The team also decides if information is needed to address the child’s present levels of performance and or any changes to the child’s special education and related services are needed for the child to meet their goals. Although required every three years, a re-evaluation can be requested by the parent or a teacher.

**Accommodation** refers to a change to teaching or testing that removes barriers and provides equal access to learning. The learning expectation is to stay the same. Accommodations do not change what the child is learning. They change how a child is learning. The end result of the work is equal to that of children without accommodations. Examples include extended time for project completion, various types of assistive technology, and seating away from distractions.
**Modifications** change the learning expectations for the child. Children who receive modifications are not expected to learn the same material as their classmates. Examples include an alternate vocabulary test or focusing only on pre-selected main points.

**Assistive technology** refers to any item, piece of equipment, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability. The devices include those purchased commercially or those that are modified or customized but exclude surgically implanted devices.

When developing your child’s IEP, the team must consider five areas:

1. your child’s strengths,
2. your concerns about your child’s education,
3. the results of the most recent evaluation,
4. academic, developmental, and functional needs, and
5. special factors.

1. **Your Child’s Strengths**

Strengths and interests can form the framework on which to build new skills and behaviors. Your child’s strengths and interests must be discussed by the IEP team and used as the basis for planning the educational program. Following are two ways teachers could build on strengths or interests for children with disabilities:

- A child who enjoys helping others can be encouraged to hand in all assignments and then be rewarded by helping a younger child with an art project.
- Teachers can ask a child who is a good speller to spell words that others find difficult.

2. **Educational Concerns of Families**

The IEP team must consider your concerns about your child’s education. Your concerns may involve goals you want your child to achieve and specific skills that you hope will be gained. This discussion by the IEP team is an opportunity to reflect on growth over the last year and areas that you believe should be addressed. Examples include the following:

- school staff training that you think may be helpful,
- resources and successes that work at home
- skills seen at home,
- your child’s concerns about being bullied,
- your child having few friends,
- your child failing general education math,
- your child saying there is not enough time to move from one class to the next,
• your child’s risks for dropping out of school,
• social skills, such as how your child gets along with others, and
• behavior concerns that may be limiting your child’s progress.

The IEP team will address concerns if they affect education. An IEP team must consider parent concerns; however, the team might not include exactly what you request in the IEP. If a concern is not addressed in the IEP, the “Notice of Action” will explain why the team did not include it.

3. **Results of the Most Recent Evaluation**

When developing an IEP, the IEP team will consider the results of your child’s most recent evaluation, either the initial evaluation or the three-year comprehensive re-evaluation. More discussion of re-evaluation is included in a later subsection of this guide.

4. **Academic, Developmental, and Functional Needs**

Additional information for IEP team planning will include the following:

• recent report cards,
• results of state and district-wide assessments,
• progress on current IEP goals, and
• discussion of the effectiveness of current IEP accommodations and modifications.

The team will consider any new developmental or functional needs, activities of everyday life, that may have become a concern for your child during the year.

5. **Special Factors**

The IEP team must consider additional special factors when children have the following:

• behavior that negatively affects their own learning or that of others,
• limited English skills,
• blindness or visual impairment,
• communication needs,
• deafness or difficulty hearing, and/or
• needs for assistive technology and services.

There is more information on special factors in a later subsection of this guide.
CONTENT OF IEP

Terms used in this section, in order of first use

**IEP** is the acronym for Individualized Education Program. It is the written plan that guides your child’s special education services.

**Early childhood special education (ECSE)** refers to special education services for children ages 3-5 who are not, and have never been, enrolled in kindergarten.

**Evaluation** refers to the data gathering process in which procedures are used selectively with an individual child to determine special education eligibility or programming. It does not include basic tests administered or procedures used with all children in a school, grade, or class.

**Transition** is planning the change from high school to your child’s future. The IEP team begins transition planning before your child is 16 and can begin at a younger age.

**Parent** means a child’s parent or a person acting in that role. The parent may be the biological or adoptive parent, a foster parent, a legal guardian, a person acting in the place of the parent such as a grandparent, a surrogate parent, or the child who is 18 or older.

**IDEA** is the acronym for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This is the federal law that guarantees the rights of children with disabilities to a free appropriate public education.

**Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)** describes what your child can do at the time the IEP is developed and the effect of your child’s disability on progress in the general education curriculum.

**General education curriculum** or grade-level curriculum refers to the curriculum that the school uses to teach all children in the school district, including children who have disabilities. The curriculum includes lessons, materials, and activities routinely used by the general population of children in the school and is aligned with state grade-level academic standards. The U.S. Department of Education defines general education curriculum as curriculum that is based on a State’s academic content standards for the grade in which a child is enrolled and includes instruction and supports that will prepare the child for success in college and careers.

**Accommodation** refers to a change to teaching or testing that removes barriers and provides equal access to learning. The learning expectation is to stay the same. Accommodations do not change what the child is learning. They change how a child is learning. The end result of the work is equal to that of children without
accommodations. Examples include extended time for project completion, various types of assistive technology, and seating away from distractions.

**Extended school year (ESY) services** provide for an extension of the IEP from the regular school year in order to allow the child to maintain the progress achieved during the regular school year. It is not summer school.

**Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** is the right, guaranteed under IDEA, for each child with a disability who needs special education and related services to have an individualized education program (IEP) at public expense.

**Related services** are any specially designed services that enable a child to benefit from special education instruction. Some examples include psychological services, assistive technology, interpretive services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, audiology, and mobility training.

**Supplementary aids and services** are any aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings, including extracurricular and non-academic settings, to enable children with disabilities to be educated with children who do not have disabilities as much as possible. Examples include paraprofessional services, large print textbooks, sign language interpreters, and extra time to complete a project.

**Age of majority** is the age when a young person is considered to be an adult. In Arkansas, the age of majority is 18.

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** is the requirement that children with disabilities be educated with peers who do not have disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate for the child.

**Assistive technology** refers to any item, piece of equipment, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability. The devices include those purchased commercially or those that are modified or customized but exclude surgically implanted devices.

**Modifications** change the learning expectations for the child. Children who receive modifications are not expected to learn the same material as their classmates. Examples include an alternate vocabulary test or focusing only on pre-selected main points.

**Paraprofessionals** are staff members other than teachers who work directly with students with disabilities under the direct supervision of a teacher or other licensed professional and who have received appropriate training pertaining to the tasks and activities they are asked to perform. Paraprofessionals must meet state-established qualification standards. IEP teams must weigh the benefit, such as a child’s personal care and/or safety needs, of a paraprofessional for a single student with the potential that a paraprofessional may inadvertently
create dependence rather than independence, limit social interactions with peers, and create a more restrictive setting for the child.

**Educational interpreters** facilitate communication by interpreting spoken language into a visual format, and vice versa, for persons who are deaf or have a hearing impairment.

**Alternate assessments** are assessments for children with the most significant cognitive disabilities. If the child’s IEP team determines it is appropriate, the child may take an alternate assessment.

