

# 12. PLACEMENT OPTIONS

It important to remember that Special Education is not a “place” but any number of services designed to help a child with a disability.

Services can be provided in the child’s regular classroom, a separate

room at the child’s school, or at a location outside the child’s school.

The IEP team should design the special education program to

encourage success in all areas of the child’s development, including academic, physical, social and emotional.



**Include the child in as much of the regular school program as possible to communicate the child’s value as an important member of the school and greater community.**

**Placement decisions can be established only after the child’s needs are identified by the IEP team and must be based on the child’s unique needs.**

## THE LAW

**To the maximum extent possible, the child has a right to:**

- Be educated with children who are not disabled
- Stay in the regular classroom
- Stay at the school the child would attend if not disabled
- Have access to all programs and services available to non-disabled children

**Placement decisions must also address the child’s access to non-academic programs such as:**

- Art and music
- Student body assemblies and group activities
- Life skills education (independent living skills)
- Vocational education (job training)
- Physical education including special physical education, individual and group games and sports
- Travel—the skills needed to travel safely from place to place within the school and community

# PLACEMENT CONSIDERATIONS:

## The child's placement—

- Should be reviewed at least once a year to ensure the placement is still appropriate and effective for the child
- Is based on the specific needs identified in the child's IEP
- Is as close as possible to the child's home and should be the same school that the child would attend if not disabled
- Should be physically accessible to all students and modifications should be made if necessary to insure access
- Should allow the child to interact with same age peers as much as possible to foster relationships, social and emotional development

**Children in dependency often experienced trauma (abuse, neglect, separation) that leaves them feeling isolated and different from their peers. It is important for these children to feel as "normal" and stable in their educational setting as possible; this is more easily accomplished if the child can experience success in the regular classroom.**

# REGULAR CLASSROOM CONSIDERATIONS:

Always assume that every student's first placement is in the regular classroom.

## Many children with disabilities can remain in the regular classroom:

- With modifications and accommodations
- With supplementary services, such as resource room or itinerant instruction (extra help) to be provided along with regular class instruction.

If the advocate feels the regular classroom is the best place for the child, and members of the IEP team disagree, the advocate should request a trial placement in the regular classroom and a scheduled reassessment.

A regular classroom should be considered if the child can receive a satisfactory education, even if it may not be the best academic setting for the child. The child's placement must also address non-academic benefits such as cultural opportunities and peer development.

Many services are available to help the child within the regular classroom.

- Remediation services—Many academic delays can be addressed with special remediation services (concentrated instruction in specific subject areas such as reading, math, etc.)
- Modifications and accommodations—Adjustments within the regular classroom to address special student needs.
- Peer tutoring and assistance (students helping each other) can be utilized in the regular classroom to encourage relationships between disabled and non-disabled students while

providing academic support.

- A Resource Specialist Teacher can provide services to a child and consultation services to the teacher in a regular classroom.
- Designated Instruction and Services—DIS (also known as Related Services), including speech therapy, small group instruction, counseling and physical therapy, can be provided within the regular class or with short-term pull-out programs (where specific instruction is received in another room). In classrooms where students leave regularly for various programs, this approach can be less disruptive or stigmatizing to the student.

## COMBINATION OF REGULAR AND SPECIAL CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

If the IEP team determines that it is not possible to meet all of the child's needs in the regular classroom, the child may need to receive partial instruction in a resource room or elsewhere.

A Resource Specialist teacher in a resource program can provide specialized instruction in math, reading, or other areas of need. Designated Instruction and Services (DIS), or related services, can also be received this way.

## SPECIAL DAY CLASSES

Special Day Class (SDC) on regular school site—Students who attend special day classes will spend a majority of the school day in this class. A child should be placed in a special day class only when the IEP team has explored all other options and determined that the SDC is the only way the child can benefit from his or her education.

**Even when the child must be placed in a special class, the IEP team should explore opportunities for peer interaction. Regular and special education teachers can team-teach certain subjects (i.e., physical education or music) and can combine classes to participate in special projects (i.e. science experiment). The child can also share recess and lunch periods with non-disabled peers.**

Sometimes schools do not have the enrollment to support a special day class at the child's regular school site. In this situation a student may need to attend a nearby school that has designated facilities for special education. In this situation, the IEP team should reconsider all placement options at the child's district school before considering a Special Day Class at a separate facility.

## Special Schools

Sometimes the child's needs require services outside of the local public education system. This may happen if the child is significantly delayed or too severely traumatized to function within the local school system. If special placement is necessary, the placement will remain free of charge for the child's family.

Further considerations of special placement are beyond the scope of this publication.

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**For more information:**

**Humboldt County Office of Education**

901 Myrtle Ave.  
Eureka, CA 95501  
707-445-7043

**Northcoast Children’s Services  
Head Start and Early Head Start Programs**

685 F Street  
Arcata, CA 95521  
707-822-7206

**Home Health Services**

St. Joseph Home Care Network  
6700 Hwy 101 Ste. B  
Eureka, CA 95501  
707-443-9332

**Humboldt Community Access and Resource Center (HCAR)**

PO Box 2010  
Eureka, CA 95502  
707-443-7077

**Humboldt County Department of Mental Health**

1711 Third Street  
Eureka, CA 95501  
707-268-5728