



Special Information for All Educators IDEA—Supporting Student Achievement

Background Information

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) IS THE Federal legislation that guarantees a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities. (34 c.f.®. SS300.13,33.121). This legislation supports more than 6.9 million children and youth in our schools today. Thirty years ago the Federal legislations was designed to support students with disabilities in accessing public education. Current legislation moves from access to the provision of a high quality standards based education. Children and youth with disabilities can and do achieve, often with special Education, related services and general education that addresses their individual needs. Positive outcomes attributed to IDEA include:

- Students with disabilities are taught in regular classrooms in their neighborhood schools.
- The number of students with disabilities graduating has increased by 14% from 1984 – 1997.
- Youth with disabilities become employed adults. In 2000, the U.S. Department of Education reported that the post-school employment rates for students served under IDEA was twice that of older adults with similar disabilities who did not have IDEA protections.
- Students with disabilities are attending post-secondary training institutions. The US Department of Education reports that the percentage of college freshmen with disabilities has tripled since 1978.
- Youth with disabilities are successfully living on their own. Studies report that

gains have been made in the percentage of young adults with disabilities living independently after graduation. (Blackorky Wager 1999).

How IDEA Supports Achievement

IDEA and its amendments emphasize continued improvement of results with disabilities through the following provisions:

- **Individual Education Program (IEP).** All eligible students must have an IEP that describes the individual's needs and defines the special education and related services to meet those needs. IDEA has provisions as to who develops the IEP, what must be included in the IEP and what must be considered when developing the IEP. Current amendments strengthen the IEP by linking student goals to high standards, and strengthening the participation of regular teachers in the development and implementation of IEPs.
- **Least Restrictive Environment.** Research indicates that generally students with mild disabilities have positive outcomes when placed part to full time in regular classrooms with appropriate supports and services. (Manset Semnel 1997; Schulte Osborne and Erchul 1998).
- **School Climate and Discipline.** IDEA has due process provisions that delineate how schools need to respond to significant problem behaviors when exhibited by a student with an IEP. Additionally, the IEP must describe proactive behavior supports and planning to prevent or minimize behavior problems.

- **Leadership.** Upholding the legal requirements of IDEA is the responsibility of all school personnel. Ensuring that the protections afforded to students with disabilities are followed requires an understanding by school leaders of the various role and responsibilities all educators play in ensuring IDEA implementation. Research indicates that collaboration in the development of the IEP and the provision of services is important to assure the increase outcomes for students. School leaders need to possess the knowledge and skills to support: (1) collaborative models of service delivery, (2) the inclusion of all students in standards-based reform, (3) a qualified workforce and, (4) professional development to staff members in helping students with disabilities achieve.

Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) at www.nichcy.org

- A User's Guide to the 1999 IDEA Regulations. Download from the Associations of Service Providers Implementing IDEA Reforms in Education (ASPIRE) and the IDEA Implementation by Local Administrators Partnership (ILIAD) site at www.ideapractices.org

Relevant Materials

Detailed ordering information of materials related to IDEA can be found at <http://www.ideapractices.org>

Annotated Materials

- Discover IDEA CD 2002
- Discover IDEA: Supporting Achievement for Children with Disabilities
- IDEA 1977 General Overview Questions and Answers
- IDEA Requirements for Preschoolers with Disabilities: IDEA Early Childhood Policy and Practice Guide
- IDEA Training Package
- Questions and Answers About IDEA

Other Resources/Materials

- An Overview of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (P.L. 105-17): Update 1999. Download from ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education at www.ericec.org
- IDEA Amendments of 1997: News Digest. Download from National

Web Based Resources

- www.ideapractices.org - home of the Associations of Service Providers Implementing IDEA Reforms in Education (ASPIRE) and the IDEALocal Implementation by Local Administrators Partnership (ILIAD) projects.
- www.fape.org - home of the Families and Advocates Partnership for Education (FAPE) project.
- www.ideapolicy.org - home of the Policymaker Partnership project.
- www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/ - home of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).
- www.nichcy.org - home of the National Information Center for children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)
- www.cec.sped.org - home of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
- <http://www.ericec.org> - home of ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities ;and Gifted Education (ERIC EC)
- www.dssc.org/frc/idea.htm - Federal Resource Center for Special Education (FRC)
- www.nasdse.org National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)
- www.nichcy.org - National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)
- www.ed.gov U.S. Department of Education (ED)
- www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)

