



INFORMATION EXPRESS FACT SHEET

Spotlight on: 

School Placement Considerations for Students who are Deaf or Hard and Hearing

This Fact Sheet is derived from a full article on this topic which can be accessed through www.handsandvoices.org. Click on the "What Parents Need to Know" Series link.

The one thing that parents of deaf and hard of hearing children understand better than anyone else is that the choices in communication, educational placement options, and other decisions about raising their children are complex and individualized. It takes a great degree of flexibility and understanding of the issues. Unfortunately, parents often lack the necessary knowledge and advocacy skills when confronted with a 'one size fits all' model by the systems that are there to support them. When it comes to the considerations of educational placement for the deaf or hard of hearing child, parents become 'equal partners' in the process by knowing the law and understanding the communication needs of their child.

You're in the Game – Come Prepared

Do you know the answers to these

questions?

- ❖ Can you question a school district's philosophy of educational placement?
- ❖ Do you, as the parent, have a right to participate in this decision?
- ❖ How do you effectively advocate for appropriate school placement based on the individualized needs of your child?

What are the legal considerations in school placement decisions?

- ❖ LRE, or "Least Restrictive Environment" placement for students in special education is not just a place, but also the setting in which the student will be in the least restrictive environment based on his individualized needs.
- ❖ IDEA Section 300.46 (a)(2)(iv) addresses the consideration of the unique communication needs of deaf and hard of hearing students, including:

- ❖ Opportunities for direct communication with peers and professional personnel
- ❖ The child's unique language and communication mode, academic level, and full range of needs
- ❖ Opportunities for direct instruction in the child's language and communication mode.
- ❖ Only when the individualized needs of the student have been addressed should a team begin the discussion of WHERE those needs will be met.
- ❖ Factors which cannot be used in determining placement: Category of disability, significance of disability, availability of special education and related services, configuration of the service delivery system, availability of space, administrative convenience.

Looking at the big picture of School Placement: Academically, Communicatively, and Socially

Three of the main issues in considering placement are of equal importance and intertwined in such a way that they must be addressed in the context of one another in order to effectively place a student in the appropriate school setting:

- ❖ Academic level of the student
- ❖ Communication mode or language (regardless of the degree of hearing loss)
- ❖ Opportunities for direct interaction with peers.

A Continuum of Placement Options

A full continuum of placement, program and service options to serve d/hh students more effectively, including those students with additional disabilities should include, but not be limited to:

- ❖ Regional programs (combined in resource and general ed. Settings) that provide the critical mass of age and language-appropriate opportunities for direct instruction and communication with staff, peers, personnel, and services.
- ❖ a State school for the deaf (Residential and Day School)

- ❖ General education placements with all necessary support services, such as itinerant teachers credentialed in d/hh education, interpreters, and assistive listening technology.
- ❖ Special day classes and resource programs, as required by federal and state laws, which may include reverse mainstreaming, partial mainstreaming, and team teaching opportunities.
- ❖ Nonpublic schools, virtual schools, home instruction, hospital instruction, and institutions required by federal and state laws to meet the needs of students with disabilities that cannot be met within the traditional public school setting.

Possible issues to address when considering placement:

- ❖ Philosophy of center-based program and compatibility to student's communication needs.
- ❖ The "Least Restrictive Environment" should be defined in context to the communication needs of the child
- ❖ More than one type of placement should be discussed (i.e.

mainstream, center-based etc.)

- ❖ There may be biases within in the team about communication methods or range of placement.
- ❖ Preconceived ideas on placement based on degree of hearing loss.
- ❖ Itinerant services -their availability and appropriateness
- ❖ NCLB (No Child Left Behind) regulations regarding schools that do not meet "Adequate Yearly Progress"

Finding the right school placement for a student who is deaf or hard of children requires an IEP team to truly look at the individual needs of that student. The successful education for our children is accomplished when their academic, social, cognitive, and communicative needs are met. In this way, the mission of special education is fulfilled, to prepare students for employment and independent living. Only then, will the efforts of educating deaf and hard of hearing students be fulfilled.

*For more information, contact:
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The "What Parents Need to Know" Series

The "What Parents Need to Know" Series includes full articles and two-page synopsis of the following topics:

- ❖ **Socialization and the Child who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing**
- ❖ **Self-Advocacy for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students**
- ❖ **School Placement Considerations for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Student**
- ❖ **From High School to Post-Secondary Education: The Transition Process**

For more information, contact: Colorado Families for Hands & Voices at: www.handsandvoices.org, or PO Box 371926, Denver, CO 80237

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