

What to Consider When Determining Placement

There comes a time in the ARD process when the committee must decide where the IEP goals are to be implemented. Will that be in a general education setting, resource, a self-contained classroom, or a combination of locations? Possibly that will also be a time when relocating a student to another campus for a program will be considered. Here is some information that you should know and facts to consider.

By law a student with disabilities can be removed from the general education environment only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in general education classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Supplemental aids and services can include accommodations, modifications, adapted materials, additional classroom or individual support with personnel, assistive technology, staff development training for school staff, peer tutoring and assistance. These are supports that are *needed* to be supported in a general education setting. This is discussed at the ARD after evaluation data, Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance (PLAAPF) and annual goals.

After all of the above is agreed upon, then the committee decides where the goals can be met with the *Least Restrictive Environment* always being the priority. The law (IDEA 2004) requires that schools serve students with disabilities with their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. Therefore, placement decisions should always begin with the least restrictive environment (general education with supplementary aids and services).

You may not consider the following when determining placement as the sole factor for a more restrictive environment:

- Disability label
- Severity of disability
- Availability of educational or related services
- Availability of space
- Administrative convenience
- Difficulty in providing modifications
- What a parent wants or a school professional wants

The ARD committee should consider the following when determining if a student should receive services in a setting other than a general education classroom:

- Has the general education placement been tried for a sufficient amount of time with the necessary supports and aids in place (a few weeks may not be long enough)

- Can the student be educated in a less restrictive (general education) setting with the use of appropriate supplementary aids and services
- Would the student receive educational benefit from the general education classroom
- What harmful effect, if any, could a placement have on the student or the quality of services that he or she needs
- What benefits, if any, could a placement have on the student or the quality of services that he or she needs

A placement planning tool has been developed to help the committee examine how the child's IEP goals can be met in each class for the day and what supports would be needed. As you fill out the form, it will help the ARD committee to understand what is needed to achieve the goal and where the learning can take place. <http://www.texasprojectfirst.org/node/175>

The ARD committee must show evidence that the school made efforts to provide supplementary aids and services to the extent practicable before removing a student from a general education setting. A student is removed only when the ARD committee concludes, based on all the above considerations, that education in the less restrictive setting with appropriate supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

If a student is receiving services outside of the general education classroom then the school needs to document:

- A description of the supplemental aids and services used to attempt to support the student in general education and why these efforts were not successful
- A description of the committee's consideration of educating a student in general education with support and why this was rejected
- A description of a behavior management program and why that can not be implemented in the general education setting
- A description of the instructional needs of the student and why this can not be met in the general education setting
- A description of the student's disabling condition and educational needs and an explanation of why the disability condition and educational needs require a placement other than general education.

The ARD committee may not have to address all of the above issues depending upon the student.

If the ARD committee is considering placement other than on the home campus, they should consider:

- The specific supplementary aids and services provided or tried to support the student on the home campus

- Why the supplementary aids and services were not educationally beneficial
- Why the supplementary aids and services did not provide access to or progress in the curriculum
- Any additional supports that could be implemented to achieve success on the home campus

An ARD committee is required to justify any placement with data.

RESOURCES:

Parents Guide to the ARD:

http://framework.esc18.net/Documents/ARD_Guide_ENG.pdf

A compilation of state and federal requirement for special education in a user-friendly format.

<http://framework.esc18.net/display/Webforms/LandingPage.aspx>

Least restrictive environment, questions and answers:

<http://www.esc20.net/users/0045/docs/AGC/LRE-QA.pdf>

A Planning Matrix for Placement Decisions:

<http://www.texasprojectfirst.org/node/175>