**Academic standards** describe what children must know and be able to do in each academic content area. Arkansas academic standards are defined in the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks. The rigorous academic content standards and the student learning expectations in the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks provide the focus for instruction for each local school district without rigidly prescribing every element of the local curriculum.

*Content of the IEP* includes 14 subsections that describe information included in the IEP.
1. **General Information**

The IEP often includes general information.

If the IEP does not include the following, you may ask other IEP team members where the information can be found in your child’s records:

**Grade** is your child’s grade in school when the IEP is written. For children under age 5, either pre-kindergarten (pre-K) or **early childhood special education (ECSE)** typically is listed. Even if your child changes grades, the IEP is in effect for one year from the date it is written, unless it is changed or amended earlier by the IEP team.

**Duration of Services** refers to the length of time the child should receive the services described in the IEP. Depending on when the IEP is written, services are typically “From” the date of the IEP meeting or the date school begins the following year. Services are “To” the date the IEP will end, usually a year from the date it is written.

**Most Recent Evaluation Date** is the date your child’s last comprehensive evaluation was completed. Evaluation needs must be considered in a formal
way at least every three years. If the team determines no evaluation is needed, the most recent evaluation date is the date of the Existing Data Review/Notice of Decision.

**IEP Type** refers to one of the following three IEP forms used in Arkansas:

- Early Childhood for children ages 3-5,
- School Age - No Postsecondary Transition for children who are not yet planning for post-secondary transition,
- Post-secondary Transition for children who are planning for transition – must be place by age 16.

**Purpose and Date of the IEP Meeting** shows the type and date of the meeting as follows:

- **Annual** is marked and the **Date** is included under the mark for an annual review meeting;
- **Temporary** is marked and the **Date** is included under the mark for a temporary IEP. A temporary IEP is used during the initial evaluation process when a child has significant needs and is only effective for 60 days. A temporary IEP helps to facilitate the evaluation process.
- **Initial** is marked and the **Date** is included under the mark for the child’s first IEP. The initial IEP sets the annual review timeline.
- **Amended** is marked and the **Date** is included under the mark for an amended IEP when a team meets between annual review meetings to make changes to the IEP. Your child can have more than one amendment to the IEP. You may request a meeting to review your child’s needs and discuss amending the IEP anytime you are concerned about your child’s progress. Amendments do not change the annual review date.

**2. Parent Rights**

As the **parent**, you must be provided a copy of *Your Rights Under the IDEA*:

- at least annually,
- when your child has an initial evaluation,
- if you file a state complaint or due process hearing,
- when specific disciplinary procedures happen, and
- upon request.

The way you were given a copy of *Your Rights Under the IDEA* (e.g., in person, mailed) is written on the IEP.

**Parent Method of Participation:**

The way you participate in the meeting must be documented on the IEP. You must be invited to participate in all educational placement decisions for your child. If you are not able to attend when a placement decision is made, the school must use and
document other methods, such as individual or conference telephone calls or video conferencing, to accommodate your schedule.

3. **Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)**

The purpose of the **Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)** section of the IEP is to describe what your child can do at the time the IEP is developed and the effect of your child’s disability on progress in the **general education curriculum**. The information should be presented with enough detail to describe your child’s present skill levels and give an overall picture of abilities and needs.

Following is an image showing the PLAAFP for school-age children who are not yet 16:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A statement of the child’s present levels of academic achievement and functional performance including:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Child’s strengths and needs (include data used to determine strengths and needs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Consider the academic, developmental, and functional needs resulting from the child’s disability, which may require special education, related services, supplementary aids, supports for personnel, or modifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Effect of the child’s disability on his/her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Achievement of annual goals, performance in related service areas, and a description of any significant lack of progress.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The PLAAFP summarizes your child’s:

- strengths,
- academic needs,
- functional needs,
- achievement of annual goals, and
- performance in related service areas, when applicable.

The PLAAFP also states the effect of your child’s disability:

- on involvement and progress in the general education curriculum, and
- reaching post-secondary goals, when applicable.

One of the key questions for the IEP team to consider is how your child’s disability affects involvement and progress in the **general education curriculum**. This section of the PLAAFP should state your child’s specific needs that directly impact learning and participation in the general education environment. This helps the team decide what services and **accommodations** your child needs.

Clear, specific language is important in the PLAAFP. See the following chart:
### USING SPECIFIC LANGUAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VAGUE</th>
<th>SPECIFIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is friendly and loves attention</td>
<td>Greets peers appropriately for age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received a math score of 50</td>
<td>Can count to 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can add</td>
<td>Writes answers to double digit math problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not communicate verbally</td>
<td>Speaks in one or two word sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows different careers</td>
<td>Lists five careers of interest and jobs associated with each career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty reading third grade materials</td>
<td>Correctly reads third grade materials at 70 words correctly per minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty following classroom rules</td>
<td>Follows classroom rules using visual cues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often suspended due to behavior</td>
<td>When redirected, becomes angry and displays verbal and physical outbursts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not complete assignments</td>
<td>Completes 10% of homework and turns in 25% of class assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writes paragraphs</td>
<td>Writes up to 5 sentence paragraphs with main idea statements in each paragraph</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For children who have transition needs addressed, no later than age 16, the child’s present level of performance relates to how the child will reach post-secondary transition goals and transition to adult living. It should indicate how the child’s disability could affect reaching post-secondary goals. Transition is a topic in another subsection of this guide.

The following image shows the PLAAFP for children planning for post-secondary transition (by age 16 – graduation):
For a preschool-age child, the team must consider how the disability affects the child’s participation in developmentally appropriate activities.

The early childhood IEP addresses specific needs for children ages 3-5 and addresses how the child functions in each of three outcome areas: positive social and emotional skills, acquisition and use of new knowledge, and action taken to meet needs. Following is PLAAFP for a child with preschool special education services:
The team uses the information in the PLAAFP to determine your child’s educational needs and to develop the rest of the IEP, including accommodations, goals, and services.

**Families Need to Know**

- You have important information to share about your child.
- The present level section of the IEP provides a snapshot of your child at a particular time and place.
- You and school professionals may see your child in different ways.
- It is important that you and your school team have a conversation about your child’s needs as seen from the school and parent perspectives. Even when the perspectives are different, instruction will be based on data supporting the identified needs.
- All of your child’s educational needs described in the present level section must be addressed in the IEP.
- IEP services are determined by the child’s needs, not by disability category.
- If an initial of three-year re-evaluation has been completed, the school’s staff must give you a copy of the evaluation report. It contains detailed information that will be used to develop the present level statement.
- The present level section will include summary statements of your child’s performance in assessed areas and will be updated each year.
4. Consideration of Special Factors

The IEP team must review specific circumstances that may or may not apply to your child. These are referred to as special factors. Factors relevant to your child, if any, will be indicated and explained on the form titled “Consideration of Special Factors.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consideration of Special Factors</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>If yes, explain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language needs as related to the IEP for a child who is an English Learner</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>If yes, explain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction in Braille if the child is blind or visually impaired, unless determined inappropriate based on evaluation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>If yes, explain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication needs, and for the child who is deaf or hard of hearing, the language and communication needs and opportunities for communication and instruction in the child's native language and communication mode</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>If yes, explain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistive technology devices and services</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>If yes, explain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive behavioral interventions and supports and other strategies to address behavior</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>If yes, explain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary aids and services, program modifications and accommodations and/or supports for personnel in general education or other education-related settings</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>If yes, explain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there other factors that need consideration?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>If yes, explain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. **Extended School Year (ESY)**

Some children with an IEP need services that extend beyond the normal school year. Such services are referred to as **extended school year (ESY) services**. The IEP team must discuss the need for ESY services every year. If services are needed, that information must be indicated in the IEP.

