

Section 14:

K-12 Education

Education Protection

Education acts have been put into place or amended since 1973 to ensure students with disabilities receive equal access to education. Below you will find a brief overview of each act.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Act & Section 504 of 1973 prohibits discriminations against any student with a disability, provides a clear definition for the term ‘appropriate education’, and mandates a student diagnosed with a disability has equal access to education. This act ensures a student with a disability is provided the same education access as a child without a disability.

The Education Amendments Act of 1974 ensured students and their families have the right to due process in special education cases.

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 includes Individualized Education Programs (IEP), free and appropriate public education for students with a disability age 5 to 15 and defines the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). LRE is a framework ensuring students with disabilities should spend as much time as possible with their neurotypical classmates in a typical classroom setting.

Education of Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986 included free and appropriate education for students with disabilities ages 3 to 5 and early intervention programs from birth to age two for children with disabilities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in the work environment and provides equal opportunities for accommodations, services, and transportation. The ADA laws for discrimination apply to school systems as well.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990 includes extension to the special education services offered at school (i.e., social work, rehabilitation, etc.), transition program for students at age 16, confidentiality in student information, bilingual education programs, and due process for all students and their families.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997 amended the 1990 act. Changes include general education teachers are included in a student’s IEP team, students with disabilities take state standardized tests, mediation to resolve difference, behavior management plans, students with a disability can continue services even if expelled from school.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 increased accountability on schools to ensure students success, mandated highly qualified teachers, implemented an early intervention reading program, and school choices for students to ensure all students can attend successful schools.

IDEA Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004 required higher standards for special education teachers through licenses and certifications, increased funding for early intervention services, and the use of Response to Intervention (RTI) programming at school.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 transitioned the control of standardized testing to each state. Only 1 percent of all students can be given alternative assessments with the implementation of the act. An antibullying prevention plan is also included in ESSA.

Supports Available in the School System

There are two primary types of plans a student may need throughout their education journey an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan. An IEP will be recommended if the student requires accommodation and specific instructions. A 504 Plan will be recommended if the student only requires accommodation. In both cases a team of people should be present at your IEP or 504 meeting. Team members should include parents, teacher, special education teacher, paraprofessional, case manager, and an advocate if desired.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is a legal document that is a plan of action to help assist the student and the educator team in supporting the student throughout their education journey. An IEP is updated yearly, but a guardian can request a meeting at any time. The IEP includes the following items:

- Statement of Services with rationale
- Short/Long term goals
- Present Level of Educational Performance (PLEP)
- Dates of IEP
- **Accommodation is a change in how a student can access tests or classroom information. Some examples of accommodations include:**
 - Seating – Student can be moved to a preferential seating option in the classroom to see the teacher clearly.
 - Audio Books – Students can have access to an audio book to help facilitate their learning. This option is available from kindergarten to 12th Grade. Audio books can include a picture book to a textbook.

- Extended testing time – Students can be offered the option of having extra time added to any test they take, or it can be specific to certain subjects they might find challenging.
- Open book tests – Students can have access to a textbook or supporting education documents when taking a test.
- **Modifications are a change in content and learning for a student. Some examples of modifications include:**
 - Alternative reading materials – A student can have tailored alternatives to reading materials to match the student’s reading level or interest.
 - Retake quizzes – A student can have the ability to retake quizzes if unable to pass the first time without the fear of a one and done system.
 - Reduced problems on quizzes – A student can have a quiz tailored to their level of understanding.
- **Curriculum is broken down into emergent and functional curriculum. The division allows for a slower pace learning environment to support the student’s needs.**
 - Emergent Curriculum focuses on a student’s interest. The style of teaching is based on listening to the student’s interest and ideas (i.e., a student is out on the playground and becomes interested in birds flying around, the teacher can build a lesson around birds).
 - Functional Curriculum focuses on skills a student needs to be successful outside of school and/or in a post-secondary environment by assisting with social skills, independent living skills, community participation (i.e., creating lessons focusing on how to go grocery shopping, wash clothes, keep a clean house, correct behavior at work or in the community, etc.).
- **Environment can play a large role for students, particularly for those in need of sensory support. Adjustments can be made to provide necessary support to ensure the student remains successful. Environment supports can include:**
 - Distractions – Removing distractions that may overwhelm the student or impede their ability to focus on class.
 - Labels – To help support the student to find materials they need to perform classroom duties.

- Schedules – A set schedule or a written schedule on the board or given to the student to help them during the day and throughout each class.
- Music – On the radio for the whole classroom to hear or if appropriate can be headphones during quiet time in the classroom or for help while focusing on a test or assignment.
- Protocols for classroom – A set schedule or a written schedule of tasks and speaking rules given to the student by each teacher to help them stay focused during each class.
- Lighting – For students who are visually impaired and may not be able to focus due to the brightness in the room.
- Seating – Students get preferential treatment with classroom seating arrangements.

504 Plan is based on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, also known as Section 504. Section 504 is a federal law protecting the rights of individuals diagnosed with a disability in activities and programs financed through federal assistance (state and local education). To qualify for Section 504, the student must be diagnosed with a disability and the disability must result in limitation of a major life function. 504 plans are utilized if a student is only in need of accommodations to their education.

