



# *Introduction to the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Module Note-Taking Guide*

## Module Overview

This course is part of a series covering the legal foundations of laws supporting students with disabilities. This module includes two parts. The first reviews the history and importance of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as well as its structure. The second part reviews the U.S. Department of Education's IDEA website.

## Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, you will be able to

- explain the origin and evolution of IDEA;
- identify the major parts and tenets of IDEA; and
- use the U.S. Department of Education's interactive website about IDEA to explore the IDEA statute and regulations and find Office of Special Education Program policy documents.

## Using the Note-Taking Guide

As you engage in the module, **take notes on the key themes and answer the summary questions** at the end of each section. After you complete the module, check your responses against the responses given at the end of this document.



## Section 1: Purpose of IDEA

This section explains the fundamental purpose of IDEA.

### Notes

| Key theme | Notes |
|-----------|-------|
| Why IDEA? |       |

### Summary Questions

| Questions                                                                         | Responses |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| What is the main purpose of IDEA?                                                 |           |
| How does IDEA aim to improve educational outcomes for children with disabilities? |           |

## Section 2: History and Evolution of IDEA

This section traces the historical development of IDEA from its origins as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 through its various reauthorizations and regulatory changes.

### Notes

| Key themes                          | Notes |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Passage of Public Law 94-142 (1975) |       |



| Key themes                                              | Notes |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Prior to the Education for All Handicapped Children Act |       |
| Reauthorizations of EHA/IDEA                            |       |
| Changes in IDEA regulations (2006–2017)                 |       |

### Summary Questions

| Questions                                                                            | Responses |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| What was the significance of Public Law 94-142 in 1975?                              |           |
| How has IDEA evolved through its various reauthorizations since its initial passage? |           |

## Section 3: Structure of IDEA

This section outlines the four-part structure of IDEA.

### Notes

| Key themes    | Notes |
|---------------|-------|
| What is IDEA? |       |



| Key themes                    | Notes |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| Four major parts (A, B, C, D) |       |

### Summary Questions

| Questions                                                         | Responses |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| What are the four major parts of IDEA?                            |           |
| How is IDEA considered both a funding law and a civil rights law? |           |

## Section 4: Overview of IDEA Part B

This section introduces the six main principles of IDEA Part B.

### Notes

| Key themes  | Notes |
|-------------|-------|
| Child find  |       |
| Eligibility |       |



| Key themes                                     | Notes |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Individualized education program (IEP)         |       |
| Free appropriate public education (FAPE)       |       |
| Least restrictive environment (LRE)            |       |
| Parent participation and procedural safeguards |       |

### Summary Questions

| Questions                                                                       | Responses |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| List the main principles covered in IDEA Part B.                                |           |
| How does the LRE concept relate to the education of students with disabilities? |           |



## Section 5: Navigating the U.S. Department of Education’s IDEA Website

This section provides guidance on how to use the U.S. Department of Education’s IDEA website as a comprehensive resource.

### Notes

| Key theme                   | Notes |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Navigating the IDEA website |       |

### Summary Questions

| Questions                                                                                             | Responses |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Where on the Department of Education’s website are the official IDEA statute and regulations located? |           |
| What types of resources are available on the IDEA website for educators and families?                 |           |

## Sample Responses

This section presents sample responses to the questions provided after each section. You may use these responses to compare them with your own responses.

| Sections                                        | Summary questions                                                                    | Sample responses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Section 1: Purpose of IDEA</b>               | What is the main purpose of IDEA?                                                    | The main purpose of IDEA is to ensure that children with disabilities have access to a FAPE that meets their unique needs and prepares them for further education, employment, and independent living.                                                                                                                                           |
|                                                 | How does IDEA aim to improve educational outcomes for children with disabilities?    | IDEA aims to improve educational outcomes by mandating IEPs, ensuring access to the general curriculum, providing necessary support services, and promoting education in the least restrictive environment.                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Section 2: History and Evolution of IDEA</b> | What was the significance of Public Law 94-142 in 1975?                              | Public Law 94-142, also known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, was the original version of IDEA. It guaranteed a FAPE to each child with a disability in every state and locality across the country.                                                                                                                          |
|                                                 | How has IDEA evolved through its various reauthorizations since its initial passage? | IDEA has evolved through reauthorizations in 1986, 1990, 1997, and 2004. Key changes include expanding early intervention services, adding new disability categories, mandating transition planning, aligning with other education laws, and improving accountability measures.                                                                  |
| <b>Section 3: Structure of IDEA</b>             | What are the four major parts of IDEA?                                               | The four major parts of IDEA are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Part A: General Provisions</li> <li>▪ Part B: Assistance for All Children with Disabilities</li> <li>▪ Part C: Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities</li> <li>▪ Part D: National Activities to Improve Education of Children with Disabilities</li> </ul> |
|                                                 | How is IDEA considered both a funding law and a civil rights law?                    | IDEA is a funding law because it provides grants to states to support special education services. It also is a civil rights law because it guarantees individual rights, including due process protections, for children with disabilities and their parents.                                                                                    |



| Sections                                                                     | Summary questions                                                                                     | Sample responses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Section 4: Overview of IDEA Part B</b>                                    | List the main principles covered in IDEA Part B.                                                      | <p>The six main principles covered in IDEA Part B are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Free appropriate public education (FAPE)</li> <li>2. Least restrictive environment (LRE)</li> <li>3. Individualized education program (IEP)</li> <li>4. Child find</li> <li>5. Eligibility</li> <li>6. Parent participation and procedural safeguards</li> </ol> |
|                                                                              | How does the LRE concept relate to the education of students with disabilities?                       | LRE requires that students with disabilities be educated with their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. This means schools must provide a continuum of placement options and only remove students from regular education environments when the nature or severity of their needs requires it.                                                                   |
| <b>Section 5: Navigating the U.S. Department of Education's IDEA Website</b> | Where on the Department of Education's website are the official IDEA statute and regulations located? | The official IDEA statute and regulations can be found under the "Law and Policy" drop-down menu on the IDEA website, by selecting "Statute/Regulations."                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                              | What types of resources are available on the IDEA website for educators and families?                 | The IDEA website offers various resources including policy documents, guidance materials, information on OSEP-funded national centers, sample lessons and activities, and links to additional resources for families, educators, and other interested parties supporting students with disabilities.                                                                             |



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