When making ESY decisions, the IEP team must consider data from the following areas:

- the nature and severity of the child's impairment,
- loss of progress, regression, experienced by the child relative to IEP annual goals and/or short term instructional objectives,
- recovery/recoumpent time from regression (reasonably, five or more instructional days for each two-week period of interruption in educational programming),
- your ability to provide the educational structure at home,
- child's rate of progress,
- child's behavioral concerns,
- child's physical concerns,
- availability of alternative resources,
- ability of the child to interact with nondisabled children/youth,
- areas in the child's curriculum which need continuous attention,
- child's vocational training needs,
- whether the requested service is “extraordinary” for the child’s condition, as opposed to an integral part of a program for those with the child's condition and
- other relevant factors as determined by the IEP team.
The school may not limit ESY services to particular disabilities or limit the type, amount, or duration of those services. An ESY program must be tied to your child’s need for services, including, but not limited to, the need to maintain self-sufficiency skills, sometimes called functional skills, the likelihood of significant regression, or the need of ESY for the provision of a **free appropriate public education (FAPE).**

ESY services for eligible children with disabilities should not be confused with traditional summer school or with summer services made available to all children. ESY services provide a different focus from general summer school programs. ESY services provide for an extension of the IEP from the regular school year in order to allow the child to maintain the progress achieved during the regular school year. **Related services** such as occupational therapy and physical therapy cannot be the only service a child receives during ESY. All ESY services documented in your child’s IEP must be provided at no cost to you.

### Families Need to Know

- The determination of whether your child needs extended school year services must be documented annually in the IEP.

- [Arkansas Department of Education Special Education and Related Services Regulations, Section 19.00](#) provides additional guidance on ESY services.

- ESY must be provided to your child when the IEP team determines the need for this service. ESY is not the same as summer school. School districts have the choice of offering summer school to children. ESY is always an **IEP** team decision.

### 6. Statement of Measurable Annual Goals

The IEP will have annual goals that describe what your child is expected to complete by the anniversary date of the IEP. Short-term objectives or benchmarks may also be included, but are required only when a child is assessed with an alternative assessment.
The goals are based on the needs identified in the PLAAFP. The IEP team will decide

- what skill areas can be addressed through accommodations or other supplementary aids and services without including an IEP goal,
- which goals are needed to bridge the gap between the child’s current level of performance and the grade level standards or expected behaviors for children of the same age, and
- what level of performance should be achieved and how that performance will be measured.
Goals may address any area which affects your child’s learning: academic, behavioral, functional, social, or other educational skills that are important for your child to master. Goals must be measurable so that the IEP team can monitor your child’s progress on each one. The IEP must address all educational needs that result from your child’s disability, regardless of the disability category. Your child’s IEP must include at least one goal that addresses areas of need identified in the PLAAFP.

Goals must be measurable, which means they have the following components:

- **Behavior** or skill to be performed (e.g., an 8-sentence paragraph which includes a topic sentence and at least three supporting details),
- **Conditions** or supports present to accomplish a goal (e.g., when given a writing component checklist),
- **Criteria** for evaluating (e.g., 90% accuracy as measured on the quarterly assignment chart), and
- **Timeframe** for completing goal (e.g., by the end of the current school year).

Following is an example of a measurable annual goal with each component:

*By the end of the school year, when given a writing rubric, Lily will write an 8-sentence paragraph, which includes a topic sentence and at least three supporting details with a score of 3 or higher in each area outlined in a grading rubric.*

An annual goal may have objectives or benchmarks, or a combination of the two.
The IEP team will determine the methods that will be used to determine progress on the goal and progress will be reported to you at least as often as the district’s grading period (when report cards are sent home).

Families Need to Know

- Your child’s current level of performance must be described in the PLAAFP.
- Each annual goal must be measurable. Your child’s expected mastery level must be written in the goal statement.
- Terms such as “age appropriate,” “increase,” and “grade level” are not measurable unless the IEP clearly describes what is meant by the terms. This can be described with a beginning and end point such as “increase from 10 words to 20 words.”
- You can suggest goals and ask questions about proposed goals during the IEP meeting.
- Making adequate progress is the key to an appropriate education.
- IEP progress reports are not the same as classroom report cards. The IEP reports progress on the IEP goals while report card grades reflect progress in the curriculum.
- If your child is progressing as planned, the goals and objectives will be continued until the annual IEP review.
- If your child is not making sufficient progress toward meeting IEP goals, and/or in general education classes, a team meeting must be held to revise the IEP. You may request this meeting.

7. Early Childhood Outcomes

If your child is ages 3-5 and receiving early childhood special education (ECSE) services, the development of the initial IEP will include the determination of outcome ratings. Outcomes are rated again when your child exits ECSE. Outcomes are rated through a process that provides a common way for describing how your child compares to other children of the same age in each of the following three areas:

- **Positive social emotional skills** measure how children interact and play with their family, other adults, and other children. These skills include following rules and expressing emotions.
• **Acquisition and use of new knowledge and skills** measure how children learn and use basic language and communication skills. Some activities included in this area are thinking, reasoning, remembering, counting, understanding vocabulary, and using imagination.

• **Taking action to meet needs** measures how children gradually become more independent by learning how to move from place to place, feed themselves, and take care of basic needs.

The three outcomes focus on what your child can do in everyday activities and routines. You know your child better than anyone, and information you share during the IEP process and childhood outcome summary process helps the team develop goals for your child. Tell the IEP team how your child plays and gets along with others, how your child gets what is needed, and what your child does when discovering new things.

**The childhood outcome summary process** provides a rubric, a method of rating, which is part of the IEP. The IEP team rates your child's level of functioning compared to peers of the same age. The team uses information from many sources including assessment tools, parent information, and provider reports. Teams think about how a child functions in each outcome area, setting, and activity.
8. Arkansas Transition Planning

By the time your child turns age 16, the IEP team will begin planning for your child’s future after high school. The IEP continues to address previously identified needs. Goals and plans for the future are linked to the following transition areas and included in the IEP:

- Career/employment,
- post-secondary education and training, and
- when appropriate, independent living, which may include recreation and leisure, community participation, and home living.

The post-secondary transition process begins with assessment. Transition assessments will be given every year to collect data on your child’s strengths, needs, and preferences. Assessment results are the foundation for life goals after high school. Your input is critical in this assessment stage. The team documents the assessment tools used to help your child plan.

