

## Special Education Law

The *Individuals Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) is the federal law for special education. The IDEA requires that all students with a disability receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Michigan also has a state law, the *Revised School Code*, with additional requirements for special education.

The IDEA established two separate age segments for students with special needs. Part B refers to special education services for students ages 3 through 21. Part C refers to early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities from birth to age 3.

Michigan special education services extend from birth through age 25 (beyond the federal requirement of 21). Therefore, Michigan's special education services and programs serve eligible students from birth through age 25.

The OSE also developed the *Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education* (MARSE), which further clarify how to implement and comply with special education law. The MARSE go through a process of public comment and approval from the state legislature before becoming final.

The [laws and regulations](#) section of the website provides links to the various special education laws, as well as other policy documents. A Family Matters [IDEA fact sheet](#) for parents is also available.

## Procedural Safeguards

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) regulations include a set of procedural safeguards. These safeguards provide certain rights to students and parents. The safeguards include in part:

- Protecting student privacy.
- Allowing parents access to their child's educational records.
- Keeping parents informed.
- Requiring parental consent for important decisions.
- Allowing parents to file complaints.

Schools are required to provide a notice of the procedural safeguards to parents at least once a year.

The [notice and consent](#) section of the website includes the Procedural Safeguards Notice document and more information.

## Eligibility for Special Education

Eligible children and students from birth through age 25 may receive special education programs and related services. A student must first be evaluated for special education in order to be determined eligible.

More information and resources are available in the [evaluation and eligibility](#) section of the website. A Family Matters [Initial Evaluation for Special Education fact sheet](#) for parents is also available.

Children from birth to age 3 who are eligible for special education services are also eligible for [Early On](#) services, which is a program administered by the Michigan Department of Education [Office of Great Start](#).

## Individualized Education Program (IEP)

An individualized education program (IEP) is a written document that outlines the student's educational needs and goals, and the programs and services the school district will provide to meet those needs. The document is written by the IEP team at an IEP team meeting. The IEP is reviewed at least once a year.

The [IEP](#) section of the website includes guidance documents and more information. A Family Matters [IEP fact sheet](#) for parents is also available.

## Resolving Disagreements

Sometimes parents disagree with a school district's decision about the education of their child with a disability. There are several special education problem solving options. Options include informal problem solving, mediation, and formal complaints.

The [Dispute Resolution Options](#) section of the website reviews the options in detail and provides resources. A Family Matters [Special Education Problem Solving fact sheet](#) for parents is also available.

## Other Offices and Organizations

Many offices, agencies, and organizations outside of the OSE work with families and schools to support students with disabilities. Outside supports include other MDE offices (e.g., Office of Great Start), OSE-funded initiatives (e.g., Statewide Autism Resources and Training), and other state agencies (e.g., Michigan Rehabilitation Services).

Look through the different [supports for students with disabilities](#) for help from other sources.