

Introduction to the IEP

An **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** is a plan developed for each eligible student between the ages of 3 to 22 years in a public or charter school. The IEP is developed to provide students with a disability a **Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** in the **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** in which the student can receive **educational benefit**. The IEP is developed by a team that includes the parents.

FAPE

Free and Appropriate Public Education refers to special education and related services that:

1. are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge
2. meet the standards of the state educational agency
3. include an appropriate pre-school, elementary school, or secondary school education
4. are provided in conformity with the students IEP



Procedural and Substantive FAPE

Offering a student a FAPE involves two elements:

1. The Local Education Agency (LEA) must comply with the procedures set forth in the IDEA.
2. The IEP developed through those procedures must be substantively appropriate for the student.

LRE

Least Restrictive Environment refers to a learning environment that maximizes a student's educational time alongside children without a disability.



The IEP must include placement and services in the LRE. This means:

1. To the maximum extent appropriate, individuals with exceptional needs, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, will be educated with children who are nondisabled.
2. Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of individuals with exceptional needs from the general educational environment shall occur only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in the regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

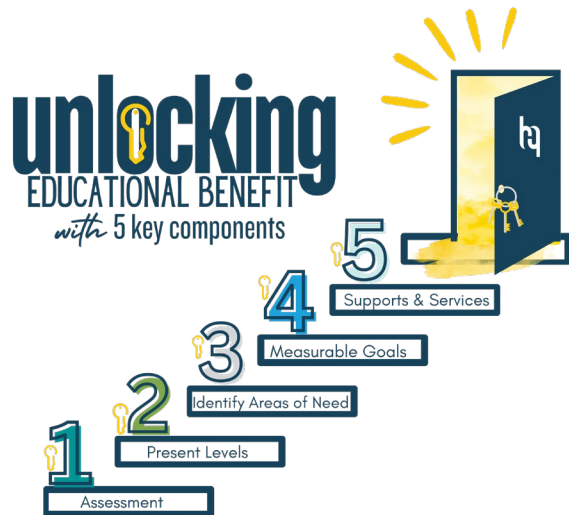
Educational Benefit

Educational benefit, sometimes referred to simply as “ed benefit,” ensures that IEPs are thoughtful and based on the individual needs and growth of each student from one iteration to the next.

In **Board of Education v. Rowley**, the U.S. Supreme Court described what constitutes “educational benefit.” The Court stated that school districts must provide a “basic floor of opportunity” that “consists of access to specialized instruction and related services which are individually designed to provide educational benefit” to the student with a disability.



In order to provide educational benefit, an IEP must be “appropriately ambitious” for each individual student. In [Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District](#), the U.S. Supreme Court clarified that to provide FAPE, LEAs must offer an IEP reasonably calculated to enable progress for a student “in light of [their] circumstances.”



Think of educational benefit as aggregated elements of the IEP that, over time, lead to intentionally designed supports and services specific to the student. Assessment data should lay the foundation for present levels. Based on the present levels, needs should become visible. Goals, supports, and services are chosen and designed in response to the specific needs of the student, which should then measure in growth over time. This process is what we refer to as educational benefit.

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