The IEP team, including your child, will develop measurable post-secondary goals in the areas of education, employment, and, when appropriate, independent living. The team will use observations, assessments, and interviews to set appropriate goals. The post-secondary transition goals will guide the rest of the IEP because the purpose of special education is to prepare your child for life after high school. The post-secondary goals are reviewed and revised annually. Whenever transition will be discussed, your child must be invited to the IEP meeting.
### 1. Postsecondary Career/Employment Goal(s)

1) **REQUIRED** - Postsecondary Career/Employment Goal(s) *(After high school, what kind of work will you do?)*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition Activities/Services that will help student move toward Career/Employment Goal indicated above:</th>
<th>Responsible Party’s Title</th>
<th>Semester/Year to be implemented (e.g., Fall/15)</th>
</tr>
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</table>

### 2. Postsecondary Education/Training Goal(s)

2) **REQUIRED** - Postsecondary Education/Training Goal(s) *(After high school, what additional education and training will you receive? This education/training will be correlated to career/employment goals or independent living skill goals)*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition Activities/Services that will help student move toward Education/Training Goal indicated above:</th>
<th>Responsible Party’s Title</th>
<th>Semester/Year to be implemented (e.g., Fall/15)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 3. Postsecondary Independent Living Skills/Community Participation Goal(s)

3) Postsecondary Independent Living Skills (ILS)/Community Participation Goal(s): Before establishing a goal, make sure a variety of ILS are considered. Remember: the activities you include under the goal should be specific to supporting the student’s moving toward living independently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition Activities/Services that will help student move toward Independent Living Skills/Community Participation Goal indicated above:</th>
<th>Responsible Party’s Title</th>
<th>Semester/Year to be implemented (e.g., Fall/15)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

If there are no areas of deficit, include a statement indicating the student will maintain his or her current skills (as indicated in assessment results) to live independently.
The IEP also includes a statement of transition services needed for the child to reach measurable post-secondary goals. These services may be in the form of activities provided in different classrooms, within the community, or through a program or service of another agency. They may also be done at home in partnership with the school. If an agency other than the school does not provide the transition service as recorded in the IEP, the IEP team must meet to identify other ways to provide the service.

The IEP team will decide what steps are necessary to help your child work toward post-secondary goals. The courses of study section of the IEP helps the team plan future course work so the child can move toward long-term post-secondary goals. The IEP will document the courses to be taken each year through your child’s exit year, enabling you, your child, and the IEP team to monitor your child’s progress toward graduation requirements. If your child’s goals change, the course of study may also change.
The IEP team will decide if your child needs specialized instruction to work on particular skills or behaviors to achieve post-secondary goals. If so, measurable annual goals, which may include objectives, will be developed. (See prior subsection on annual goals.) An example might be learning to keep a homework schedule for school in order to successfully earn credits toward graduation so the child can attend post-secondary training. Another goal could relate to improving a specific skill needed for the child to live independently.

**Families Need to Know**

- Your child is invited to every IEP meeting in which transition is discussed.

- When the IEP team looks at the courses of study, ask how the child is doing in achieving the required number of credits for graduation.

- It is important to consider all areas of transition to ensure your child leaves high school with the necessary skills for independent living and functioning in the community. Transition is critical because many children with disabilities leave high school lacking the academic, technical, and social skills necessary to continue in post-secondary training or the ability to find and maintain employment.

- Transition services may be provided to children younger than age 16 if the services will enhance employment or other educational outcomes.

- IEP team decisions should include input from the student, parents, and others from the child’s school and community.

- The team must make sure that the child’s desires and interests are considered. This is why assessments are so important.

- A child who graduates and receives a regular diploma no longer qualifies for special education services.

- Parent input is very important to the transition process.

- More information is available on the [Arkansas Transition Services](https://www.arkansas.gov/departments/education/services/transition) website.
9. Transfer of Rights at Age of Majority

Under IDEA, educational rights transfer to children when they reach the age of majority, age 18 in Arkansas. At least one year before your child turns 18, the child and the parent must be informed of the rights that will transfer to the child at the age of majority. When rights are transferred from you to your child, you will continue to receive all legally required information such as IEP meeting notices. Your child will assume all other rights. If legal guardianship of the child is obtained after the child reaches the age of majority, there is no transfer of rights.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transfer of Rights: In Arkansas, beginning not later than one year before a child reaches the age of majority under State law, age eighteen (18), except for a child with a disability who has been determined to be incompetent under state law, the child’s IEP must include a statement that the child has been informed of his or her rights under Part B of the Act, if any, that will transfer to the child on reaching the age of majority, consistent with 34 CFR 300.520 and §9.00 of these regulations.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ ] N/A for this student/IEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Date notification was given: ___________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Date of Transition Plan Development: ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student’s Disability: ________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dates Plan was Reviewed (must be reviewed at least annually):</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Families Need to Know

- As a parent, you will be notified of IEP meetings after your child turns 18; however, the “Notice of Conference” will be given to you for informational purposes.
- Children reaching the age of majority may choose to invite their parents to participate in the IEP process. The children have the right to invite parents to meetings.
- Children may submit written requests to the school asking that their parents continue to be invited to meetings.
- Parents continue to have the right to access to their children’s educational records if the children are claimed as dependents for tax reporting purposes.
- More information on the age of majority and the transfer of rights on the Center for Parent Information & Resources website.
10. Schedule of Services

The IEP outlines the special education, related services, and other supports your child will have. Specific services and supports are given so that your child can:

- advance toward accomplishing annual goals,
- learn and participate with other children with and without disabilities,
- participate and make progress in the general education curriculum, and
- participate in extracurricular or nonacademic activities.

Each service should be based on teaching practices that have positive effects on the educational growth of the child to the extent practical and give clear direction to staff on how to serve your child. Terms such as “when available” and “if necessary” should be avoided.

The “Schedule of Services” specifically outlines the special education and related services to be provided for your child. It specifies subject areas, amount of time, frequency, and location of the services given.
11. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Your child should be educated in the regular classroom with appropriate aids and supports, referred to as "supplementary aids and services, to the maximum extent appropriate. The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for a child with a disability is an appropriate program, including any necessary special supports, so that the child is educated and involved with non-disabled peers as much as possible. When determining the LRE for a child, a consideration is, if the school the child is attending would be the school that they would attend if they did not have disabilities. Children should have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular and nonacademic activities with children who do not have disabilities.

LRE decisions are made by the IEP team based on your child’s specific needs. The IEP team must consider the regular education classroom with supplemental aids and supports before considering removal from that classroom. The IEP must explain the following:

- the reasons your child will be educated outside the classroom, and
- how much time your child will be educated or participate in activities outside of the regular education setting.

The explanation will include the nature and severity of the disability and the reasons your child must be removed from regular education to receive services.

You must be informed about placement alternatives available for your child. The IEP team will discuss the alternatives and together you will decide which is most appropriate educational placement to meet your child’s needs in the LRE. The services must be developed so your child can progress in the general education curriculum.

Families Need to Know

“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 if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.”

34 CFR 300.114(a)(2)
IDEA requires school districts to have a variety of placement settings, called a continuum of placements, available to meet the individual needs of children.
The LRE decisions for children ages 3-5 are determined using the information in the following IEP form:

The IEP team should think about supports and strategies to help your child succeed in the general education classroom.

