

3. $\sqrt{64} = 8$
4. $3[8 + (4 + 2)] = 42$
5. $\frac{2^5}{2^3}$
6. $2() =$

Individualized Education Programs

Services and supports for children with disabilities from ages 3 through 21

Each child with a disability who receives special education must have an individualized education program (IEP). The IEP describes the services and supports the school will provide the child. The IEP must be updated every year.

Present Levels of Performance

The present levels of performance section of the IEP explains what the child already knows how to do. There must be a present level for each of the child's areas of need, or areas where they struggle. Areas of need could include:

- Academics, like reading and math
- Daily living skills, like dressing and eating
- Social skills
- Behavior
- Sensory issues, like seeing and hearing
- Motor skills, like walking or throwing
- Communication

Information from evaluations and feedback from teachers and parents will help determine the child's areas of need.

Annual Goals

The annual goals section of the IEP outlines what the child will learn to do in one year. There should be at least one goal for each of the child's areas of need. Goals should be specific, measurable, and reasonable but also challenging. Goals should not be based on disability or grade. Goals should be based on what the child can do now and what they should be able to do in a year.

A child's goals should not stay the same from year to year. If a child did not make progress on their goals from the previous year, that should be discussed and addressed when the next IEP is being written.

Special Education and Related Services

The special education and related services section of the IEP indicates what support the school is going to give the child to help reach the goals in the IEP. This section must describe what kind of special education and related services the child needs. Special education might include adapting content, a specific methodology, or how the teacher will deliver instruction to the child. Related services include services like speech therapy, occupational therapy, and counseling.

This section of the IEP must also include supplementary aids and services. While special education and related services focus on what the child needs to achieve their goals, supplementary aids and services are focused on what the child needs to learn in a regular education classroom, as well as what the child needs to participate in extra-curricular and other non-academic settings, like field trips, school clubs, and sports teams.

Placement

The placement section of the IEP describes how often, for how long, and where the child will receive the special education and related services they need. Children must receive services in the least restrictive environment, which means they should learn in the same schools and classes that they would attend if they did not have a disability, as much as possible. Schools must make a continuum of placements available to make sure that there is a classroom and school available to meet the needs of all students with disabilities, no matter what their disability is. The placements available from least to most restrictive are:

- All day in a regular classroom
- Some or all of the day in a special education classroom
- A separate public or private day school, only for children with disabilities
- A separate residential school, where only children with disabilities live
- One-on-one instruction in a student's home or a hospital

Where a child with a disability receives their services must be based on their unique needs. Some things to consider include what and how many services and supports the child needs; the academic and non-academic benefits of being in the regular classroom; and the negative effects, either on the child or other students, that may be caused by the child with a disability being in the regular classroom.

Accommodations and Modifications

The accommodations and modifications section of the IEP describes changes the student needs to make progress on their goals. Accommodations change the way that information is presented, but they do not change the content that is being taught. Examples of accommodations include shorter assignments, more time, or use of technology. Modifications change the content that is being taught so that it is more appropriate for the child's level of understanding. All IEPs must identify whether or not the child needs accommodations to take standardized tests that are given to all students in the school.

Special Factors

There are five special factors that must be included in the IEP, if they apply to the individual child.

1. Behavior

When a child is known to have behavioral challenges, the IEP must include positive behavioral strategies to address the child's behavior. Positive strategies might include goals focused on improving behavior, accommodations in the classroom to help avoid behavioral challenges, related services like counseling, or a formal behavior intervention plan that identifies replacement behaviors to teach and planned responses when the child has a behavioral challenge.

2. Limited English Proficiency

Schools need to formally assess children whose native language is not English to understand how their English proficiency affects their academic performance. Once the child has been assessed, the IEP needs to indicate whether the child will receive special education instruction and services in English or in their native language.

3. Use of Braille

Children who are blind or visually impaired are required to receive instruction in Braille, unless an evaluation shows that it is not appropriate for that child. If the child's visual impairment can be accommodated by large print materials, audio books, or screen readers, the IEP must indicate what the child will receive. Because visual disabilities can improve or worsen over time, a child's need for Braille should be regularly reviewed and added, if needed.

4. Communication

IEPs must address the needs of children with communication challenges, including children who are deaf or hard of hearing, nonverbal, and not easily understood by others. Schools must use the child's preferred method of communication, if they have one. Methods of communication might include sign language, a picture exchange system, or use of technology. If a child does not yet have a preferred way to communicate, the school must evaluate the student to identify one or more appropriate methods of communication. Then, the IEP should include teaching the student how to use the identified method of communication.

5. Assistive Technology

Schools must provide any assistive technology that a student needs to make progress on their IEP goals. Assistive technology can be simple, like a magnifying glass, or complicated, like a computer that speaks for a child. Assistive technology is usually identified in the child's evaluation or by a related service provider who works with the child. IEPs must include not only the devices that the child needs, but also the services the child needs to use the device, including training for the teacher and the child, if necessary.

Extended School Year Services

Extended school year (ESY) are services the child needs outside of the traditional school year. Schools cannot limit the amount or kind of ESY they provide or limit ESY to children with certain disabilities. The IEP team must look at their state's criteria and the student's unique needs. Some criteria that states use include:

- How long it takes children to regain their skills after a school break
- Severity of the child's disability
- Goals that require continuous exposure
- Work on vocation goals
- Behavioral challenges or other special factors that interfere with learning during the school year
- Not losing opportunities over a break to work on emerging skills

Transition Plan

After a child turns 16 (and earlier in many states), the IEP must include goals and services to help the child prepare for life after high school. This transition plan must address education, employment, and independent living. Schools cannot provide the same transition goals and services to all students. The transition plan must include input from the child and must be based on the child's strengths, interests, and preferences.

Where can I learn more?

You can find additional [resources online](#) or by emailing us at school@thearc.org.

