

UNDERSTANDING I.D.E.A.

Kindergarten-12th grade

What is I.D.E.A.?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law that guarantees that children with disabilities have access to a “free appropriate public education” (FAPE).

YOUR RIGHTS:

#1

F.A.P.E.

The Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is a part of federal law that makes sure students with disabilities have rights and supports in school.



[Learn More](#)

#3

I.E.P.

The Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are personalized plans for children with disabilities. IEPs describe the services and accommodations to help them in school.



[Learn More](#)

#5

Parent and Teacher Participation

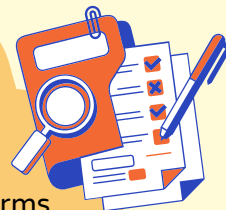
Families and schools work together to build the IEPs. This makes sure that the plan is made specifically for the child and meets their needs.



[Learn More](#)

#2

Appropriate Evaluation



The appropriate evaluation informs caregivers about their children's abilities and needs. It helps them figure out what supports and accommodations will benefit their children.

#4

L.R.E.

The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) ensures that children with disabilities learn alongside their non-disabled peers as much as possible, while still receiving necessary accommodations.



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#6

Safeguards

IDEA has a set of legal rights and protections for children and families, to make sure that there is a fair process for getting special education.



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UNDERSTANDING A.D.A.

COLLEGE AND BEYOND!

What is A.D.A. ?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in public life, covering areas such as employment, education, and transportation, regardless of federal financial assistance.

ADA in Schools

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires colleges and universities to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities.



ADA in Communities

The ADA makes sure that people with disabilities are not separated or treated differently because of a disability. People with disabilities have to be included in colleges and universities.

[Learn More](#)

Possible Accommodations:

[Learn More](#)

- taped texts
- notetakers
- interpreters
- readers
- videotext displays
- television enlargers
- talking calculators
- electronic readers
- braille calculators, printers, or typewriters
- telephone handset amplifiers
- service animals



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UNDERSTANDING A.D.A. CONT.

Five Titles of the ADA:

Title I:

EMPLOYEMENT

Title I requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations and prohibits disability-based discrimination. These accommodations may include job restructuring, accessible workstations, flexible schedules, interpreter services, and modified medical examination policies.

Title II:

PUBLIC SERVICES

Title II prohibits public services from excluding individuals with disabilities, requiring state and local agencies—including public transportation—to be accessible.

Title III:

PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Public accommodations—such as restaurants, hotels, grocery stores, and private transportation—must be accessible under Title III.

Title IV:

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Title IV requires telecommunications companies—such as cable providers, telephone services, and other communication systems—to offer relay services for individuals who are D/deaf or hard of hearing.

Title V:

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

This title includes information on the ADA including how it relates to different state laws, definitions, insurance, drug use, and the legal system.



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UNDERSTANDING IEPs

What is an IEP?

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a legal document that outlines special education services, supports, and goals for a student with a disability. It is designed to ensure the student has access to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment.

How do you get an IEP?

The school evaluates the student to determine if the student has a disability that impacts their learning. If eligible, the IEP team meets to create a customized plan.

Simple Process Flow:

Referral → Evaluation → Eligibility →
IEP Meeting → Plan Created

Who does this involve?

Parents/guardians, special education teachers, general education teachers, school specialists, and the student (if appropriate) all collaborate to build and update the student's IEP.





WHAT'S INSIDE AN IEP?

CURRENT PERFORMANCE

A snapshot of how the student is doing in school, both academically (like reading and math) and functionally (like behavior, communication, or social skills).

MEASURABLE ANNUAL GOALS

Specific, achievable goals that the student is expected to reach within a year, helping them make meaningful progress based on their needs.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Details on the customized support the student receives, such as speech therapy, extra time on tests, or classroom modifications.

PROGRESS MONITORING AND REPORTING

Details of how the school tracks the student's progress toward their goals and how often the school updates the family.



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What to Do If Your IEP Request is Denied in Connecticut?

Step 1: UNDERSTAND THE DENIAL

The school must provide you with a Prior Written Notice (PWN) detailing the reasons for the denial, the evaluations or records used in making the decision, and other options considered.



Step 2: REQUEST AN I.E.E.

If you believe the school's evaluation was inadequate or incorrect, you can request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) at the public's expense.

[Learn More](#)

[Learn More](#)

Step 3: SEEK MEDIATION

Connecticut offers mediation services through the Bureau of Special Education at no cost to parents. A neutral mediator helps both parties reach an agreement.

[Learn More](#)



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Step 4:

FILE A STATE COMPLAINT

If you think the school district has violated special education laws, you can file a complaint with the Connecticut State Department of Education, which will investigate and provide a decision within 60 days.

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Step 5:

INITIATE A DUE PROCESS HEARING

Connecticut offers mediation services through the Bureau of Special Education at no cost to parents. A neutral mediator helps both parties reach an agreement.

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SERVICES & SUPPORT FOR DHH STUDENTS

Students who are D/deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH) may qualify for services and support under IDEA, even if they do not identify as having a “disability”. Specific and unique resources for DHH students can support their access to language, learning and communication. Students who are DHH can receive support through either a IEP or a 504 plan.

IEP vs 504 Plan

504 Plan:

- A diagnosis of hearing loss is enough to qualify
- Can provide accommodations like assistive technology, preferential seating, or captioning to help access the general curriculum.
- To qualify for a 504 evidence of academic struggle is not required.

IEP:

- Must have a diagnosis that may include hearing loss that has an impact on their ability to meet general education goals
- Includes personalized goals, services, accommodations, and is a legally binding plan.
- IEPs may be more appropriate when more support than accommodations alone are needed.

LRE FOR DHH

- Least restrictive environment means students should learn alongside typical peers as much as possible while still having full access to language and learning.
- For DHH students LRE may consider:
 - A setting with accessible language, trained staff, and peer interaction, this may or may not be a traditional general education class.
 - The LRE for a DHH student prioritizes access to communication.
 - Parents and schools may consider the quality of language access and not just the physical placement.

POSSIBLE ACCOMMODATIONS & SERVICES

Accommodations should support the students access academically and socially.

- FM/DM Systems
- Classroom interpreters for the student’s preferred communication mode
- Captioning services
- Note takers or speech-to-text programs
- Preferential seating
- Individualized testing needs (quiet environments, additional time)
- Expanded core curriculum
- Extended school year (ESY)



WHAT MAKES AN IEP FOR A DHH STUDENT UNIQUE?

- An IEP for a DHH student outlines goals, services and accommodations that are tailored to the students language, communication and learning needs.
- Goals for a DHH IEP may go beyond the general curriculum and include things like developing language skills, auditory training or social communication strategies.
- Often audiologists, teachers of the deaf, and speech-language pathologists are part of the IEP team and can provide helpful insight and advocate for the DHH student.
- This IEP is a living document, meaning it is reviewed at least yearly, but parents can request changes or meetings at any time.

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