- **Assistive technology** supports a child’s learning (e.g., a communication board enables a child who is non-verbal to communicate more effectively; or a laptop or iPad can help a child take notes in class).

- **Accommodations** change how the child accesses the curriculum (e.g., seating away from distractions or allowing a child to give an oral response rather than a written one).
• **Modifications** change what the child is required to do to demonstrate mastery in a course (e.g., an alternate vocabulary test or focusing only on pre-selected main points).

• **Paraprofessionals** provide specialized or concentrated assistance for children. A paraprofessional can be assigned to a classroom or to a specific child.

• **Educational interpreters** facilitate communication through sign language for a child who is deaf or hearing impaired.

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**Families Need to Know**

Ask yourself, “With this level of support, is it reasonable to expect my child to achieve the IEP goals and also make meaningful progress in the general education curriculum?” If the answer is no, discuss your concerns with the IEP team.

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12. **Arkansas Educational Assessments**

All children enrolled in public school must take statewide and district-wide student achievement tests at specified times as outlined in the federal *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*. Schools are required to include children with disabilities in educational assessments. The IEP team must discuss your child’s participation in and needed accommodations on the tests.

The Arkansas Department of Education requires children to take the ACT Aspire or the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Assessment based on alternate achievement standards in English language arts, mathematics, and science. These tests, which meet the assessment requirements of ESSA, begin in grade 3 and continue through grade 10. For the 2018-2019 school year, students who participate in the alternate assessment will also take the DLM Alternate Assessment in English language arts and mathematics. Also, any grade 11 student may take the ACT free of charge.
Assessment Decision

1. Can the child participate in regular statewide and districtwide required assessments?
   - Yes  
   - No
   
   A. List accommodations needed (if any) consistent with IEP and general test administration guidelines.
      - None needed
      - Accommodations needed: ________________________________

2. If the child will participate in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program, has the IEP team considered the guidelines for participation in alternate assessment?
   - Yes  
   - No
   
   A. If the child will participate in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program, provide a statement of why the child cannot participate in regular assessment.

   ________________________________

   B. If the child will participate in the online Arkansas Alternate Assessment, list accommodations needed (if any) consistent with IEP and alternate test administration guidelines.
      - None needed
      - Accommodations needed: [ ] Assistive Technology  [ ] Paper Version  [ ] Scribe  [ ] Sign Language

I understand that my child will be assessed with the statewide alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards.

Parent Signature: ________________________________
Families Need to Know

- Talk with your child’s IEP team about which state assessments are required each year for your child.

- The IEP team should consider the guidelines for an alternate assessment to determine if it is appropriate for your child. If the alternate assessment is appropriate, you will be asked to sign a statement on the IEP, indicating your understanding that the alternate assessment is not the same test as the regular assessment.

- Arkansas’s accountability assessment program is designed to measure:
  - how well students, as a group, are achieving according to the Arkansas academic standards,
  - the proficiency of Arkansas public school graduates, and
  - children’s progress, as a group, over time.

Most children take the ACT Aspire. For children with the most significant cognitive disabilities, the IEP team may decide that the alternate assessment is appropriate. Children must meet very specific eligibility criteria to take the alternate assessment. If the IEP team decides that your child will take the alternate assessment, you will be asked to sign the IEP acknowledging that your child is taking an assessment different from the assessment taken by children without disabilities.
Accommodations for Assessments

The purpose of statewide testing is to understand how well children are meeting Arkansas academic standards. Some children with disabilities need accommodations to take these tests in order to reduce or eliminate the effect of the disability on test performance. The goal of accommodations is to level the playing field so the child can demonstrate mastery to the same level as all children.

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**Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program**

**Participation Decision Documentation**

To meet the criteria for the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program, the student must meet **ALL** participation criteria descriptors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation Criteria</th>
<th>Participation Criteria Descriptors</th>
<th>Sources of Evidence [check if used]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. The student has a significant cognitive disability | Review (of student records) indicates a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. *Adaptive behavior is defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life.* | ☐ Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test  
☐ Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment  
☐ Results of individual and group administered achievement tests  
☐ Results of informal assessments  
☐ Results of individual reading assessments  
☐ Results of district-wide alternate assessments  
☐ Results of language assessments including English learner (EL) language assessments if applicable |
| O YES  
O NO | | |
| 2. The student is learning content linked to (derived from) the Arkansas State Content Standards. | Goals and instruction listed in the IEP for this student are linked to the enrolled grade-level Arkansas State Content Standards and address knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for this student. | ☐ Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives and materials including work samples  
☐ Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals and objectives from the IEP  
☐ Data from scientific research-based interventions  
☐ Progress monitoring data |
| O YES  
O NO | | |
| 3. The student requires extensive, direct, individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade-and age-appropriate curriculum. | The student (a) requires extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and support that is not of a temporary or transient nature and (b) uses substantially adapted materials and individualized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate and transfer skills across academic content. | ☐ Examples of curriculum, instructional objectives, and materials including work samples from both school and community based instruction  
☐ Teacher collected data and checklists  
☐ Present levels of academic and functional performance, goals, and objectives, and post school outcomes from the IEP and the Transition Plan for students age 12 and older |
| O YES  
O NO | | |

If all responses above are marked YES, the student may participate in the Arkansas Alternate Assessment Program.
The following types of accommodations may be made based on a child’s needs:

- **Presentation accommodations** allow children to obtain information in ways other than reading standard print. This accommodation includes auditory, multisensory, tactile (touch), and visual methods. For example, a child who is visually impaired might have the math script read aloud.

- **Response accommodations** allow children to show what they know in different ways. For example, a child who is nonverbal may respond to test questions using an augmentative communication device.

- **Setting accommodations** allow children to take the tests in different settings or under different conditions. (Although testing in a small group and individual test administration are allowed for all children, writing it in the IEP is helpful for school staff.)

- **Timing and scheduling accommodations** give children additional time to complete the test or change the way the testing time is organized.

Accommodations are determined by the IEP team and written in the IEP. Team members should:

- be knowledgeable about state and district academic standards and assessments,
- look at what accommodations increase your child’s access to the general education curriculum (the subject content that all children are taught),
- understand that only accommodations allowed by the testing company may be allowed on statewide testing, and
- consider the accommodations routinely used by your child in daily classroom instruction and testing.

Testing accommodations should not be introduced for the first time on the day your child takes the state assessment. Testing accommodations must mirror as closely as possible the accommodations used daily, unless the accommodation will invalidate the test.

The *ACT Aspire Accessibility Manual* lists what accommodations are allowed on the ACT. Districts may submit a "Special Accommodations Request " asking for accommodations not listed in the test's accessibility manual. Special requests are reviewed by Arkansas Department of Education staff to make sure the accommodations will not invalidate test scores and are **not always** approved.

