

## Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and a Continuum of Placement Options

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- IEP team must consider where the special education services will be delivered. This decision is made on an individual basis by the team and **cannot be based on a school philosophy, such as “full inclusion”**
- To accomplish the delivery of special education services and program in the LRE, LEAs are required to ensure:
  - that the placement be determined by the student’s IEP team
  - that a continuum of placement alternatives be discussed and
  - that a student with a disability be provided with instruction in a setting different from that of non-disabled peers ONLY when the nature or severity of the student’s disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily
- Continuum of placement options that must be considered:
  - Instruction in regular classes
    - Direct services- specially designed instruction provided to an individual student with a disability or to a group of students with disabilities by a certified special education teacher (or a properly trained and supervised paraprofessional) to aid the student(s) to benefit from the general education class instruction
    - Indirect services- consultation provided by a certified special education teacher to a general education teacher to assist the general education teacher in adjusting the learning environment and/or modifying his/her instructional methods to meet the individual needs of a student with a disability who attends the general education class
    - May include co-teaching, resource room, etc.
  - Special classes
    - Special class means a class consisting of students with disabilities who have been grouped together because of similarity of individual needs for the purpose of receiving specially designed instruction in a self-contained setting, meaning that such students are receiving their primary instruction separate from their non-disabled peers
  - Special schools
    - Special school means a school consisting of students with disabilities who have been grouped together because of similarity of individual needs for the purpose of receiving specially designed instruction in a self-contained

setting, meaning that such students are receiving their primary instruction separate from their non-disabled peers

- Home instruction
  - Special education services are provided in a hospital or institution
- Instruction in hospital and institutions
- Continuum must also make provision for supplementary services such as resource room or itinerant instruction, to be provided in conjunction with regular class placement
- Determining both the elements of an individual student's appropriate education and the environment in which it will be delivered is an IEP Team function **(the discussion of LRE should begin at regular classes but the practical placement decision does not have to begin there)**
  - Parents must have meaningful input in any placement decision made
  - As a practical matter then, the LRE becomes whatever setting school officials and parents agree should be used to implement the IEP designed for the student
  - LRE changes for each student (not always the regular education classroom)
- LRE does not trump FAPE (student must be making progress and if student is not making progress, the team should meet again and discuss if the student needs placement in a more restrictive environment in order to make progress)