

IEPs and the Role of the School Nurse

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) is the primary federal legislation that governs how states provide special education services to children with disabilities (Selekman 2013). Within IDEA there are provisions as to how students are identified and evaluated for special education services (Yonkatis 2017). Once students are determined to be eligible for special education the school will then develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for that student which outlines annual goals, objectives, and any related services needed for the student.

“Every U.S. student is entitled to a free and appropriate education. School districts must identify and evaluate any child who they find is unable to engage fully in learning as a participant in the general education curriculum. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 requires that these students be assessed by qualified individuals in any areas that may be impacting learning...The school nurse, as the health expert, has an important role to play as a member of the special education team in evaluating whether a student has health concerns that are impacting learning and how health barriers to learning might be reduced,” (Yonkatis 2017).

**For more information on how your district manages IEPs, and evaluates students for special education services consult your local administrator or director of Special Education Services.*

Examples of how a School Nurse Plays a Role on the Individualized Education Program Team

- School Nurse may assist in identifying children who may qualify for special education services, or children who may need other health related services.
- In collaboration with the child, parents, and healthcare providers; the school nurse can help to assess the child's functional and physical health status.
- Assist in developing health related goals for the IEP
- Develop IHPs and/or ECPs to accompany to the IEP as necessary
- Provide trainings for teachers and staff regarding the individual health needs of the child.
(Selekman 2013)

IDEA 2004 Disability Categories:

Autism; Deafness; Deaf-Blindness; Emotional Disturbance; Hearing Impairment; Intellectual Disability; Multiple Disability; Other Health Impaired; Specific Learning Disability; Speech or Language Impairment; Traumatic Brain Injury; Orthopedic Impairment; Visual Impairment; *Developmental Delay-special designation for children ages 3-9*
(Shannon, 2017)

Medicaid Reimbursement for Nursing Services Provided

When providing direct nursing services, such as tube feedings and medication administration, for students qualifying for special education services; consult your local district to see if services rendered are eligible for Medicaid reimbursement.