

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

When IDEA was originally enacted in 1975, Congress recognized that many children with disabilities were unnecessarily separated from their peers and educated in alternative environments. Therefore IDEA requires that states provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The goal is to allow children with disabilities to be educated with their peers in the regular classroom to the extent possible.

IDEA recognizes that there is an array of placements that meet the general requirements of providing FAPE in the least restrictive environment. LRE may change from child to child, school to school and district to district. In developing the IEP, parents and the local educational agency are empowered to reach appropriate decisions about what constitutes LRE for the individual child, including placements that may be more or less restrictive in order to maximize the child's benefit from special education and related services.

(Adapted from 2014 SpEd Parent Handbook, Federal Way Public Schools, Washington)

Special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature and severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. *(Section 300.114 of RI Regulations Governing the Education of Children with Disabilities)*