

# Individuals with Disabilities Education Act



## Who is eligible for special education?

To be eligible for special education services, a student must:

1. have a disability as defined by one or more of the 13 IDEA disability categories; and
2. because of the disability, require special education services

Students who have disabilities not covered by the IDEA or students with disabilities who do not require special education services are not eligible. However, a student with a disability may be eligible for supports and services under Section 504.



**Schools are required to reach out to the community and spread the word about Child Find.**

Additional resources and information for parents can be found on the SPEDTex website.



[SpEdTex.org](http://SpEdTex.org)



1.855.773.3839

## Fact Sheet for Families



### What is IDEA?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law that has been in effect since 1975. IDEA requires public schools to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to eligible students ages 3-21 with disabilities. IDEA also provides legal protections for these students and their parents.



### IDEA requires public schools to...

- Find and evaluate students who have or are suspected of having a disability and need special education services (Child Find).
- Develop and implement an individualized education program (IEP) for eligible students with a disability.



### What is Special Education?

Special education means instruction that is specially designed to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability. It includes any related services needed for the student to benefit from his or her special education services. Special education is not a place, but a set of services and supports that can be provided in many ways and in many different settings. What special education looks like for an individual student is outlined in his or her IEP. The IEP is developed by a team referred to in Texas as the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee. The parent is a member of the ARD committee.



### Child Find also includes...

- Any child suspected of having a disability and need for special education despite passing from grade to grade.
- Homeless, under the care of the state, attending private school, or highly mobile
- May not be attending public school



[TEA.Texas.gov/TexasSpEd](http://TEA.Texas.gov/TexasSpEd)