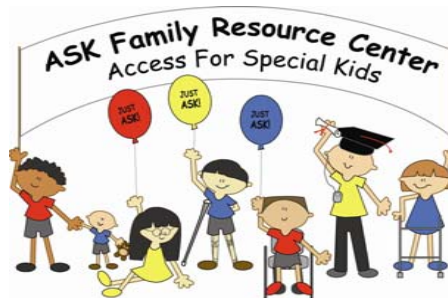


# Special Education: What Do I Need to Know?



Developed by PACER Center ([www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)) with funding from the Minnesota Department of Education

Presented by ASK Resource Center



# What Is Special Education?

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## Special education is:

- Specially designed instruction
- Available at no cost to parents
- Designed to meet the needs of a child with a disability
- Provided in the most typical setting appropriate for the child

**Special education is not a place.**

# Why Are Parents Included?

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**As a parent, you are included at every step because:**

- The law gives you this right.
- Only you have an in-depth, long-term, daily relationship with your child.
- You are the only permanent member of the special education team.
- Research and experience show that special education is more effective when parents are involved.
- When parents are involved, children do better and schools get better.

# How Are Parents Involved?

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**As a parent, you have the right to:**

- Participate at special education team meetings
- Read your child's school records
- Use dispute resolution methods to resolve disagreements
- Agree or disagree with services and decisions

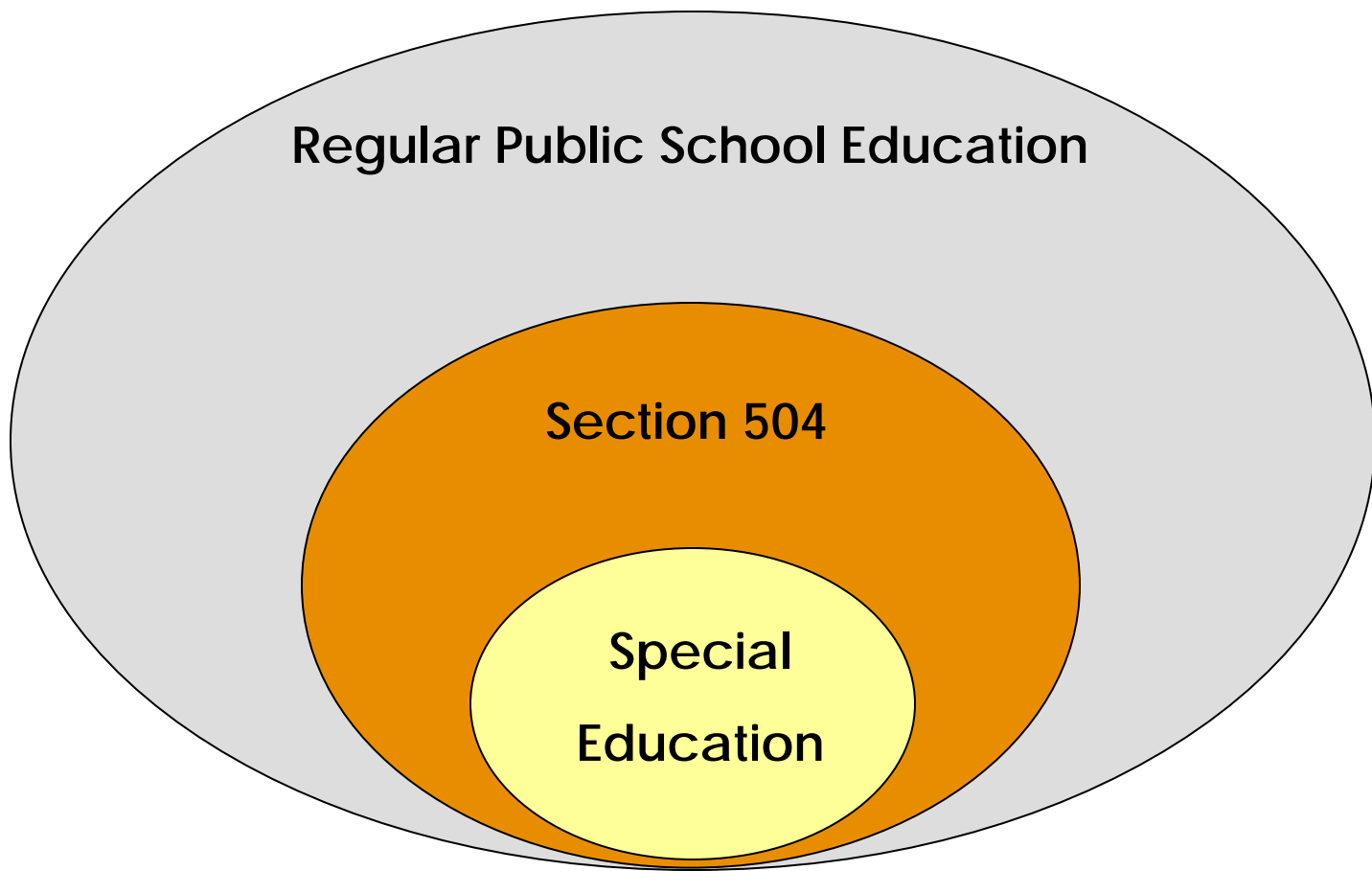
# How Can I Participate Effectively?

