



The Special Education Continuum of Services:

Moving Students Towards a Least Restrictive Learning Environment Overview for Families



Brooklyn North Borough Office Special Education Department

How is special education defined in New York State (NYS)?

Special education means: specially designed individualized or group instruction or special services or programs, and special transportation provided at no cost to the parent to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities.

Such instruction includes but is not limited to that conducted in classrooms, homes, hospitals, institutions and in other settings.



Least Restrictive Learning Environment (LRE)

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) refers to:

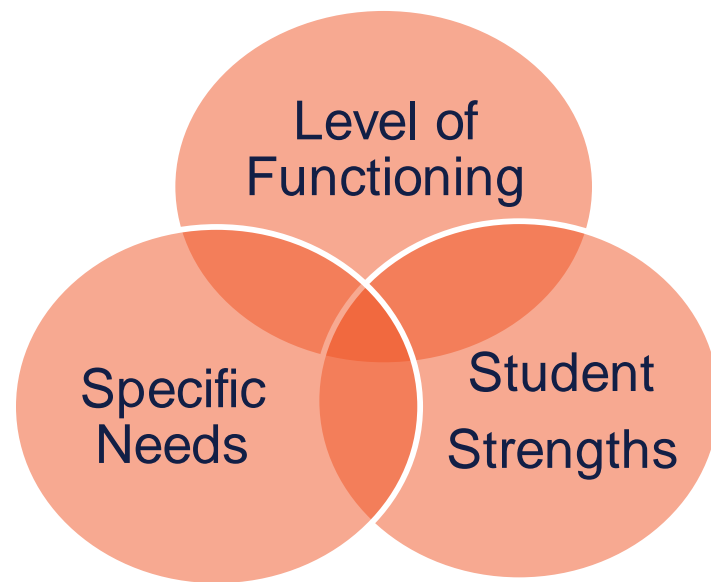
- The extent special education services are provided to a student in a setting with the student's nondisabled peers.
- Some of the services such as Integrated Co-Teaching services (ICT) are directly designed to support the student in his/her general education class.
- Others may or may not be provided in settings with nondisabled peers, depending on the needs of the student.



Moving students towards LRE

The Present Levels of Performance and Individual Needs (PLOP) section of a student's IEP identifies the areas of **specific needs** related to the student's disability, his/her current **levels of functioning**, and his/her **strengths**.

This is the foundation for developing goals and services to address the student's individual needs.



The recommended special education programs and related services are based upon an analysis of the student's previously determined Present Levels of Performance and Measurable Annual Goals.

Each determining the least restrictive level of service sufficient to support the student.



The IEP **must** indicate the special education program(s) and/or related service(s) recommended for the student to advance appropriately toward his/her annual goals and, to the greatest extent appropriate:

- Be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum;
- Participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities; and
- Be educated and participate in activities with other students with and without disabilities.



The continuum of special education programs includes:

- ❖ Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) (individually or in groups of maximum size up to 8)
- ❖ Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT)
 - ❖ One general education teacher and one special education teacher
- ❖ Special Class:
 - ❖ In a District 1-32 school (12:1/15:1(HS), 12:1+1/12:1(K-8))
 - ❖ In a District 75 school (12:1+1, 12:1+(3:1), 8:1+1, 6:1+1)



Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT)

Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classrooms include both students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

Two teachers lead an ICT classroom: a general education teacher and a special education teacher.

The teachers work together and collaborate to adapt and modify instruction to ensure the entire class has access to the general education curriculum.



Special Class Services

Special classes are classes that serve only students with disabilities. Special classes serve children whose needs cannot be met within the general education classroom, even if special education services are provided.

A student can be recommended for special class services in only some instructional areas or in all instructional areas. This recommendation will depend on the individual child's needs.



Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS)

Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) are specially designed and/or supplemental instruction provided by a special education teacher.

With SETSS, the student is supported by a special education teacher in accessing and progressing in the general education classroom alongside peers without disabilities.

The SETSS teacher may provide instruction directly to the student. This is called **“direct” SETSS**.



Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS)

Alternatively, the special education teacher may work with your child's general education teacher(s), instead of working directly with your child. When doing so, the SETSS provider may guide the general education teacher in how to adjust your child's learning environment and/or the teacher's instructional methods. This is called **"indirect" SETSS**.



Non Special Education

- Strategies to maintain students in general education and to support achievement of standards
- De-classification support services

Referral for Special Education

- General Education with related services
- General education with Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS)
- Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT)

Special Class Services

- General Education part-time and special class part-time in community school districts/high schools.
- Special Class full-time in community school districts/high schools.
- Special class full-time in specialized schools (District 75).
- State supported/operated schools/SED approved non-public schools.
- Home/hospital instruction

Related Services are provided as a support throughout the continuum

The range of services is broad but it is not static for any individual student. As student progress is assessed, ensuring continuation of service in the least restrictive environment is considered.

Each time an IEP is developed for a student (as part of the initial evaluation, annual review, and/or re-evaluation), general education with needed supplementary aids and services is considered.

De-classification of students no longer in need of special education services must also be considered.



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Thank you, The Brooklyn North Special Education Team

