

The services chosen for your child will depend upon the amount and kind of special instruction or support your child needs. A special education teacher may be able to give instruction in the general classroom. An example of this is “co-teaching,” where a general and a special education teacher team teach the same class.

For some children, placement outside of a general education class for some of the day is necessary. Students who receive most of their instruction in basic academic subjects outside of a general education setting will still have opportunities to participate in other activities in school with general education students. These opportunities might include participation in elective subjects such as art or music, belonging to a general homeroom, socializing in the lunchroom, and attending assemblies and other enrichment programs with their typical peers.

Each IEP must include a description of the types of support the child needs. Your child may receive more than one type of support and the type should not be based on the child’s disability alone.

- Learning support – for children whose greatest need of support is in the areas of reading, writing, math, or speaking or listening related to academics.
- Emotional support – for children whose greatest need is for social, emotional, and behavioral help.

- Life skills support – for children whose greatest need is to learn academic, functional, or vocational skills that will allow them to live and work independently.
- Blind and visually impaired support – for children who require services related to visual impairment or blindness. The IEP for these students must address the extent to which Braille will be taught and used.
- Deaf and hard of hearing support – for children who require services related to deafness or hearing impairment. The IEP for these students must include a communication plan to address language and communication needs.
- Speech and language support – for children who have speech and language impairments and require services to develop communication skills.
- Physical support – for children who have a physical disability and require services in functional motor skill development.
- Autistic support – for children who require services in the areas of communication, social skills, or behavior.
- Multiple disabilities support – for children with more than one disability, the combination of which results in severe impairment, and who require services in academic, functional, or vocational skills necessary for independent living.

The law requires that students receiving special education be placed in classes with students of the same age range. At the elementary level (grades K-6), a class cannot have children who vary in age by more than three years. At the secondary level (grades 7-12), an age range of no more than four years is allowed. An exception can be made by the IEP team for an individual child based on the child's needs. It must be justified in the IEP.