

LDA of NYS
Position Paper Regarding Services for Students with Disabilities
in the Least Restrictive Environment

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The Learning Disabilities Association of New York State (LDA) is an advocate, of long standing, for the principle of least restrictive environment. LDA has always recognized that many students with learning disabilities can benefit from services provided within the general education setting (with the appropriate supports as per the IEP) in order to effectively meet their academic and social needs. LDA has also recognized that some students with learning disabilities may require more intensive alternate instructions in a variety of settings.

LDA supports the mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), that students with disabilities be educated in the least restrictive environment with the necessary supplemental aids and services provided as appropriate in order to ensure satisfactory achievement of education in these settings, to the maximum extent possible with their peers without disabilities. All decisions regarding educational services for students with learning disabilities, consistent with the continuum of service requirements, should be based upon their individual needs as determined by a multi-disciplinary evaluation of their capabilities and functional levels of performance. The process for determining appropriate supports and services for students with learning disabilities, must be the result of a cooperative effort among parents, evaluators, educators and, when possible, the students themselves. LDA's statement regarding service to students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment is based upon the following principles specified in the IDEA, which LDA strongly supports:

- A free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment appropriate for the students' individual needs;
- An Individualized Education Program (IEP) based upon an appropriate evaluation and which includes current functioning levels, instructional goals and objectives consistent with curricular requirements and recommendations for services.
- A continuum of special education services to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities for special education and related services.

- An on-going comprehensive professional development program for general and special education personnel which supports and assists them in meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

In conclusion, LDA supports the IDEA principles governing the education of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. LDA recognizes, however, that appropriate implementation demands comprehensive planning, continuing professional development and availability of adequate resources and support.

(The Learning Disabilities Association of New York State is a statewide organization founded by parents, which provides advocacy, and support services to individuals with learning disabilities, neurological impairments and other related developmental disabilities and their families.)