- Accommodation is a change in how a student can access tests or classroom information. Some examples of accommodations include:
 - Seating – Student can be moved to a preferential seating option in the classroom to see the teacher clearly.
 - Audio Books – Students can have access to an audio book to help facilitate their learning. This option is available from kindergarten to 12th Grade. Audio books can include a picture book to a textbook.
 - Extended testing time – Students can be offered the option of having extra time added to any test they take, or it can be specific to certain subjects they might find challenging.
 - Open book tests – Students can have access to a textbook or supporting education documents when taking a test.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is a plan based on a student's Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA). The BIP will include a description of the problem behavior, hypothesis (global and specific) reasoning behind the behavior, intervention strategies for positive behavioral support and additional support services.

Assistive Technology allows a student the opportunity to have an increase in learning, performance, and productivity. Examples of assistive technology can include:

- Applications (Apps)
- Audio Books
- Calculators
- Communication Boards
- Crutches
- Large Print Materials
- Personal or Voice Amplification System
- Screen Reading Software
- Speech Generating Device
- Switches
- Tablets
- Walker
- Wheelchair

Seclusion and Restraint continue to be topics of discussion at the State and Federal levels. In 2020, the state of Iowa updated Chapter 103 on Corporal Punishment, Physical Restraint, Seclusion, and Other Physical Contact with Students. Visit <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/ACO/chapter/281.103.pdf> to review the law in its entirety or visit https://educateiowa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Top10PointsAboutChapter103_7-7-21.pdf for the Top 10 Points About Chapter 103.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) requires public schools to provide students diagnosed with disabilities access to a classroom setting with their nondisabled peers, in their neighborhood schools. Classroom settings will be agreed upon based on the maximum appropriateness and may include alternative education opportunities based on a student's needs (i.e., part-time special education classroom, full-time special education classroom, special education school, or residential home school setting).

Transition Planning will begin for students on an IEP around the age of 16 to start the process of preparation for their future transition after high school. This plan will vary based on how long a student decides to remain in school.

Graduation Age Requirements differ for individuals diagnosed with a disability. Federal law entitles a student diagnosed with a disability the right to remain in school until the end of the school year on the age of their 21st birthday. A student can choose to accept their diploma earlier, but no school can force a student to graduate earlier than 21. If assistance is needed in the transition or graduation requirements, contact your Service and Support Coordinator and Case Manager.

Spanish Resources for school are available from The Arc of the United States School Homepage <https://thearcatschool.org/en-espanol>.

Supports Available at School

Occupational Therapist (OT) assists in helping their patients perform, adapt, modify, and/or change their daily activities to allow an individual the ability to participate in activities of their choosing through movement and coordination. Examples of occupational therapy may include:

- Improving hand-eye coordination
- Increasing attention span
- Learning nonverbal queues
- Teaching steps to help assist in being able to get dressed
- Use of the restroom independently

Paraprofessional (Para) is a certified member of the education staff in the education system. Paraprofessionals are trained to provide support, instruction, management, and organization to assist educators and students in a classroom setting. Paraprofessionals may be in a classroom to provide support to some or all the class or they may provide individualized one-on-one support to one student. In some local districts a one-on-one paraprofessional will remain with the student throughout their education journey from kindergarten to 12th grade.

Special Education Teacher is a teacher who has received a college degree specializing in the field of providing education to students diagnosed with emotional, learning, mental, or physical disabilities. Special Education teachers adapt general education lessons and skills to match the needs of each student.

Speech and Language Therapist/ Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP) assist in helping their patients improve language and communication skills.

Examples of speech and language therapy may include:

- Helping a patient who is diagnosed with muteness
- Supporting a patient with their aphasia diagnosis
- Testing to diagnose a swallowing disorder
- Working with a patient on their apraxia of speech diagnosis
- Utilizing books and letter cards to help a patient with a lisp
- Using assistive technology (i.e., communication device to express needs and wants)

Physical Therapist (PT) assist in helping their patients by prescribing exercises, treating specific areas of concern, and/or utilizing a hands-on-care concept. Examples of physical therapy may include:

- Adaption to an artificial limb
- Managing a chronic illness
- Rehabilitation after an accident
- Relieving pain
- Use of assistive devices (cane, walker, wheelchair, etc.)

Local Educational Resources:

Cedar Rapids Community School District Transition Center

319-558-1247

The Transition Center provides opportunities for students with disabilities—aged 18 to 21—who have completed four years of high school and continue to qualify for services and supports aligned to unmet needs in the areas of living, learning, and/or working. Examples of support can include integrated employment, community experiences, and independent living skill development to assist with the transition into adulthood.

College Community School District PrairieWood Transition Center

<https://phs.crprairie.org/programs/prairiewood-transition-center>

401 76th Avenue SW Cedar Rapids, IA 52404 · 319-848-5200

PrairieWood Transition Center provides community-based education and training for students who participate in special education. Each student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) with an emphasis on increasing independence in his or her home and community.

Grant Wood Area Education Agency

<https://www.gwaea.org>

4401 6th Street SW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404 · 319-399-6700

Iowa's Area Education Agencies were created by the 1974 Iowa Legislature to ensure all children have equal educational opportunities. Grant Wood Area Education Agency is one of nine AEAs in the state and serves as an intermediate agency providing educational services to local schools. Grant Wood AEA staff are committed to unlocking the potential of each and every learner.

LinnMar Community School District Transition Services

<https://www.linnmar.k12.ia.us/transition-services>

2999 N 10th Street, Marion, IA 52302 · 319-447-3359

Transition Services provides a variety of services to our students as well as our families in an effort to assist in the many transitions that occur during a student's educational career.

Transition Iowa

<https://www.transitioniowa.org>

Transition Iowa is a website providing information and resources to support transition planning for youth with disabilities and their families, and the educators and professionals who support them.

