

Thurston County Child Health Notes

Promoting early identification and partnerships between families, primary health care providers & the community.

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SPECIAL EDUCATION – THE KEY THINGS TO KNOW



Special Education is education that addresses the individual needs of children with disabilities. Children with **learning disabilities**, **neurodevelopmental disabilities**, and **physical disabilities** benefit from customized education programs and/or specialized services to meet their individual needs.

SPECIAL EDUCATION FACTS & TERMINOLOGY

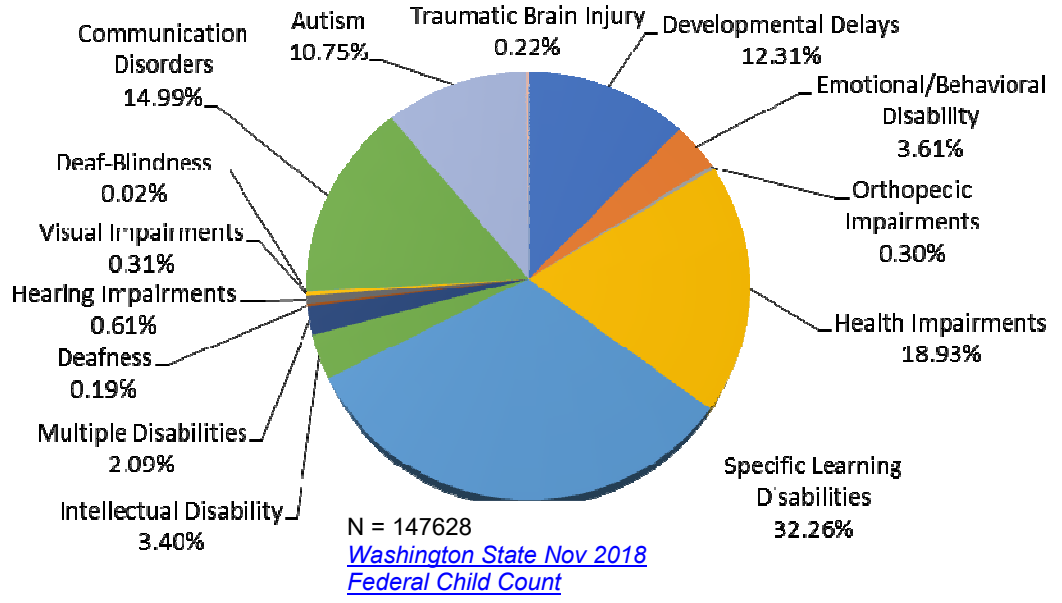
13% of students (6.7 million total in U.S.) enrolled in public schools receive special education services.

A specific **medical diagnosis is not required** for a child to be evaluated for special education.

Students who do not qualify for an IEP may still require some degree of accommodations in the classroom (ex. preferential seating) and may qualify for a **504 plan**.

A 504 plan is a blueprint for how the school will provide supports and remove barriers for a student with a disability, so the student has **equal access** to the general education curriculum.ⁱ Unlike the IDEA, Section 504 does not require a public school to provide specially designed instruction.

IEP ELIGIBILITY CATEGORIES IN WA STATE



TERMINOLOGY

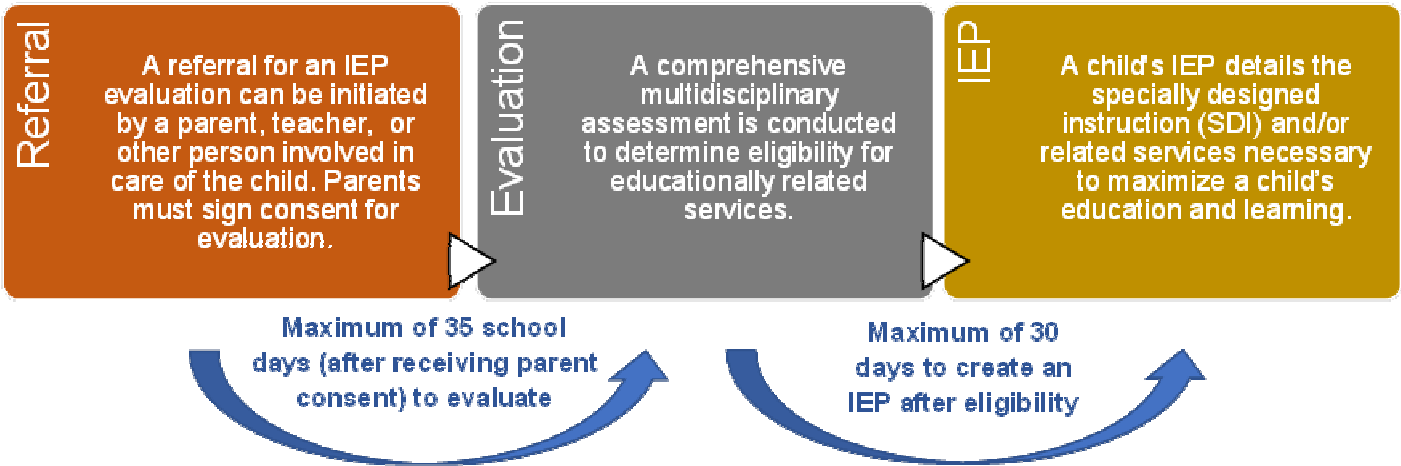
Individualized Education Program (IEP): A written statement for a student eligible for special education that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with state and federal laws. It describes the amount of time that the student will spend receiving special education, any related services the student will receive, and the academic/behavioral goals and expectations for the year.ⁱⁱ