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**Families Need to Know**

- Accommodation needs on the statewide assessment are determined by the student’s IEP team.
- Accommodations needed for the statewide assessment should be used regularly by the child prior to testing.
- Accommodations the child receives on a regular basis as listed in the IEP should be considered for accommodations on statewide assessment.
13. **Parent Survey**

Every year you are presented with an opportunity to participate in a satisfaction survey regarding your child’s special education services. The results from this survey are collected and reported to the district and state. The IEP will note that you received this survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent(s) received Parent Survey:</th>
<th>Parent was provided a copy of the IEP:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. **IEP Signatures**

All meeting participants are asked to sign the IEP signatures section. Signatures document participation in the development of the IEP. Signatures do not indicate that participants agree with all IEP decisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Participant Signatures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Education Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Education Agency Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual to Interpret Instructional Implications of Evaluation Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notice of Action

Terms used in this section, in order of first use

IEP is the acronym for Individualized Education Program. It is the written plan that guides your child’s special education services.

Evaluation refers to the data gathering process in which procedures are used selectively with an individual child to determine special education eligibility or programming. It does not include basic tests administered or procedures used with all children in a school, grade, or class.

IDEA is the acronym for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This is the federal law that guarantees the rights of children with disabilities to a free appropriate public education.

School districts are required to implement the IEP as soon as possible following the meeting. The “Notice of Action” should be written and given to you within seven calendar days before the proposed start of the IEP services or prior to any change in IEP services.

After most IEP meetings, you will get a copy of the IEP and the “Notice of Action,” which describes what the school proposes or refuses to do. The “Notice of Action” is given to you before the proposed services are to begin or when the district refuses to implement a request you make. The “Notice of Action” includes the following:

- a description of the action the school proposes or refuses,
- the reasons for the proposal or refusal,
- a description of the evaluations, assessments, records, or reports used to make the decision,
- a description of other options considered,
- a description of other factors affecting the proposal or refusal, and
- resources to help families understand IDEA.

The “Notice of Action” will give you more detailed information about what is and is not included in the IEP.

After an initial IEP is developed, services cannot begin until you provide written consent. Your consent for special education services is noted by your signature on the “Notice of Action.” Also, if you wish for services to begin immediately for your child, you must mark the statement, “Parent agreed to immediate implementation of the action being proposed.” If this is not marked, the proposed IEP will not be implemented for seven days.
The following is to describe the action(s): □ Proposed or □ Refused by our district

Box A: Consent is REQUIRED for these actions to be carried out:

☐ Initial evaluation
☐ Initial placement
☐ Reevaluation (with assessment):
   ☐ Comprehensive Evaluation
   ☐ Specialized Evaluation
   ☐ Other (specify):
☐ Temporary placement
☐ Other (specify):

Box B: Consent is NOT REQUIRED for these actions to be carried out:

☐ Ineligibility for services
☐ Change in eligibility
☐ Change of placement
☐ Provision of FAPE
☐ Graduation with regular diploma
☐ Dismissal from Special Education Services
☐ Disciplinary Removal
☐ Other (specify):

Consent Granted for Action to Take Effect Immediately
☐ Parent agreed to immediate implementation of the action being proposed

Explanation of Action: (The reason(s) for the proposal or refusal):

Basis for the Action: (A listing or attached description of each evaluation procedure, assessment, record or report used as a basis for the action):

Options Considered and Reasons Rejected: (option(s) considered by the IEP team and reason(s) for rejection)

Other Factors Relevant to the Action:

Procedural Safeguards
Parents of a child with a disability, or the child with a disability, have protections under the procedural safeguards of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A copy of "Your Rights under the IDEA" may be accessed at:


If you need assistance in understanding the provisions of the procedural safeguards, you may contact:

Name: ____________________________ Phone Number/Email: ____________________________

Name: ____________________________ Phone Number/Email: ____________________________

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this action, please contact:

Name/Title: ____________________________ Phone Number/Email: ____________________________

When parents revoke consent for services for their child, the child and his/her parents no longer have the protections provided under the procedural safeguards of Part B of the IDEA.
Accessing Insurance

**Term used in this section**

**IEP** is the acronym for **Individualized Education Program**. It is the written plan that guides your child’s special education services.

School districts are permitted to access private insurance and Medicaid if you provide written consent for this access. Granting or denying your consent does not affect the IEP services your child receives. If you grant this consent, the district will then seek reimbursement from Medicaid or your private insurance for specific IEP services given at school. You may revoke consent to access insurance at any time. Regardless of insurance reimbursement, your child will get all IEP services at no cost to you.

![Parental Consent Form](image)
IEP REVIEW AND REVISIONS

Terms used in this section, in order of first use

Service providers are individuals the district hires to provide specific services for students.

IEP is the acronym for Individualized Education Program. It is the written plan that guides your child’s special education services.

Appropriate is suitable or fitting. IDEA specifies the procedures for determining the appropriate education for an individual child. Evaluations are done to identify your child’s needs. From those needs, the IEP team will determine the appropriate educational services so your child can make meaningful educational progress.

Parent means a child’s parent or a person acting in that role. The parent may be the biological or adoptive parent, a foster parent, a legal guardian, a person acting in the place of the parent such as a grandparent, a surrogate parent, or the child who is 18 or older.

General education curriculum or grade-level curriculum refers to the curriculum that the school uses to teach all children in the school district, including children who have disabilities. The curriculum includes lessons, materials, and activities routinely used by the general population of children in the school and is aligned with state grade-level academic standards. The U.S. Department of Education defines general education curriculum as curriculum that is based on a State’s academic content standards for the grade in which a child is enrolled and includes instruction and supports that will prepare the child for success in college and careers.

Evaluation refers to the data gathering process in which procedures are used selectively with an individual child to determine special education eligibility or programming. It does not include basic tests administered or procedures used with all children in a school, grade, or class.

Although all teachers and service providers must be aware of their role in providing the services outlined in your child’s IEP and must provide the specific services they are responsible for to your child, there is no promise that your child will make progress at a planned rate. If you think your child is not making appropriate progress, you may request a meeting to discuss revisions to your child’s IEP. Furthermore, you can ask for an IEP meeting anytime you have a concern related to your child, even if this means multiple IEP meetings during a school year. Also, whenever there is a need to resolve non-IEP concerns, a parent can request a parent-teacher conference.

A new IEP must be written at least every year. Also, an IEP must be revised or amended whenever significant changes in a child’s program or placement are needed. Reasons may include, but are not limited to the following:
• accomplishment of one or more IEP goals,
• not enough progress on one or more goals or in the general education curriculum,
• availability of new evaluation information,
• new information from families to share with the IEP team,
• the need for a change in the child’s placement for special education services,
• a change in the amount of time special education services are needed, and
• a team determination of a need for certain intervention procedures.

Anytime an IEP is revised or amended, parents can ask for a copy of the new IEP.

**Re-evaluation**

*Terms used in this section, in order of first use*

**Re-evaluation** refers to the review of a child’s special education and eligibility needs. Every three years after a child is determined to be eligible for special education services, the IEP team must consider evaluation needs. At that time the team must decide what, if any, testing is needed for the committee to determine if the child continues to be eligible for special education services. The team also decides if information is needed to address the child’s present levels of performance and/or any changes to the child’s special education and related services are needed for the child to meet their goals. Although required every three years, a re-evaluation can be requested by the parent or a teacher.

