



## Students With Disabilities

### Overview

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) is a federal law that ensures certain services to children with disabilities throughout the United States. IDEA controls how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities.

Parent involvement is one of the founding principles of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Parents have the right to participate in all decisions regarding the education of their child with a disability.

These include the right to:11

- Participate in meetings related to the evaluation, identification, and educational placement of their child.
- Participate in meetings related to the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to their child.
- FAPE is the right of every American child to receive a free public education that meets his or her unique needs.
- Be a part of the team that develops, reviews, and revises the Individualized Education Program for their child. If neither parent can attend the IEP meeting, the school must use other methods to ensure their participation, such as phone calls.
- An IEP is the document that defines a child's special education program. It includes the disability under which the child qualifies for special education services, the services that the school will provide, his or her yearly goals and objectives, and any accommodations that will be made to assist his or her learning.
- Be members of any group that makes placement decisions for their child. If neither parent can attend the meeting where placement is decided, the school must use other methods to ensure their participation, such as phone calls.



There are fourteen categories of disabilities defined under IDEA. These include:

1. Autism
2. Deaf-Blindness
3. Deafness
4. Developmental Delay
5. Emotional Disturbance
6. Hearing Impairment
7. Intellectual Disability
8. Multiple Disabilities
9. Orthopedic Impairment
10. Other Health Impairment
11. Specific Learning Disability
12. Speech or Language Impairment
13. Traumatic Brain Injury
14. Visual Impairment including Blindness

For a student to fully meet the definition of a “child with a disability” and qualify for special education and related services, his or her educational performance must be adversely affected due to the disability.

## Additional Information & Resources

1. National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities  
[www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)
2. Michigan Department of Education, Special Education and Early Intervention Services [http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-6530\\_6598---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-6530_6598---,00.html)
3. Michigan’s Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative  
<http://miblsi.cenmi.org>