

# Student's Placement and Services

Arlington Public Schools (APS) provides a continuum of services from ages 2 through 22 for students with disabilities, pre-kindergarten through high school, who are found eligible to receive special education services. It is important to be mindful that special education refers to *services* as opposed to *places*. For example, special education services may be provided directly in general (regular) education classes ("push-in" services), and/or in special education settings ("pull-out" services). Based on their unique and individual learning needs, some students may spend the majority of the school day in general education settings, while others spend the majority of the school day in a special education setting. In many instances, students with disabilities receive a combination of push in and pull out services.

## Placement Decisions

You are a critical member of the IEP team that determines your child's placement, and your consent is required for this decision. Therefore, families are encouraged to become familiar with APS' continuum of services. Every student must be provided a **Free Appropriate Public Education** (FAPE) in the **Least Restrictive Environment**.

The first consideration in determining placement is the services and supports your child needs. The next consideration that the team is required by federal law to address is that your child is educated in the **Least Restrictive Environment** (LRE). The LRE means that children are educated in general education settings with typically developing peers to the greatest extent possible, and are removed from those settings only when needed to meet the child's unique learning needs. Usually, every effort is made to provide services in the child's local neighborhood school if appropriate services are available, and the majority of students with disabilities within APS will receive special education services in their home schools.

## Continuum of Placement and Service Possibilities

As children's learning needs are different, every public elementary, middle and high school in Arlington offers a continuum of services for special education and related services. In order to meet the specialized needs of some students with disabilities, APS also offers specialized countywide programs, and placement at the Stratford Program and the Program for Employment Preparedness (PEP), secondary programs for students with disabilities. Placement into countywide programs is a carefully considered IEP team decision, since such programs represent a more restrictive placement. Inclusion opportunities and experiences with non-disabled peers are expected for all students, regardless of placement. Infrequently, IEP teams may determine that students require homebound instruction or placement in a more restrictive environment such as a private school setting to meet their needs. APS also provides Service Plans to students with disabilities who are parentally placed at private schools located in Arlington.

Extensive information about APS Special Education, including services and countywide programs, can be found at: <https://www.apsva.us/student-services-special-education/special-education-office-of/>

You are encouraged to contact the Parent Resource Center (PRC) to learn more about special education and the continuum of services, and connect with parent liaisons in Arlington schools.

