



Planning for Educational Needs

As a special needs parent, you can take steps to make sure your child gets the best education possible. To do so requires becoming an active advocate and participant in your child's educational plan. The first step is knowing the special education laws and what they provide.

Early Intervention

Early intervention provides support for infants and young children who have disabilities or developmental delays. Early intervention services include, but are not limited to, identification and screening, occupational therapy, speech pathology, and physiotherapy. These services are provided for the purpose of lessening the effects of the conditions and enhancing the child's development. Early intervention can have significant impact on the child and the family by reducing the number of special services needed, reducing stress and frustration, and possibly making the child indistinguishable from mainstream classmates.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which amended the Education For All Handicapped Children Act, requires that children with disabilities receive:

1. Free appropriate public education (for children ages 3–21).
2. Education as close to home as possible with children who do not have disabilities.
3. Supplemental services (such as speech therapy or a classroom aide) to complete their education.
4. An assessment to determine the child's needs.

In order to assure that your child gets the best possible education, this law includes two protections: Individualized Education Program and Due Process.