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- Understand your rights.
- Prepare for and attend meetings.
- Understand before you speak.
- Put things in writing.
- Recognize different roles you and school staff play.
- Exchange information in your native language

# How Do Special Education and Regular Education Fit Together?

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# How Does the Special Education Process Work?

PLACEMENT



SERVICES



EDUCATIONAL  
NEEDS



EVALUATION



# What Do I Need to Know about Evaluation?

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## Your child is evaluated for special education to:

- See if there's a disability and a need for special education and related services
- Understand your child's needs and strengths
- Make educational decisions, including eligibility for services

# What Is an Appropriate Evaluation?

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## **An appropriate evaluation:**

- Uses a variety of tools and strategies
- Does not discriminate
- Uses standardized tests valid for this purpose as much as possible
- Uses technically sound tests
- Is administered by trained professionals

# What Do I Need to Know about the IEP Team Meeting?

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## **IEP team members include:**

- Parents
- Special education teacher
- Regular education teacher
- District representative
- Person who can explain evaluation

## **The team also may include:**

- The child
- Others

# What Do I Need to Know about Developing the IEP?

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## The IEP team must discuss:

- Your child's strengths and abilities
- Your concerns for your child
- Evaluation results
- What your child needs in order to learn
- School services
- Special factors

# What Do I Need to Know about Developing the IEP?

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## Measurable annual goals will:

- Name the skill or behavior that needs to change
- Report your child's current level in this skill or behavior
- State what your child can reasonably achieve in one year
- Tell how progress will be measured

# What Do I Need to Know about Developing the IEP?

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## The IEP also will describe:

- Progress measurement
- Accommodations
- Dates and places for services
- Transition
- Age of majority
- State and district tests

# What Do I Need to Know about the Placement Process?

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Special education can be provided in lots of places.

**FIRST:** The team determines appropriate IEP goals and services based on your child's needs.

**THEN:** The team will discuss where the services will be provided in the least restrictive environment.

# IEP Summary

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The purpose of special education is to prepare children to lead “productive and independent adult lives to the maximum extent appropriate.” --IDEA

Ask yourself: “Is this IEP an appropriate step toward a productive and independent life for my child?”

# What If We Disagree?

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Due process rights provide ways to resolve disagreements

- Meeting with school staff
- Facilitated IEP
- Resolution Facilitation
- Preappeal Conference
- Complaint to Iowa Department of Education
- Due process hearing and resolution session



# Resources

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To learn more about special education or your rights, you can contact:



ASK Resource Center  
5665 Greendale Road, Suite D  
Johnston, Iowa 50131  
(800) 450-8667  
[www.askresource.org](http://www.askresource.org)

You may also contact:

Iowa Department of Education  
[www.iowa.gov/educate](http://www.iowa.gov/educate)

U.S. Department of Education  
<http://IDEA.ed.gov>