

## What If My Child Has a Disability? Parent Guide #5

A kindergarten class should support ALL children.

- For children with special needs, there is a federal law called the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act" (IDEA).
- There are also Michigan regulations called "Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education."
- Both of these are about the rights of children with special needs and their families.
- For more information on IDEA, please visit the [U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osep/index.html) ([www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osep/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osep/index.html)).
- School districts are required to teach children with special needs in regular classes whenever possible. Sometimes supports and services are needed for this to happen.
- When ALL children learn together, they ALL benefit.
- A child with a special need may not need to work at the same grade level as the other children. He/she may not need to behave like the other children in class either.

All services, supports, and goals for a child receiving special education services are developed by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team.

- IDEA requires that the IEP tell what supports, programs and services are provided to the child.
- The IEP will also include the amount of time the child will spend in the regular class.
- Parents are members of the IEP team.

During spring before your child's kindergarten school year, you begin to get ready.

- A team should be created that includes parents, adults and teachers who are important in your child's life.
- The team should focus on **the strengths and needs** of your child.
- The team should set goals and timelines for each service and support.

Other questions you may have:

- Does the staff need any training to work with your child?
- What is the rule on parent visits?
- Does your child take any pills or medicine?
- Does your child need specialized equipment?
- Do you have any concerns?
- Does your child have any movement needs?
- Does your child have a special diet?
- Do you have any social concerns?
- Does your child need specialized transportation?
- Does your child need assistive technology?
- What do you want from parent-teacher communication?
- Does your child need changes to the classroom itself or the teaching material?

Parents should receive a brochure about their rights. This will explain how your child's transition should be handled by your school district. You may request a parent handbook from your school.