

Related Services Basics

A student who qualifies to receive special education services may receive related services to assist them to fully participate and receive benefit from special education. In some cases, a student who has a disability may not require special education services, therefore not qualifying as a student with a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The student may still qualify for related services under Section 504 if the student's disability limits their ability to learn or carry out major life activities such as walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, communicating, or learning for example. Related services are the supportive services or activities necessary for some students with disabilities to maximize their educational outcomes. Any related service or support that helps a student to benefit from or achieve the goals set out in their individualized education program (IEP) should be provided by the appropriate related service personnel. Special education and related services are intended to be flexible to meet the needs of an individual student. Appropriately matched to those needs, related services can assist students with disabilities by helping them to:

- Participate in the general education curriculum with their peers,
- Meet their annual educational goals, and
- Participate in extracurricular and nonacademic activities.

The additional support provided by qualified related service personnel are designed to help a student to meet their educational and functional goals. Related services are designed to help a student in their area of need, for example, writing, speaking, or moving.

There is a wide range of disabilities therefore there are many different types of related services that may assist a student's needs. Related services are not meant to be a one size fits all for students. They are intended to be individualized to meet each students needs and should be associated with a student's IEP goals and written in the IEP. Related services are intended to help a student meet their IEP goals and be tied to those specific educational outcomes, rather than stand as isolated services. IDEA does not provide a comprehensive or exhaustive list of related services because services are tailored to meet the individual student's needs. Related services in schools may include but are not limited to the following:

- Audiology services,
- Counseling services,
- Early identification and assessment of disabilities,
- Interpreting services,
- Medical services (for diagnostic or evaluation purposes,)
- Occupational therapy,
- Orientation and mobility services,
- Physical therapy,
- Psychological services,
- Recreation including therapeutic recreation,
- Rehabilitation counseling,
- School health services and school nurse services,
- Social work services in schools,



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Related Services Basics

- Speech-language pathology services,
- Transportation, and
- Parenting counseling and training.

IDEA provides an open list and definition of related services, however services do not include the provision of surgically implanted devices such as cochlear implants or insulin pumps for example. But related service personnel may routinely check some devices to make sure they are on or functioning properly, for example making sure that a student is wearing their hearing aid and that the hearing aid's battery is working, or simple being aware of the warning signs that a device is not functioning properly by noticing changes in the student's perceptions of sound.

Related services in schools are provided to students with IEP's and their families at no charge. However, students might have disability related therapy needs outside of what can be provided or offered in a school setting, for example a regimen of range-of-motion exercise or post-surgical treatment. These needs are often met in clinical settings and generally covered through insurance and not through the school system. Services provided by a doctor are usually not considered a related service.

HOW DOES A STUDENT QUALIFY TO RECEIVE RELATED SERVICES

Students who qualify to receive special education services may also qualify to receive related services within their IEP to help them to make progress toward their educational goals. The IEP team will consider from evaluations what related services may benefit a student with disabilities. The IEP team must consider and determine:

- If and what type of related services may benefit a student with a disability,
- How the service will be delivered including direct or indirect service,
- The frequency in which the service will be delivered,
- The duration of services,
- When the service will be provided,
- Where the service will be delivered, and
- When the service will start and when it will end.

The IEP team will consist of related service personnel. The IEP team should consider student specific information as they plan the provision of related services within a student's IEP including:

- The student's daily schedule,
- The most appropriate time to provide the service to help meet the educational goals of the student, and
- Naturally occurring opportunities like providing physical therapy during recess.

Related services, like special education services should be provided in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). IEPs should allow the student to have access to the general educational curriculum and be included with their typical peers as much as possible and appropriate. The LRE of related services may include the following placements along the continuum:



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Page 2 of 4

Related Services Basics

- Consultative and collaborative services: General education and related services providers work together to meet the needs of the student with a disability. The student remains in the general education classroom,
- Classroom-based services: All services are brought to the student in the classroom setting. The therapist or service provider may work individually with the student or with a small group that includes the student, and
- Pull out services: Student is taken out of the classroom to a different location like the gym, library, or resource classroom to receive their related service.



Related services are most effective when the responsibilities and the service do not belong solely to the related service provider. The benefits of services are experienced when techniques are incorporated into every part of a student's ongoing routine throughout the school day. You the child's parents, your child's teachers, and related service personnel should have ongoing communication and keep each other informed of the progress the child is making.

INTERRUPTION IN SERVICES

IDEA does not define the use of substitutes or scheduling make up sessions when a related service personnel or student is absent from school. The state and the Local Education Agency (LEA) are required to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them FAPE, consistent with the child's individualized education program (IEP). The state and the LEA must consider the impact of a provider's absence or a child's absence on the child's progress and performance and determine how to ensure the continued provision of FAPE in order for the child to continue to progress and meet their annual goals in their IEP. Whether an interruption in services constitutes a denial of FAPE is an individual determination that must be made on a case-by-case basis (OSEP letter May 8, 2007).

If it is determined that a missed service may impact a student's progress the LEA may contract with qualified providers outside the school system through another public or private agency if there are personnel shortages in the school. When a LEA contracts with an outside provider there can be no cost to the parents of the child with a disability. If you have evidence that supports that the school district did not provide your child's related services within the IEP, you may file a complaint with the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE). The ALSDE is responsible for supervising special education programs operated by LEA's, and complaint procedures to resolve disputes.

When discussing the provision of related services in your child's IEP meeting, discuss the specific schedule and time services will be provided. Additionally, discuss with the IEP team how any missed therapy sessions will be made up before the end of the school year or through Extended School Year (ESY).



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Page 3 of 4

Related Services Basics

THE ROLE OF RELATED SERVICE PERSONNEL

Related service personnel help students with disabilities to become more active in learning and school-related activities. Related service personnel have a variety of responsibilities related to the provision of services. Service personnel assess and refer students for services. They screen, evaluate, and assess a student's problems that might interfere with their school performance. They conduct ongoing, informal assessments to monitor a student's needs and determine the necessity of continuing a related service or support. They additionally make recommendations to the IEP team concerning other needs or referrals when they are needed for other services. Related service personnel also work directly with students. They provide strategies, modifications, and adaptive aids or equipment to improve student's school performance and to include students in school activities. They assist and train students in developing the skills required to help manage their own needs. They also may assist or address individualized modifications so that a student can access school activities or the environment. Related service providers also serve as members of the IEP team. They assist in developing goals for each student to reach their educational goals. They train school staff and parents in skills to help manage student's needs. They work with parents, teachers, and other professionals to explain how a student's problems may affect their student's performance. They provide recommendations and strategies, and modification recommendations, and adaptive aids and equipment that would improve a student's school performance and provide inclusion in the LRE. They also work with assistive technology specialist to determine needs and implement supports for students.

APEC IS HERE TO HELP

APEC's AL PTI provides free training, information, and consultation to families schools, and communities. Visit our training calendar for more information about learning opportunities at www.alabamaparentcenter.com or call our center for personal help and consultation. The contents of this publication were developed in part under a grant from the US Department of Education, #H328M150012. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, David Emenheiser. Special Education V.13

YOUR OPINION IS IMPORTANT

Your opinion matters. Please take a few moments to tell us what you think by completing a short survey about this sheet or other services of the AL PTI. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ALPTI>



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Page 4 of 4