Specially Designed Instruction (SDI): Adapting the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child. SDI is to address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability and to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children.ⁱⁱⁱ

Accommodation vs. Modification: Accommodations change *how* a student learns the material. Modifications change *what* a student is taught or expected to learn.^{iv}

SPECIAL EDUCATION LAW

Under the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** Part B, children (ages 3 to 21) with disabilities are entitled to a **free and appropriate public education (FAPE)** in the **least restrictive environment (LRE)**.



INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

IEP Evaluation:

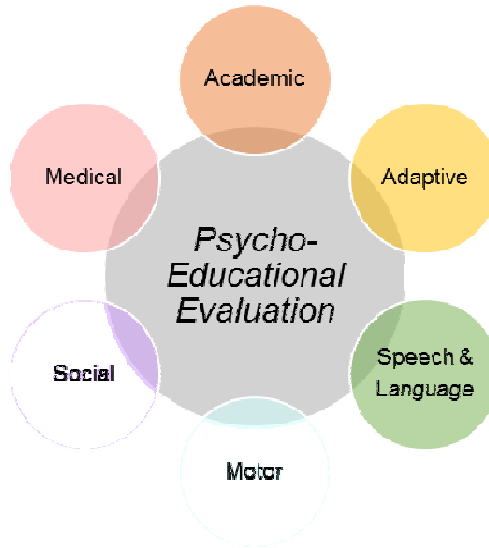
Comprehensive evaluations are used to determine what a child's strengths and weaknesses are and to assist in developing an IEP.

Specially Designed Instruction:

Provided in general or special education setting.

Related Services (may include):

- Speech and language therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Social work & counseling



IEP Team Members:

- Parents/Caregivers
- Special Education teacher(s)
- General Education teacher(s)
- School representative
- An individual who can interpret the evaluation results
- Student (if appropriate)
- Individuals with knowledge or expertise about the child
- Representatives from other agencies

ROLE OF PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS

ADVOCATE: Help families **navigate** the special education system and **know their rights**.

COLLABORATE: As a child's **medical home**, primary care providers (PCPs) are asked to partner with families and schools. PCPs can also partner with specialists such developmental-behavioral providers.

COMMUNICATE: PCPs can ask families to sign a **release of information** so that information can be shared with their child's school and vice versa. Written documentation and **updated medical records** may be requested by school districts.

EDUCATE: Teach families about their **shared decision-making** and **integral role** in the IEP process.

SURVEILLANCE: Provide screening and surveillance at each well-child visit to **identify** whether a child may have a disability and **refer** for a special education evaluation.

RESOURCES

Local:	Special Education Parent Liaison at OSPI (360)-725-6075 speced@k12.wa.us Learning Disabilities Association of Washington 1-425-882-0820 www.idawa.org Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports contact: OSPI for PBIS Coordinaoor (360) 725-6132 https://www.pbis.org/pbis-network/washington
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	Washington Autism Alliance & Advocacy https://www.washingtonautismadvocacy.org/updates/
Regional:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Partnerships for Action, Voices for Empowerment (PAVE) https://wapave.org/category/parent-and-family/ ➤ WA State Governor's Office of the Education Ombuds https://oeo.wa.gov/contact/ ➤ Special Education Support Center: WA Education Association http://specialeducationsupportcenter.org/ ➤ Guidance for Families: Special Education in Washington State, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/special-education/guidance-families-special-education-washington-state ➤ Special Education Federal Child Count and Educational Environment Data, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/special-education/special-education-data-collection/state-special-education-data-collection-summaries
National:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Center for Parent Information & Resources https://www.parentcenterhub.org/partb ➤ Empower Families as Partners in the LRE: A Presentation for Parents https://www.pattan.net/Videos/Empowering-Families-as-Partners-in-the-Least-Restr ➤ National Association of School Psychologists https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/families-and-educators ➤ Special Education Guide https://www.specialeducationguide.com/ ➤ Understood: For Learning & Attention Issues https://www.understood.org/en ➤ U.S. Department of Education IDEA Website https://sites.ed.gov/idea/parents-families/ ➤ Wright's Law – Special Education Resources https://www.wrightslaw.com/idea/

REFERENCES

ⁱ Understanding 504 Plans, Understood.org

<https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/504-plan/understanding-504-plans>

ⁱⁱ Individualized Education Program (IEP), Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

<https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/special-education/guidance-families-special-education-washington-state-0>

ⁱⁱⁱ Sec. 300.39 Special education, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/a/300.39>

^{iv} The Difference Between Accommodations and Modifications, Understood.org

<https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/treatments-approaches/educational-strategies/the-difference-between-accommodations-and-modifications>