



# The Basics of IDEA

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# What is IDEA?



# Acronym Soup

IDEA –  
*Individuals with  
Disabilities  
Education Act*

IEP –  
Individualized  
Education  
Program

FAPE – Free  
Appropriate  
Public  
Education

LRE – Least  
Restrictive  
Environment

Can you think of  
more?



# Laws that Govern Special Education



# *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)*

- ▶ Confidentiality
- ▶ Ethical responsibility
- ▶ Only persons who have educational responsibilities
- ▶ Discussion of a student in ANY public area is both illegal and unethical
- ▶ Records
- ▶ Access to school records
- ▶ Written parental consent for release of information
- ▶ Rights are transferred to student at age 18

# Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Civil Rights Law

“No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be:

\*excluded from participation in;

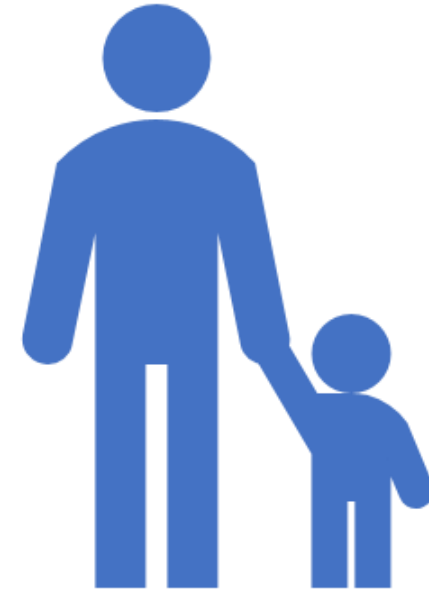
\*denied the benefits of; or

\*subjected to discrimination

. . . under any program or activity receiving Federal Financial assistance.”

# *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004*

- ▶ Federal law entitling every student who meets the definition of a “child with a disability”
  - ▶ to a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment
  - ▶ ensures special education and related services to those children
  - ▶ provides instruction designed to meet the unique needs of children who have a disability that impacts adversely on educational performance



# Child Find



# What is Child Find?

- ▶ Affirmative obligation
- ▶ Ongoing obligation
- ▶ Identify and evaluate
- ▶ Suspected disability



# Red Flags: Non-Academic Factors

- ▶ Academic concerns in school
- ▶ Behavioral concerns in school
- ▶ Outside information provided
- ▶ Information from school personnel
- ▶ Parent request for an evaluation



# Referrals for Special Education

When someone requests that a child be evaluated for **special education** this is called a **referral**. The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) requires local public school districts to “identify, locate, and evaluate every child who may have a disability requiring **special education services**.”

## ▶ Who can refer?

- Parent
- Teacher

## ▶ RTI Process

- Don't delay

# Eligibility for Special Education

The IDEA provides definitions for the disability areas.

The IDEA lists 13 different disability categories and for the most part, the *Alabama Administrative Code* (AAC) mirrors those definitions and disability areas.

The AAC – provides specific minimum required evaluative components and criteria for each of the 13 disability areas.

Within the definition of each disability area, the AAC states that the disability must adversely affect the child's educational performance.



# Who is Eligible?

- ▶ Federal and state regulations
- ▶ 13 categories of eligibility
- ▶ Changes made to eligibility in 2014
  - ▶ Autism
  - ▶ Deaf/Blindness
  - ▶ Developmental Delay
  - ▶ Emotional Disability
  - ▶ Hearing Impairment
  - ▶ Intellectual Disability
  - ▶ Multiple Disabilities
  - ▶ Orthopedic Impairment
  - ▶ Other Health Impairment
  - ▶ Specific Learning Disability
  - ▶ Speech or Language Impairment
  - ▶ Traumatic Brain Injury
  - ▶ Visual Impairment



# Characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder(ASD)

- ▶ Trouble using and understanding language
- ▶ Difficulty taking in sensory input in an ordinary way
- ▶ A need for a particular routine
- ▶ Trouble recognizing another person's feelings
- ▶ Difficulty working on or participating in activities with no clear ending
- ▶ Difficulty switching from one activity to another
- ▶ Difficulty organizing themselves
- ▶ Inappropriate use of items/toys
- ▶ Repetitive, stereotypical behaviors



# Tips for working with students with Autism Spectrum Disorder:

- ▶ Create a structured routine
- ▶ Give cues about what will happen next
- ▶ Develop visual prompts/schedules
- ▶ Give choices
- ▶ Utilize appropriate technology
- ▶ Have high expectations and be consistent
- ▶ If a child seems over stimulated from sensory input, allow him somewhere to de-stress
- ▶ Always take advantage of teachable moments, especially social
- ▶ Stay calm (Q-TIP)

# Characteristics of Emotional Disabilities

- ▶ An inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors
- ▶ An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers
- ▶ Inappropriate types of behaviors or feelings under normal circumstances
- ▶ A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression
- ▶ A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems



# Tips for working with students with Emotional Disabilities:

- ▶ Don't poke the bear
- ▶ Keep class rules/activities simple and clear
- ▶ Reward positive behaviors
- ▶ Allow for mini-breaks
- ▶ Fair treat for all
- ▶ Use motivational strategies

# Characteristics of Intellectual Disabilities

- ▶ Deficits in intellectual functions
- ▶ Deficits in adaptive functioning
  - ▶ Basic life skills
  - ▶ Social skills
  - ▶ Communication skills





# Tips for working with students with Intellectual Disabilities:

- ▶ Teach one concept or activity component at a time
- ▶ Teach one step at a time to help support memorization and sequencing
- ▶ Teach students in small groups, or one-on-one, if possible
- ▶ Always provide multiple opportunities to practice skills in a number of different settings (repetition)
- ▶ Use physical and verbal prompting to guide correct responses, and provide specific verbal praise to reinforce these responses
- ▶ Provide hands-on learning activities
- ▶ Allow for alternate methods of responding and producing work

# Characteristics of Other Health Impairment - ADHD

## Inattentive type:

- ▶ do not pay close attention to details;
- ▶ can not stay focused on play or school work;
- ▶ do not follow through on instructions, finish school work or chores
- ▶ can not seem to organize tasks and activities;
- ▶ get distracted easily; and
- ▶ lose things such as toys, school work, and books.



## Hyperactive/Impulsive type:

- ▶ fidget and squirm;
- ▶ get out of their chairs when they are not supposed to;
- ▶ run around or climb constantly;
- ▶ have trouble playing quietly;
- ▶ talk too much;
- ▶ blurt out answers before questions have been completed;
- ▶ have trouble waiting their turn;
- ▶ interrupt others when they are talking; and
- ▶ Interrupt the games others are playing.

# Tips for working with students with ADD/ADHD:

- ▶ Figure out what specific things are hard for the student
- ▶ Post rules, schedules, and assignments
- ▶ Call attention to changes in the schedule
- ▶ Show the student how to use an assignment book and a daily schedule
- ▶ Teach study skills and learning strategies, and reinforce these regularly
- ▶ Help the student channel his or her physical activity
- ▶ Provide regularly scheduled breaks
- ▶ Give directions step by step

# Effective Teaching Practices for all Students with Disabilities:



Collaborate with special education teachers and parents on a regular basis



Create a structured learning environment



Keep the students engaged



Know your students' stories



Establish relationships with your students



“I’ve come to a frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It’s my personal approach that creates the climate. It’s my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or dehumanized.”

— Haim G. Ginott

