

# Is My Child Eligible for the IEA Program?

An “eligible student” must be a Tennessee resident who meets **all** of the following criteria:

1) has an active individualized education program (IEP) through a public school district **in effect** at the time of request for participation in the program; **and**

2) meets **at least one** of the following requirements:

- was previously enrolled in a Tennessee public school during the two semesters (or one full school year) immediately preceding the semester in which the student receives an IEA,
- is entering kindergarten\*,
- moved to Tennessee within six months prior to the date the student receives an IEA\*\*, or
- received an IEA in the previous year; **and**

3) has one of the following disabilities identified in their IEP as their primary or secondary disability:

- autism,
- deaf-blindness,
- hearing impairments,
- intellectual disability,
- orthopedic impairments,
- traumatic brain injury, and/or
- visual impairments.

\*If a student has an **active IEP prior to enrolling in kindergarten (i.e., in pre-K) and the IEP is active at the time of request for participation in the IEA Program**, the student will be eligible to receive an IEA without having to attend a Tennessee public school; however, the student may have to be enrolled in a public school (e.g., pre-K) to keep the IEP active until the date of enrollment in the IEA Program. If students are entering kindergarten in August 2016, the student would need to be enrolled in, and attend, a public school for the fall 2016 semester in order to be eligible to enroll in the IEA Program in Jan. 2016. *Please note: for more information about IEPs, parents should contact their school district.*

\*\*If a student has an active IEP in another state and moves to Tennessee, the student will have to register with the school district in which they reside in order to be eligible to participate in the IEA Program.

# Top 5 Things to Consider Before Applying for the IEA Program

Determine whether the IEA Program provides the educational options that best meet the individual needs of your child. Before applying parents should consider:

- all of their child's educational needs;
- the education options available;
- the services that their child is currently receiving and the cost of those services; and
- the amount of funding their child will receive in the IEA Program and what services that funding would cover.

## **1. Are you willing to waive all of your child's IDEA rights and services?**

By placing your child in the IEA Program, parents are agreeing to:

- Take full legal responsibility for the education of your child including obtaining services necessary to educate your child.
- Waive all of your child's rights to services under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Children in the IEA Program **will not receive any services through the public school system**. Children in the IEA Program will **no longer have an IEP or services plan** through the public school system.

If the student withdraws from the IEA Program and returns to the school district **parents must request, in writing, an evaluation for eligibility**, in order for the student to be eligible for services. The school district shall treat the request as a request for an initial evaluation.

***Additional Questions to Consider:***

- A. What services is your child currently receiving through the public school system?
- B. Can you, as the parent, provide those services, or are there private options available that you could pay for (e.g., private schools, educational therapists, etc.)?

**2. Would the IEA award be enough to provide my student with an education? If not, would I be able to supplement the IEA award with my own funds?**

The IEA Program awards an average of **\$6,300** to each student. This annual award and your personal funds must cover the cost of **all** of your child's educational needs and expenses.

***Additional Questions to Consider:***

- A. What is the cost of the services your child received through the public school system?
- B. What is the total cost of the services your child will need?

**3. What type of school would my child attend: home school or private school?**

- A. If your child will attend a private school, are the IEA funds enough to cover the cost of the private school tuition and fees? If not, can you afford to supplement the cost with your personal funds?
- B. If you plan to home school your child, do you understand all the requirements and responsibilities to home school your child in Tennessee? For a list of the requirements, go to: <http://tn.gov/education/topic/home-schooling-in-tn>
- C. If a student withdraws from the IEA Program and returns to a public school, the credits earned at the participating nonpublic school may not be accepted as credit by the public school. Participation in the IEA Program does not guarantee that credits earned at participating schools and/or homeschools will transfer to a public school.

**4. Are you aware that if your child is in grades 3-8, he/she will be required to take an annual assessment in English language arts and mathematics and send the child's score report to the department?**

- A. The assessment must either be the state TCAP (TNReady) assessments or one of the norm-referenced tests listed in the *IEA Parent Handbook*.
- B. Children who take the TNReady assessment will have access to the same accessibility features available to all students, but **will not have access to any other accommodations** since the child will no longer have an IEP.
- C. To determine whether the child will receive accommodations on the norm-referenced tests, parents will need to ask the private school or testing center.
- D. The department will not compile, track, or publicly release student assessment results; student assessment results submitted to the department will only be reviewed to verify that the student has taken the required assessments.

**5. Are you willing and able to complete all the responsibilities of the IEA Program, including submitting expense reports and receipts through the electronic IEA Portal and communicating with the IEA Team electronically through the IEA Portal?**

- A. All forms and expense receipts must be submitted through the electronic IEA Portal. The department will send all IEA communications electronically.
- B. Parents can access the IEA Portal and receive/send IEA communications through their computer or smartphone, and select whether they want to receive electronic communications via the portal, email, or text message.
- C. If parents do not have access to a computer, they can:
  - ask their private school to allow them to use the school's computers,
  - use the computers at their local public library, and/or
  - use IEA funds to purchase a computer, but they must receive pre-approval.

Have a question? Ask us!  
Contact (615) 253-3781  
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