

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE)

Definition: When a student does not participate full time with students without disabilities in the regular education classroom, the area for Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) must be addressed.

1. The LRE statement must explain the extent of nonparticipation. An LRE explanation is based upon the statements of student needs addressed earlier in the IEP and answers the questions “why can’t the student’s instructional needs be met in the general classroom without supplemental aids or support?” It must describe *why* the child is being removed from the general education setting to receive services. What is it about the nature or severity of the disability that makes this necessary.
2. The LRE statement must identify what the student will be missing in the general education setting.

Considerations for LRE decisions:

- Consider the general classroom first
- Consider what aids and services would allow the student successful participation
- Consider what positive behavior strategies and interventions may be appropriate for students with behavior that impedes their learning or the learning of others
- Consider the student’s language needs if the student is D/HH or has Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
- Consider the need for instruction in Braille and the use of Braille for students who are blind or visually impaired
- Consider the child’s communication needs
- Consider the student’s need for assistive technology devices and services

The LRE explanation is not based upon the following:

- The student’s disability
- School organization
- Instructional methods
- Curriculum content
- Service availability
- Space availability

Common Mistakes

- Identifying the service rather than the reason. For example, “needs 1-1 speech services” rather than “-----is highly distracted in a group setting. To continue to show progress, ----- needs to have a quiet environment with few distractions to concentrate on articulation skills”
- Case manager identifies the areas they work with but forgets the other times the student is outside of the mainstream setting, for example, identifies resource room time for reading but forgets the pull out time for speech, social skills, or counseling.
- LRE does not match the federal child count setting or service page

Example: The following examples can be taken as a guide/reference that would be considered acceptable for LRE statements. These are examples; they are not blanket LRE statements that would be appropriate for all students.

Dan needs intensive social skills instruction and practice in a small group situation in order to improve his ability to resolve conflict and cooperate with peers. He will receive this instruction from the social worker and EBD teacher during his study hall. Dan will receive his remaining instruction in the general education setting with his non-disabled peers.

Due to Sue’s significant information processing deficits in the areas of auditory acquisition and organization related to sequencing words, she needs small group reading instruction with repeated directions in multiple formats. Therefore, she will be removed from general education reading to receive this instruction. Sue will receive her remaining instruction in the general education setting with her non-disable peers. Sue also has the option of accessing the special education academic support resource room from the mainstream classroom when in need of additional support. She will not miss core instruction when leaving the classroom rather will access the support room when there is individual work time in the classroom when needed.