

Family Matters Fact Sheet

Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education



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Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Regulations

The least restrictive environment (LRE) requirements are considerations for individualized education program (IEP) teams to use when making decisions about where programs and services for individual students will occur. LRE is a key principal of the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#) and guides a child's education program through needed accommodations, modifications, and other types of supplementary aids and services for more successfully accessing the general education curriculum.

Note: This document references the term "school" to represent local school districts, educational service agencies, intermediate school districts, or any agency of the state responsible for educating children with disabilities.

LRE General Requirements

The state must have LRE policies and procedures in place so students in public or private schools or care facilities are educated with typical peers.

A child with disabilities should only be in special classes, a separate school, or otherwise removed from settings with typical peers when the characteristics of the disability are so severe the use of supplementary aids and services cannot support the child in the general education setting.

Continuum of Alternative Placements

If a child is not able to remain in the current school placement because of the severity of their disability, the school must make available [a continuum of alternative placements](#) is available for the child to receive special education and related services.

The continuum must include alternative placements including instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions. Supplementary services such as resource room or itinerant instruction (e.g., speech, occupational, physical therapy) must be provided along with regular class placement.

March 2025



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Family Matters fact sheets are intended to enhance public understanding of Michigan's special education system and are not a substitute for official laws and regulations.



Placement

In determining the educational placement of a child (including a child in preschool) with a disability, each school must ensure the placement decision is made by a group of persons—including the parents and others who are knowledgeable about the child, the meaning of the evaluation data, and the placement options—and follows LRE requirements. The child’s placement must:

- Be determined at least annually.
- Be based on the child’s IEP.
- Be as close as possible to the child’s home.
- Have consideration given to harmful effects on the child or quality of services needed.
- Not be separate from the general education classroom only because of needed modifications in the curriculum.

Harmful Effect Considerations Examples:

Transportation should be similar time riding on bus as peers. The time on the bus should allow for a child to have after school social opportunities.

The child having access to neighborhood peers and the impact on social opportunities.

Non-Academic and Extracurricular Services and Activities may include:

- Meals/cafeteria
- Recess
- Counseling
- Athletics
- Transportation
- Health services
- Clubs
- Special interest groups
- Referrals to agencies
- Employment

Non-Academic Settings

Each school must ensure children with and without disabilities participate together in extracurricular services and activities to the greatest extent possible. Any supplementary aids and services determined by the IEP Team to be needed for a child to participate in non-academic settings must also be provided by the school.

Resources

Michigan Department of Education

- [Least Restrictive Environment \(LRE\) Continuum](#)
- [Least Restrictive Environment: The Requirements Package](#)
- [Family Matters: Educational Placement and Least Restrictive Environment \(LRE\)](#)
- [LRE Resources](#)

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