

# CONTINUUM OF PROGRAM OPTIONS

## Definition

The range of placements in which special education can be implemented.

## Legal Requirements

Each SELPA shall ensure that a continuum of program options is available to meet the needs of students with a disability for special education and related services as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The continuum of program options shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, all of the following or any combination of the following:

1. General Education programs.
2. Special Education Programs; resource, learning lab, etc.
3. Designated instruction and services.
4. Special classes.
5. Nonpublic, nonsectarian school services. (NPS, RTC)
6. State special schools.
7. Instruction in settings other than classrooms where specially designed instruction may occur.
8. Itinerant instruction in classrooms, resource rooms and settings other than classrooms where specially designed instruction may occur.
9. Instruction using telecommunication and instruction in the home, in hospitals and in other institutions.

In addition to the continuum of program options listed above, a district may contract with a hospital to provide designated instruction and services required by the student with a disability as specified in the IEP. However, a district shall not contract with a sectarian hospital for instructional services. A district shall contract with a hospital for designated instruction and services required by the students with a disability only when no appropriate public education program is available. For purposes of this section, "hospital" means a health care facility licensed by the State Department of Health Care Services.

## Legal References

EC 56360; EC 56361; EC 56361.5

## Local Procedures

Once a student is eligible for special education, the IEP team will determine the student's placement and services in the least restrictive environment based on the following continuum of program options:

1. General Education  
Placement in the general education program shall occur when the student's educational needs can be addressed through modifications of the general education program.
2. Specialized Academic Instruction (SAI)  
Specialized Academic Instruction will be provided when a student has special learning needs that cannot be addressed adequately in the general education program. The students can be assigned to general education classroom teachers for the majority of a school day or placed in special education. The special education teacher plans and directs the student's instruction and assists the general education teacher.
3. Designated Instruction and Services (DIS).

Designated Instruction and Services (DIS), also known as Related Services, shall be available when the instruction and services are necessary for the student to benefit educationally from his or her instructional program. Students may need assistance in special areas that may include, but are not limited, to the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language/speech development &amp; remediation</li> <li>• Adapted physical education</li> <li>• Physical therapy</li> <li>• Occupational therapy</li> <li>• Counseling/parent training</li> <li>• Health/Nursing services</li> <li>• Social Worker services</li> <li>• Vision services</li> <li>• Psychological services other than assessment and IEP development</li> <li>• Counseling and guidance services, including rehabilitation counseling</li> <li>• Instruction in the home or hospital</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audio-logical Services</li> <li>• Orientation/Mobility services</li> <li>• Specially designed vocational education and career development</li> <li>• Specialized driver training instruction</li> <li>• Recreation services</li> <li>• Specialized services for low incidence disabilities such as readers and vision/hearing services</li> <li>• Medical services for diagnostic and evaluation purposes</li> <li>• Interpreting services</li> <li>• Transportation</li> </ul>
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4. Special Classes

Students may need special instruction for a majority of the day in a self-contained special day class on an integrated or isolated site to accommodate their special needs. Specially trained personnel staff these classes. Placement in a special class shall only occur when the student's goals and objectives cannot be met in a less restrictive environment.

5. Nonpublic, nonsectarian school services (NPS, RTC)

Students may need educational services and programs that are not offered by the public schools. These students may attend state certified nonpublic and nonsectarian schools on a full or part-time basis. This placement recommendation is based on the IEP team decision that an appropriate public program is not available.

6. State Special Schools

Students may need a special school such as one of those operated by the State for students with severe visual or hearing impairments. These schools may be considered as a placement option when the IEP team has determined that no appropriate placement is available within SELPA.

7. Instruction in settings other than classrooms where specially designed instruction occurs

Students may need instruction in settings other than classrooms where specially designed instruction may occur. Community-based instruction, vocational training and/or work experience training would be examples.

8. Itinerant instruction

Students may need itinerant instruction in classrooms, resource rooms and settings other than classrooms where specially designed instruction may occur. Examples: include itinerant deaf/hard of hearing services in general education and/or visually handicapped services in general education or orientation and mobility trainings in the community.

9. Instruction using telecommunication, instruction in the home, in hospitals and in other institutions as required

Students may need such instruction due to illness or judicial placement (e.g., juvenile halls or youth authority settings). With constant technological advances, long-distance learning through telecommunication has become an increasingly valuable support on the educational continuum.

## **FAQs**

What is the difference between Home/Hospital Instruction and Instruction in the Home or Hospital?

*Home and hospital instruction is a general education term referring to temporary service provided to a student who is ill or injured and cannot attend school. It is provided by a general education teacher and must be provided at least five hours per week in order to count for average daily attendance. A student with a disability cannot be placed on general education home and hospital instruction. A student with a disability who needs instruction in the home or hospital must be placed in that setting by the IEP team. It is considered Designated Instruction and Service and is written into an IEP based on a written report from a physician or psychologist. The IEP team determines the frequency, intensity and duration of the service. The physician or psychologist report should include a statement of diagnosed condition, certify the student condition prevents the student from attending less restrictive placement and a statement of the projected calendar date for the student's return to school. A student with a disability cannot be placed on home and hospital instruction without such a report.*

### **REMINDERS**

- The continuum of program options is a range of special education placement/services from least restrictive to most restrictive.
- IEP teams must consider the continuum of program options when determining the least restrictive environment for a student.