



What's the Big IDEA? #9

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities. This series is designed to offer information about IDEA as amended in 2004. Each fact sheet will focus on a different aspect of IDEA.

Related Services

When a child qualifies for special education services, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team will also need to discuss whether the student needs related services. Related services can provide a wide variety of supports that will enable a child to benefit from special education. IDEA defines *Related Services* as: “. . . transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education . . .” Section 300.34(a) According to the US Department of Education, related services, as listed under IDEA, include, but are not limited to:

- Audiology/interpreter services
- Counseling services
- Early identification and assessment of disabilities in children
- Medical services (to determine eligibility and/or need for services)
- Occupational therapy
- Orientation and mobility services
- Speech/language pathology services
- Parent counseling and training
- Physical therapy
- Psychological services
- Recreation
- Rehabilitation counseling services
- School health services
- Social work services in schools

PRO Note: Transportation can also be a related service. Issues related to transporting your child to school should be handled by the IEP team or special education department.

This fact sheet will highlight the most commonly used services. However, the following guidelines apply to all of the services.

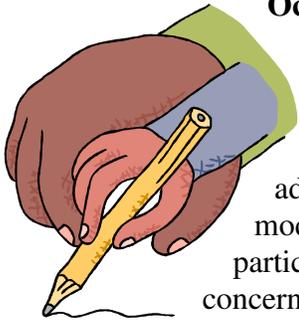
- If a child needs a particular related service in order to benefit from special education, the related service professional should be involved in developing the IEP.
- All therapists should work with the special education and general education teachers and any other therapists in order to develop a consistent and cohesive program that will help the child benefit from therapy in all settings.
- Each specialist will do an initial evaluation to determine the student's needs and whether he or she can benefit from individualized therapy. The therapists will make a recommendation as to the services that can be provided and how they will work with your child to build needed skills. The therapists make the recommendation, but the **team** decides if they agree with the recommendation. *Remember, no single person and no single test makes the decision.*

- Each specialist will provide services and document progress by using some form of data collection. Therapists should provide a progress towards goals report at the end of each grading period or as otherwise noted in the IEP.
- Therapy should be provided in the school setting that is most appropriate. Oftentimes, therapies can be provided in the general education setting with peers that can also benefit from the activity. Pull-out sessions can be used to work with children individually or in small groups.

As the IEP team discusses the services your child may need, you may hear a lot of acronyms. Have you ever wondered what those acronyms stand for? Parents Reaching Out has a *Book of Acronyms* that will help you decipher all of those initials. You can find it on our website, www.parentsreachingout.org under Publications, or call us at 800-524-5176 to request a copy.

Here is a brief overview of four specialists who may work with your child.

Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) – An SLP will work with children who have speech and/or language impairments. The areas the SLP will work on depend on the child’s needs. The SLP can help children who have difficulty with articulation (saying speech sounds), fluency (eg. stuttering), or voice (eg. hoarseness). The SLP also helps children who have trouble understanding others (receptive language) or sharing their thoughts, ideas, and feelings (expressive language). SLPs also work with children who have difficulty with auditory processing. Children who have trouble following directions, poor short-term and long-term memory, and a short attention span when listening may have auditory processing concerns. Therapists can teach children strategies to help them with problem solving (comprehension issues), vocabulary, or pragmatics (using language in the correct way during social situations).



Occupational Therapist (OT) – An OT works with a student to help him/her have access to and be successful in the learning environment. The OT may work on handwriting, fine motor, or visual motor processing skills so the child can complete written assignments. OTs also help students learn to organize the environment – personal space, work area, etc. They may work on sensory integration issues with a student who has difficulty adjusting to a certain type of sensory input or output. The OT will work with the teacher to modify the classroom and/or adapt learning materials to support the student’s successful participation in class. For more information on supporting students with sensory integration concerns, you may want to check out our publication, *How Can I Help This Child?* You can find it on our website, www.parentsreachingout.org

Physical Therapist (PT) – PTs help children develop their large motor skills so they can perform the tasks they need to do at school. They work with movements that involve the large muscles, such as walking and jumping. PTs can help students with activities such as writing on a chalkboard, participating in a physical education class, or walking up and down stairs.

Audiologist – An audiologist conducts comprehensive hearing evaluations in the school setting. The audiologist can train the school staff regarding hearing loss, hearing aids, classroom amplification, and strategies for classroom accommodations. The audiologist can also educate students and families about hearing loss and help them manage any amplification technology, such as an auditory trainer, that may be needed.



“What’s the Big IDEA?” fact sheets are developed by Parents Reaching Out under a grant from the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education. Views expressed do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education and should not be assumed to be an endorsement by the federal government.