

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

What is it?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, was originally created and approved by congress in 1975. At its core, IDEA is a document that protects the rights of all students to receive free, appropriate, quality education regardless of ability or diagnosis.

What rights does it give?

Although originally created in 1975, IDEA has gone through several rounds of amendments and changes with notable additions happening in 2004 and most recently in 2015. Despite any changes or amendments, the rights afforded to students and families with disabilities has remained the same. The main rights afforded families and students through IDEA are:

- The right to free, appropriate public education (FAPE)
- The right to a comprehensive and timely evaluation process
- The right for students to have access to education in an environment that is deemed the least restrictive
- The right for an Individual Education Plan created if the student is determined to have a disability

- The right for parents to request evaluations, amendments, and re-evaluations as they see fit in accordance with the students needs
- The protection of these rights and the right to raise concerns if any of these rights are not being met

What else does IDEA do?

IDEA is split into four parts, Part A, Part B, Part C, and Part D with each covering different content and rights contained within the document. Outside of the rights afforded to students and families, IDEA also ensures that schools are equipped with the necessary resources – including training and staffing – to be able to provide free, appropriate public education to all students. It also outlines the funding and spending given to schools and how this funding should be utilized to support students with disabilities and the requirements and expectations schools must meet so they do not violate student and family rights. IDEA also covers students ages birth through 3 who require special education services such as early intervention but who are not yet school age.

What does this all mean for me?

If you are reading these documents, it means you are looking for help and resources to best help your student have their needs met either through an IEP and 504. Your right to a quality education and a well

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written document with student needs and accommodations is outlined and protected within IDEA. Through other resources and my professional expertise, we will advocate for your student's needs and rights as outlined within these government acts!

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References

Department of Education. (2025, April 23). *About IDEA*. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/about-idea/#IDEA-Purpose>

U.S. Department of Education. (2004). Individuals with disabilities education act. Public Law 108-446. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/108th-congress/house-bill/1350/text>