Least Restrictive Environment - IDEA/Missouri State Plan, Part Two
The following slides are meant to give an overview or “big picture” of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) as outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Missouri’s State Plan for Special Education. IDEA and Missouri’s State Plan for Education provide direction for determining special education and related services. This mini-lesson is a continuation of IDEA/Missouri State Plan-Part 1. To view IDEA and Missouri’s State Plan for Special Education, click on the link to the DESE website located on the Resources page of this training unit.
Placement decisions are made each year by the public agency, usually the local school district. Through the IEP process, the public agency must convene a yearly review and consider revision of a student’s IEP. During the IEP process, a placement decision must be made for each student with a disability. The placement decision should be approached from the assumption that a student with a disability should be educated with peers who do not have a disability, unless the needs of the student with a disability require other arrangements. The public agency must be able to justify the placement decision in accordance with a two-part inquiry.
What is the Two Part Inquiry?

Whether education in the regular classroom can be achieved satisfactorily
- with the use of supplementary aids and services

If not, then whether the student has been integrated to the maximum extent appropriate

The two-part inquiry that must be used by the public agency to justify a placement decision is 1) whether education in the regular classroom, with the use of supplementary aids and services, can be achieved satisfactorily. If not, then it must be determined whether 2) the student has been integrated to the maximum extent appropriate.
When making a placement decision, you should consider many other factors. One factor to consider is the curriculum and goals of the regular class. What we mean by this is that you should look at factors that show a need for specially designed materials, supplies, or equipment or significant modifications to the regular curriculum which would have an adverse affect on the educational program for other students in the class.
Another factor to consider when making a decision on placement, is the sufficiency of the district’s efforts to accommodate the child with a disability in the regular class. By that, we mean a description of modifications which have been attempted, resources which have been committed, the student-centered results which were observed, or a description of the modifications considered but rejected and the basis for the rejection.
The degree to which a student with a disability will receive educational benefit from regular education is another factor to consider when making a placement decision. Consideration of potential positive effects should be made with respect to cognitive, academic, physical, social, or other areas of development.
Other Factors to Consider

D. The effect the presence of a child with a disability may have on the regular classroom environment and on the education that the other students are receiving

- Description of potential harmful effects for the student with a disability or
- Disruptive effects for students without disabilities

You should also consider the effect the presence of a child with a disability may have on the regular classroom environment and on the education that the other students are receiving. When making a placement decision, you should consider a description of potential harmful effects for the student with a disability or disruptive effects for students without disabilities.
The last factor you should consider when making a placement decision is the nature and severity of the student’s disability. Think about factors which support a need for alternative instruction which cannot be achieved in the regular class. These could include extreme distractibility, diverse learning styles, and inability to engage appropriately with other students in academic or social settings.
When considering a student’s placement, you should also look at the nonacademic settings the student will participate in. The Missouri State Plan states that each public agency must ensure that each student with a disability participates in nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities with students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the student. This should be to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the student.

The public agency must also ensure that each student with a disability should have the supplementary aids and services determined by the student’s IEP team to be appropriate and necessary for the student to participate in nonacademic settings.
What are Supplementary Services and Activities?

- May include
  - Meals
  - Recess periods
  - Counseling services
  - Athletics
  - Transportation
  - Health services
  - Recreational activities
  - Special interest groups or clubs sponsored by the public agency
  - Referrals to agencies which provide assistance to individuals with disabilities
  - Employment of students including both employment by the public agency, and assistance in making outside employment available

This slide lists some of the supplementary services and activities which must be made available to students with disabilities, if the services and activities are deemed to be appropriate and necessary by the student’s IEP team.