

Charleston County School District
Department of Exceptional Children Services

Schools make the following commitments to students with disabilities and their families in support of LRE:

- High standards for all children
- Opportunities for children with and without disabilities to interact
- Access to general education curriculum
- Monitor of students' instruction and success
- Appropriate services and supports within the school to meet each child's needs.

**Underlying Principles of
Least Restrictive Environment**

- **A continuum of services**
- **Instruction in general education classrooms**
- **Access and progress in general education curriculum**
- **Instructional, curricular, and behavioral supports layered within the school environment**
- **Interaction with nondisabled students**

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LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

First the IEP team decides *what* services your child needs. Next, a decision must be made about *where* services will be provided. Where your child receives IEP services is his or her *placement, also known as educational placement*. A student's placement must be in the least restrictive environment (LRE). This means children with disabilities are educated with non disabled children to the maximum extent appropriate. The IEP team must decide if your child can attend a general education class with appropriate services and supports before placing your child in separate classes or separate schools.



- Your child's educational placement is determined at least annually. The Educational Placement is based on your child's IEP. You are part of the IEP team.
- Generally, Your child is educated in the school that he or she would attend if not disabled unless the IEP team decides another educational placement is necessary.
- If your child cannot be educated at his school of residence, the educational placement must be as close as possible to your child's home.

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- When looking at educational placement options, the IEP team must think about any harmful effect on your child or on your child's services.
- Your child may not be removed from a regular classroom because he or she needs changes to the general education curriculum.

Parents have the right to be part of the group that decides their child's educational placement and services



The IEP team must consider your child's individual needs and decide the least restrictive placement based on your child's needs. *What is least restrictive for each child is based on that child's individual needs.* This means that the District cannot use a "one size fits all" approach to educating children who have a disability. Decisions must be based on individual needs in the IEP, and **not** on:

- The child's disability, meaning a student cannot be placed in a separate setting just because the child has a mental disability, this also means a student cannot be placed in a special class just because a child needs extra services;
- Where the District's staff is located;
- Amount of funds that are available; or
- What is easy for the school district.

What is the Continuum of Alternative Placements?

IEP teams also look at the *continuum of alternative placements*. This means different options where children can receive services these options reviewed by the IEP Team is outlined on the LRE Page.

The options include:

- A general education class
- A special education class at a general education school
- A special education school or center
- At home, in a hospital or other public or private institution

Placement in the general education classroom is the *first* option the IEP team must consider. This means, the IEP team must decide: Can your child's needs be met in the general education classroom? What aids, services, and supports does your child need to make education in the general education classroom possible? If the IEP team decides that your child's needs can be met in the general education class with services and supports, then that is the least restrictive environment.

Services and Supports

The District offers many services and supports to help your child access the general education curriculum and meet your child's individual needs. Examples of services and supports are:

- Co-planning, co-teaching, inclusion and related services provided in the general education classroom.
- Special education support provided outside of the general education classroom. These include: strategy instruction, the use of extra programs or related services.
- Special education classroom with or without participation in general education. Services may be provided in a special education classroom at a general education school, Special School or another educational program as determined by the IEP team.

The Department of Exceptional Children Services (DECS) offers students in Charleston County School District services that are individualized and designed to give students with disabilities the opportunity to reach their full potential. DECS provides a range of educational programs and related services to students found eligible for special education. Special education is a service students receive to support access to the general curriculum and to promote integration with age appropriate peers. It does not constitute a specific setting or instructional environment. In a tiered approach, IEP teams would consider the level and type of support a student needs, where that support can be provided, and determine the amount of instruction needed outside of the general education classroom.