**Evaluation** refers to the data gathering process in which procedures are used selectively with an individual child to determine special education eligibility or programming. It does not include basic tests administered or procedures used with all children in a school, grade, or class.

**Related services** are any specially designed services that enable a child to benefit from special education instruction. Some examples include psychological services, assistive technology, interpretive services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, audiology, and mobility training.

**Modifications** change the learning expectations for the child. Children who receive modifications are not expected to learn the same material as their classmates. Examples include an alternate vocabulary test or focusing only on pre-selected main points.

**IEP** is the acronym for Individualized Education Program. It is the written plan that guides your child’s special education services.

Once your child is eligible for special education services, the need for **re-evaluation** must be reviewed every three years, or more often if needed. During the re-evaluation process, which can be done in a meeting, the team will review your child’s progress and your concerns, and determine if further **evaluation** is needed. The purpose of this review is to decide what, if any, additional data are needed to determine:
• if your child continues to have a disability,
• if your child continues to need special education and related services,
• the present levels of academic achievement and related developmental needs, and
• if additions or modifications to the special education and related services are needed.

Decisions made during this process are written on the form titled “Existing Data Review.” If the team determines additional testing is needed, you will be asked to sign consent for the evaluation on the “Notice of Action.” If the team decides not to evaluate your child you do not sign consent for evaluation, and your child will not be evaluated.
If the team decides no additional testing is needed, but you believe testing **is needed**, you may request the testing and the district must conduct the assessment.
Independent Educational Evaluation

If you disagree with initial or re-evaluation results, you have the right to request an independent educational evaluation. This evaluation is done by a private provider agreed upon by you and the district. The district will pay for this evaluation. After the evaluation is complete, the IEP team will meet and review the results and the effect of the results on your child’s educational needs. The results must be considered by the IEP team. The team decides if the results are an accurate reflection of your child’s needs.

Parental Due Process Rights
(Procedural Safeguards)

Terms used in this section, in order of first use

**IEP** is the acronym for Individualized Education Program. It is the written plan that guides your child’s special education services.

**IDEA** is the acronym for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This is the federal law that guarantees the rights of children with disabilities to free appropriate public education programs.

**Parent** means a child’s parent or a person acting in that role. The parent may be the biological or adoptive parent, a foster parent, a legal guardian, a person acting in the place of the parent such as a grandparent, a surrogate parent, or the child who is 18 or older.
**Appropriate** is suitable or fitting. IDEA specifies the procedures for determining the appropriate education for an individual child. Evaluations are done to identify your child’s needs. From those needs, the IEP team will determine the appropriate educational services so your child can make meaningful educational progress.

Occasionally, you may not agree with the IEP that was developed or have concerns that the IEP is not being implemented correctly. The procedural safeguards document entitled *Your Rights Under the IDEA* outlines parent rights and steps that can be taken to make sure an appropriate education is in place for your child.

When you have concerns regarding your child’s IEP, first talk to your child’s teacher or principal. While this is not a requirement before other steps, talking with campus staff may resolve your concerns. If you would like another step after talking to the campus, you can contact the special education supervisor in your district (See district special education directors and early childhood coordinators for names and contact information.) The supervisor may be able to resolve the concern.

Regardless of the level of communication you have had with the district you can always:

1. request a facilitated IEP meeting,
2. request a mediation,
3. file a state complaint, or
4. file a due process hearing.

See the following comparison of the four options:
## HOW DO THEY COMPARE?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is it?</th>
<th>Facilitated IEP</th>
<th>Mediation</th>
<th>State Complaint</th>
<th>Due Process Hearing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An IEP meeting, facilitated by an impartial facilitator from the Arkansas Special Education Mediation Project, so a non-biased individual can help all parties reach agreement</td>
<td>A meeting to resolve a specific issue, led by a mediator from the Arkansas Special Education Mediation Project</td>
<td>A written complaint submitted to the Arkansas Department of Education which says that a specific part of IDEA is potentially not being followed</td>
<td>A formalized process when the requestor says IDEA has been violated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who can request the process?</th>
<th>Parent or public agency</th>
<th>Parent or public agency</th>
<th>Any organization or individual</th>
<th>Parent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who makes the final decision?</td>
<td>Mutually between parties</td>
<td>Mutually between parties</td>
<td>Arkansas Department of Education officials</td>
<td>Impartial hearing officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the federal timeline?</td>
<td>14 days or fewer</td>
<td>14 days or fewer</td>
<td>60 calendar days</td>
<td>75 calendar days or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the cost to the family?</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Possible legal fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the limitations?</td>
<td>Focus on current IEP concerns</td>
<td>Focus on current IEP concerns</td>
<td>Can only address concerns within the last one year prior to the date the complaint was filed</td>
<td>Can only address allegations within the last two years prior to the date the hearing was requested</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Does Special Education Look Like?

Terms used in this section, in order of first use

**Inclusion** is the philosophy of a school supporting the individual needs of all students. Under IDEA, districts are mandated to educate each child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom the child would attend if not disabled.

**IEP** is the acronym for Individualized Education Program. It is the written plan that guides your child’s special education services.

**Indirect services** refer to services provided by the general education classroom teacher in consultation with qualified special education personnel. Indirect services are not provided directly to children by the special educator.

**Accommodation** refers to a change to teaching or testing that removes barriers and provides equal access to learning. The learning expectation is to stay the same. Accommodations do not change what the child is learning. They change how a child is learning. The end result of the work is equal to that of children without accommodations. Examples include extended time for project completion, various types of assistive technology, and seating away from distractions.

** Modifications** change the learning expectations for the child. Children who receive modifications are not expected to learn the same material as their classmates. Examples include an alternate vocabulary test or focusing only on pre-selected main points.

**Resource services** refer to direct instruction provided by a special education teacher to children with disabilities. This instruction may occur outside of the general education classroom.

**Self-contained classroom** refers to a class where direct instruction is provided by a special education teacher to children with disabilities the majority of the school day. This instruction occurs in a different location from non-disabled peers and provides focused, individualized instruction. Self-contained services may address functional life skills and/or behavior in addition to academic skills.

**Direct instruction** refers to special education services provided to a child by a licensed special education teacher or a related services professional.

**Related services** are any specially designed services that enable a child to benefit from special education instruction. Some examples include psychological services, assistive technology, interpretive services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, audiology, and mobility training.

The basis of all special education is inclusion in general education to the maximum extent appropriate. The amount of time a child spends in the general education classroom
is decided by the IEP team and changes depending on the support needed for each child to benefit from instruction in the general education classroom. Therefore, special education services differ greatly from one child to another and may change for your child over time.

