

Let's Talk Learning Disabilities

EPISODE 09

In this Episode, Laurie and Abbey follow up their previous discussion on 504 accommodations, and dive deeper into the world of special education. They discuss the guidelines, laws, qualification processes, as well as the benefits and downsides to special education.

What is special education? (1 min)

Special education is a robust support system that is a step above section 504 accommodations. Through special education, the student with the disability can receive specially designed instruction and curriculum from age 3 to 21. To qualify for special education, you either have to meet criteria under IDEA law for one of the 13 different disability categories, or qualify through a full and individual evaluation also known as an FIE. An evaluation is also required to be done or reassessed every 3 years for each student.

Common Disability Categories that Qualify for Special Education (5 min)

Qualifying for special education in some disability categories will need a form signed off by a medical professional. The school will also still require the full and individual evaluation to be done. These disabilities include: Other Health Impairment, Visual Impairment, Auditory Impairment, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Intellectual Disability (formally known as mental retardation), Orthopedic Impairment, Emotional Disturbance, Traumatic Brain Injury, Deaf/Blind, Multiple Disabilities (3 or more disabilities), Speech Impairment.

Annual IEP Meetings (11 min)

IEP, Individualized Education Plan, meetings are required to occur once a year at minimum to re-address the students accommodations and support in accordance to their specific disabilities and skill set. IEP documents are very long, sometimes up to 30 pages and beyond and contain information specific to the student, as well as other things that may not pertain just yet such as graduation and transition plans. The parent must consent at every turn to further the special education process which

means enrolling in special education, proposed accommodations, and any changes along the way must involve parental consent. After the student turns 14 years old, they also can be involved in the annual IEP meetings to take an active role in their education and progress.

Independent Educational Evaluation (12 min)

Laurie and Abbey discuss timelines and the process of going through an evaluation through the school system and how many times it can take a whole semester, or sometimes even an entire school year to walk through the evaluation process to enroll in special education. Concerned parents can become frustrated with the process and contest to have the school pay for what's called, an Independent Educational Evaluation, done by a private practice. Laurie and Abbey, having their own private practice, have of course run into this situation many times, and want to spread awareness to parents that this type of evaluation is not just available to them, but is also required to be paid for by the public school.

Benefits of Special Education (19 min)

Special education involves what are called resource classrooms, which have a lower student teacher ratio by a teacher certified in special education. Students receive individualized instruction and curriculum with options of learning in many different ways, at a pace that suits them best.

Downsides of Special Education (29 min)

Although stigmas are much less pronounced, special education can carry a negative connotation with some people. Also, if a student is in a resource classroom, it is indicated on their report card and transcript which may restrict their college or continuing education plans for the future.

Transition Planning (33 min)

In each student's IEP, or Individualized Education Plan, a section is dedicated to transition planning, whether that student is planning to move forward to college, the

workplace, or an extended high school experience, special education can help prepare a student to transition until their 22nd birthday.

Resources:

Contact info for the podcast: letstalklearningdisabilities@gmail.com

E-Diagnostic Learning Website: <https://ediagnosticlearning.com>

Social:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/eDiaglearning/>

Twitter: @diaglearning

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/diagnostic-learning-services/>

Instagram: @diaglearning

Length of episode 28:37