

# What is Special Education?

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Special education is a service designed to meet the unique needs of students who have disabilities through instruction or special services or programs. In New York State, services related to special education are provided on a continuum from birth through age 26. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the federal law that outlines the way states deliver special education services from birth through

age 21, and includes the rights parents possess throughout the special education process.

Understanding and navigating the Special Education process can be confusing and overwhelming. The Parent Training and Information Center of Westchester Independent Living Center helps parents of children with disabilities increase their confidence and develop advocacy skills that will benefit their children. We help parents to gain the knowledge they need to make informed decisions and effectively advocate for their children.

We serve the Lower Hudson Valley region of the counties of Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester. We help parents through phone and email conversations, answering questions and providing information. We also provide workshops and trainings for parents, as well as professionals to learn more about topics related to special education, such as Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), Dignity for All Students Act (DASA), Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

We also provide a multi-session training series, which prepares parents to advocate for their own children, and as a volunteer to help other families. In this series parents learn about: fostering positive interaction between schools and families, successful methods of approaching CSE/CPSE meetings, improving communication skills, developing effective IEP and 504 Plans and more.

If you need our assistance, please contact us at 845-228-7457 or [contact@wilc.org](mailto:contact@wilc.org)

For further information, you can explore our website at [www.wilc.org](http://www.wilc.org)