Children who receive special education services in Arkansas could be seen:

- fully participating in the general education classroom with non-disabled peers and receiving indirect services (e.g., minimum supports such as accommodations and/or modifications),
- attending classes in the general education setting with the support of two co-teachers, one general education teacher and one special education teacher,
- attending a classroom with non-disabled peers lead by a teacher who is trained and certified to teach both general education and special education,
- attending some classes in the general education setting and attending smaller classes outside the general education setting where they receive resource services and a greater level of support to achieve IEP goals,
- attending all core academic classes, English, math, science, social studies, in a special education resource room, but attending other classes such as music, art, physical education or electives in general education classrooms with non-disabled peers,
- receiving services in a self-contained special education classroom, usually a different location from non-disabled peers, where direct instruction is given by a special education teacher and often addresses life skills or behavior needs, or
- receiving related services during the school day such as speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or mental health services.

The descriptions of special education settings provided are not intended to include all methods for the delivery of special education services. The IEP team will develop a program to meet the specific educational needs of your child.
GLOSSARY
An alphabetical Listing of Terms Used in the Guide

**Academic standards** describe what children must know and be able to do in each academic content area. Arkansas academic standards are defined in the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks. The rigorous academic content standards and the student learning expectations in the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks provide the focus for instruction for each local school district without rigidly prescribing every element of the local curriculum.

**Accommodation** refers to a change to teaching or testing that removes barriers and provides equal access to learning. The learning expectation is to stay the same. Accommodations do not change what the child is learning. They change how a child is learning. The end result of the work is equal to that of children without accommodations. Examples include extended time for project completion, various types of assistive technology, and seating away from distractions.

**Age of majority** is the age when a young person is considered to be an adult. In Arkansas, the age of majority is 18.

**Alternate assessments** are assessments for children with the most significant cognitive disabilities. If the child’s IEP team determines it is appropriate, the child may take an alternate assessment.

**Appropriate** is suitable or fitting. **IDEA** specifies the procedures for determining the appropriate education for an individual child. Evaluations are done to identify your child’s needs. From those needs, the IEP team will determine the appropriate educational services so your child can make meaningful educational progress.

**Assistive technology** refers to any item, piece of equipment, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability. The devices include those purchased commercially or those that are modified or customized but exclude surgically implanted devices.

**Direct instruction** refers to special education services provided to a child by a licensed special education teacher or a related services professional.

**Early childhood special education (ECSE)** refers to special education services for children ages 3-5 who are not, and have never been, enrolled in kindergarten.

**Educational interpreters** facilitate communication by interpreting spoken language into a visual format, and vice versa, for persons who are deaf or have a hearing impairment.
**Evaluation** refers to the data gathering process in which procedures are used selectively with an individual child to determine special education eligibility or programming. It does not include basic tests administered or procedures used with all children in a school, grade, or class.

**Extended school year services (ESY)** provide for an extension of the IEP from the regular school year in order to allow the child to maintain the progress achieved during the regular school year. It is not summer school.

**Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** is the right, guaranteed under IDEA, for each child with a disability who needs special education and related services to have an individualized education program (IEP) at public expense.

**General education curriculum** or grade-level curriculum refers to the curriculum that the school uses to teach all children in the school district, including children who have disabilities. The curriculum includes lessons, materials, and activities routinely used by the general population of children in the school and is aligned with state grade-level academic standards. The U.S. Department of Education defines general education curriculum as curriculum that is based on a State's academic content standards for the grade in which a child is enrolled and includes instruction and supports that will prepare the child for success in college and careers.

**Inclusion** is the philosophy of a school supporting the individual needs of all students. Under IDEA, districts are mandated to educate each child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom the child would attend if not disabled.

**Indirect services** refer to services provided by the general education classroom teacher in consultation with qualified special education personnel. Indirect services are not provided directly to children by the special educator.

**IEP** is the acronym for Individualized Education Program. It is the written plan that guides your child’s special education services.

**IDEA** is the acronym for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This is the federal law that guarantees the rights of children with disabilities to free appropriate public education programs.

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** is the requirement that children with disabilities be educated with peers who do not have disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate for the child.

**Modifications** change the learning expectations for the child. Children who receive modifications are not expected to learn the same material as their classmates. Examples include an alternate vocabulary test or focusing only on pre-selected main points.

**Paraprofessionals** are staff members other than teachers who work directly with students with disabilities under the direct supervision of a teacher or other
licensed professional and who have received appropriate training pertaining to the tasks and activities they are asked to perform. Paraprofessionals must meet state-established qualification standards. IEP teams must weigh the benefit, such as a child’s personal care and/or safety needs, of a paraprofessional for a single student with the potential that a paraprofessional may inadvertently create dependence rather than independence, limit social interactions with peers, and create a more restrictive setting for the child.

**Parent** means a child’s parent or a person acting in that role. The parent may be the biological or adoptive parent, a foster parent, a legal guardian, a person acting in the place of the parent such as a grandparent, a surrogate parent, or the child who is 18 or older.

**Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)** describes what your child can do at the time the IEP is developed and the effect of the disability on progress in the general education curriculum.

**Re-evaluation** refers to the review of a child’s special education needs. Every three years after a child is determined to be eligible for special education services, the IEP team must consider evaluation needs. At that time the team must decide what, if any, testing is needed for the committee to determine if the child continues to be eligible for special education services. The team also decides if information is needed to address the child’s present levels of performance and/or any changes to the child’s special education and related services are needed for the child to meet their goals. Although required every three years, a re-evaluation can be requested by the parent or a teacher.

**Related services** are any specially designed services that enable a child to benefit from special education instruction. Some examples include psychological services, assistive technology, interpretive services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, audiology, and mobility training.

**Resource services** refer to direct instruction provided by a special education teacher to children with disabilities. This instruction usually occurs in different locations from non-disabled peers.

**Self-contained classroom** refers to a class where direct instruction is provided by a special education teacher to children with disabilities. This instruction usually occurs in a different location from non-disabled peers and provides focused, individualized instruction. Self-contained services may address functional life skills and/or behavior in addition to academic skills.

**Service providers** are individuals the district hires to provide specific services for students.

**Specially designed instruction** is instruction that meets the needs of a child with a disability who is eligible for special education services. The content, methodology, and/or the delivery of instruction is adapted, as appropriate, to
address the child’s unique needs which result from the disability. Specially designed instruction ensures students with disabilities can access the general curriculum and meet educational standards that apply to all children.

**Supplementary aids and services** are any aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings, including extracurricular and non-academic settings, to enable children with disabilities to be educated with children who do not have disabilities as much as possible. Examples include paraprofessional services, large print textbooks, sign language interpreters, and extra time to complete a project.

**Transition** is planning the change from high school to your child’s future. The IEP team begins transition planning before your child is 16 and can begin at a younger age.
WEB RESOURCES

Arkansas Department of Education

Home page
Family and community engagement
Special education
Special education parent page

Arkansas Parent Training Centers

The Center for Exceptional Families
Family Support Program & Northwest Arkansas Community Parent Resource Center

Arkansas Transition Services

The Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education

Center for Parent Information & Resources

Home page
Getting Ready for When Your Teen Reaches the Age of Majority: A Parent’s Guide
Office of Civil Rights Guidance to Schools on the Bullying of Students with Disabilities

Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

Home page
For Families

Easterseals Outreach Program & Technology Services

Increasing Capabilities Access Network (iCAN) and Tools for Life

Understood.org

University of Arkansas Project Connect Autism Resource Guide

U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services