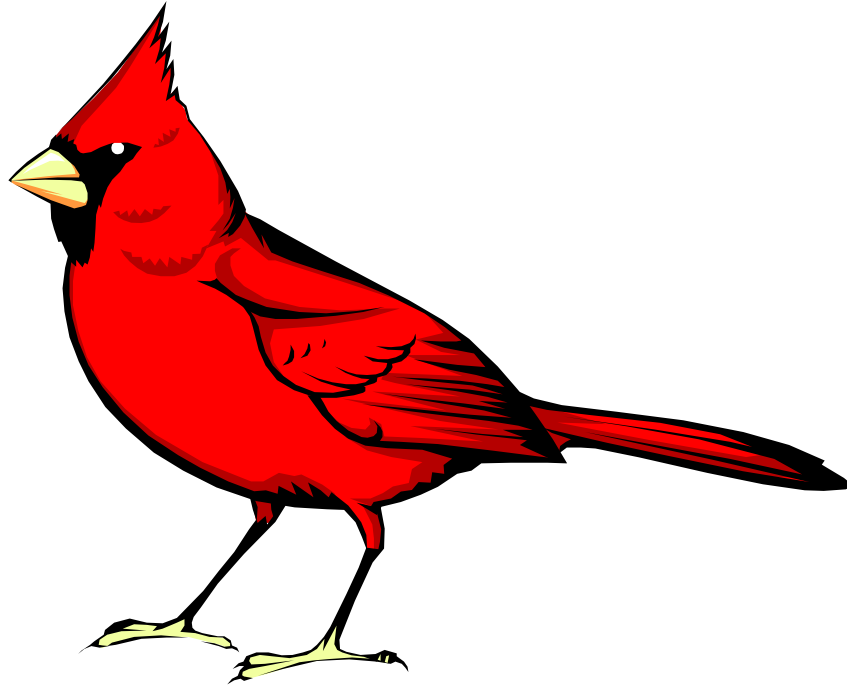


Welcome to the Special Education Site



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## The Foundation of Special Education

Before children with disabilities had the broad protections of the law, many parents in the United States were told, “We are sorry, your child cannot go to school here because she/he is too severely disabled.” Parents had no rights at that time. Since 1975, however, federal and state laws have been enacted that require schools to provide education for all children with disabilities. The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA*, requires that all children with disabilities in the United States receive a free, appropriate public education.

To understand the big picture of special education, I will highlight the six principles of IDEA.

1. All children will be served: no child in need of special education will be excluded from receiving services, no matter how severe the disability.
2. Children will be tested fairly to determine if they will receive special education services. Schools are required to give tests to children that show both their strengths and their weaknesses and a team of professionals will evaluate the tests to determine if they need services.
3. Schools have a duty to provide individually designed, appropriate programs for every child at no cost to their parents. IDEA requires public schools to provide a free, appropriate public education to all children who have been identified as needing special education. Parents and educators work together to design a program that addresses the child’s individual educational problems. This program is called an Individualized Education Program (IEP).
4. Children with disabilities will be educated with children who do not have disabilities. Students with disabilities will be educated with peers who do not have disabilities.

5. The decisions of the school system can be challenged by parents. Under IDEA, parents and students have a right to due process; which gives parents an opportunity to challenge decisions that have been made. In addition to guaranteeing the right to challenge, IDEA provides parents with the right to notice; parents need to be notified before any change in their child's educational plan.
6. Parents of children with disabilities participate in the planning and decision making for their child's special education. IDEA requires a partnership between parents and school personnel. Parents will be working with school and other professionals to see that a free, appropriate, public education is provided for your child.

### Resources

\*Here are some websites and other resources that you may find helpful and informational.

#### **Parent Training and Information Centers and Community Parent Resource Centers**

[www.taaliance.org](http://www.taaliance.org)

The U.S. Department of Education funds Parent Training and Information Centers and Community Parent Resource Centers in each state to provide training and information to parents of children with disabilities.

#### **National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities**

[www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)

NICHCY is a central source of information on disabilities, IDEA, No Child Left Behind and parent-friendly information.

**All Kinds of Minds**

[www.allkindsofminds.org](http://www.allkindsofminds.org)

This website provides resources to help parents and students understand why a child is struggling in school and how to help each child become a more successful learner.

**LD Online website**

[www.ldonline.com](http://www.ldonline.com)

Offers online articles, resources, and forums to help parents, teachers, and people with LD understand many different types of learning disabilities and learn strategies and information to help individuals with LD be more successful at home and at school.

**National Center for Learning Disabilities**

[www.nclld.org](http://www.nclld.org)

This parent-professional organization has a great website on learning disabilities organized by age group with resources, publications, advocacy and online experts.

**Pacer Center - Champions for Children with Disabilities**

[www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)

This website is a great parent resource because it is based on the concept of parents helping parents. It also keeps parents informed on changes in IDEA, free workshops and has a wealth of information about all disabilities.

If you would like more information about how the special education process works here at CACS, please contact me. I also have a number of other resources; books, articles, and additional websites that would be helpful to you as parents. I do value your information and input; ultimately, you know your child best.