



DOES YOUR CHILD NEED A MORE RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT?

Special education settings are designed to support students with higher academic, emotional, sensory, and/or behavioral needs. In some cases, students may receive services in a setting outside of their least restrictive environment (LRE) or general education classroom in order to access more intensive supports aligned to their individualized needs. These specialized programs vary by campus and district and may not be available at every location. It is important to consult with your campus representative or special education department to determine which settings are available, as well as the specific criteria students must meet for consideration and eligibility. Any change in a student's instructional placement—whether to a more restrictive or less restrictive setting—must be determined through the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee process. An ARD meeting is required to review data, consider the student's needs, and make collaborative, data-driven decisions regarding placement and services.

ECSE: Early Childhood Special Education

- Children who are 3, 4 and 5 years of age, and who have been identified through formal evaluations as having special education eligibilities may be considered for placement in the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE). ECSE classrooms are designed to provide early learning experiences to children, at their levels of ability. The ECSE curriculum reflects both developmentally appropriate activities in the areas of communication, cognition, fine motor, gross motor, self-help and social skills. All students will be actively engaged, following a classroom schedule in rigorous lessons that change to meet the developing needs of the children. The activities are functional and focus on developing skills needed now and in the future. Each classroom will have clearly defined instructional areas for large and small group work, as well as areas dedicated to interacting with household items, blocks, technology, science/sensory experiences and motor activities. Frequent data collection is an integral component of the ECSE program. Progress on all IEP goals/objectives must be

documented regularly. In addition, as required by TEA, all ECSE students will be assessed, using the Early Childhood Outcomes assessment instrument (ECO) upon enrollment into ECSE, at mid-year and in May for as long as the students are in the ECSE program. Before the student exits ECSE, reports of progress must be completed and the results reported to TEA through the Childhood Outcomes Summary Form (COSF) report. Placement in a ECSE classroom must be determined by an ARD/IEP committee. The individual goals/objectives for each student must focus on the skills needed to prepare for participation in the school program, when age-eligible.

Resource: modified curriculum setting (terms for this type of program may vary)

- A resource class, taught by a special education teacher, may be offered to students with learning difficulties when they are unable to meet expectations on grade level content within a general education class, performing well below their same aged peers and require modified curriculum. Resource classes may be offered in the areas of reading, language arts, mathematics, science or social studies. These classes should emphasize functional academics, as well as skills needed for school success, such as organization, study skills and social skills. Resource classes can provide research-based specialized instruction based on individual student needs in grade-level TEKS, as identified by the student's IEPs. This specialized instruction shall not duplicate general education classroom instruction, but shall reflect grade level curriculum standards, provide instruction to students on ways to compensate for learning problems that interfere with the way they process, retrieve and give back information and provide a flexible learning environment commensurate with student learning styles and needs. This setting is NOT for students who “just need a smaller environment” as being placed in this special education setting receive a modified curriculum due to significant gaps in academic achievement, when compared to their grade level peers. Student participation in resource classes must be determined by the ARD/IEP committee and the student's IEP must address specific goals to be mastered by participating in this setting.
- ***Other names/similar programs may be, but aren't limited to:***

- Alternate Curriculum

Life Skills: modified curriculum setting (terms for this type of program may vary)

- Life Skills (LS) classes are designed to meet the needs of students whose intellectual, developmental and academic levels are so delayed that participation in the general education program, even with modifications and accommodations is unfeasible. The focus of the LS program is to teach functional skills in academics, daily living, vocational, recreation/leisure and community participation for students of all ages, at their individual ability levels. Instructional lessons in the classroom will be rigorous and reflect appropriate grade-level TEKS through the use of essence statements and prerequisite skills, as well as skills needed for life after public school. The students will be actively engaged in learning throughout the school day and the teacher will collect data on each student's progress. The data will be used to plan lessons, to create the next IEP, and to determine the need for Extended Year Services. The classroom activities will be functional and age-appropriate, and will change to meet the needs of the student. Classroom instruction will include individual, small group and community-based experiences. Students who participate in Life Skills classes will also have access to all activities available to non-disabled peers to the greatest extent possible. Such activities include grade level field trips, assemblies, lunch, etc. The placement of a student in a Life Skills class must be determined by ARD/IEP action and the goals/objectives must reflect an emphasis on functional skills at the individual student's present level of ability.
- ***Other names/similar programs may be, but aren't limited to:***
 - ALS: Academic Life Skills
 - FLS: Functional Life Skills
 - RISE: Reaching Independence through Supported Education
 - ISPD: Individuals with Severe and Profound Disabilities

APPLE: Autism Programming for Positive Learning Experiences (terms for this unit/type of program may vary)

- Students with autism may require an intensive and more restrictive environment in order to develop foundation skills. This specialized program includes the use of research supported strategies and methods for children with autism to address individualized needs and skills. APPLE teachers receive specialized training and materials to implement these research based strategies and it is specifically designed to meet the needs of students on the autism spectrum that require comprehensive behavior, academic, social and communication training. Students in the APPLE program access the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) through instruction in pre-requisite skills with extensive modifications to the standard curriculum. A placement into the APPLE program is the most restrictive setting on a general education campus due to the small staff to student ratio, the high level of intensive supports required, and the limited availability of the classes throughout the district. Placement must be determined through ARD action.
- ***Other names/similar programs may be, but aren't limited to:***
 - SAILS: Specialized Approaches to Individual Learning or Social, Academic and Independent Living Skills

BAC: Behavior Academic Classroom (terms for this unit/type of program may vary)

- A Behavior Academic Classroom (BAC) is a classroom for special education students who have severe behavior challenges that have not been able to be met in other instructional settings. Placement in the BAC classroom may be for all or for part of the day, with other classes in any other setting (general education, resource, co-teach, classroom support, etc.). The goal of the behavior program for every student should be to improve acceptable and appropriate behaviors, to develop self-awareness, self-monitoring and self-control, to make progress in academic achievement, and to participate in general education whenever possible. When a student is placed into BAC, the primary goal of the program is to move him/her out into less restrictive placements as the behavior improves. A Behavior Academic Classes can provide consistently high quality academic instruction with access to the

general curriculum, flexible instructional arrangements for individual, small group and large group learning opportunities, daily social skills instruction, a classroom management system based on positive behavioral supports, accurate and consistent data collection and record keeping on all student objectives, visible evidence of rules, procedures, routines, schedules, reinforcement menus and other positive behavioral supports, a crisis management plan, etc. Placement in a BAC must be determined through ARD action.

- ***Other names/similar programs may be, but aren't limited to:***

- SEAS: Social Emotional and Academic Success
- BIC: Behavior Intervention Classroom
- Focus Classroom
- ABLE: Academic and Behavior Learning Environment

Homebound:

- Some special education students may experience serious illnesses that prevent them from attending classes on school campuses. These illnesses may be of relatively short duration (at least 4 weeks in length), persistent (continuing for the foreseeable future) or periodic (periods of illness, totaling at least 4 weeks in the school year, requiring confinement at home/in the hospital, interspersed with periods of time when the student can attend classes on campus). In all cases, information from the student's physician must indicate that the student must be confined to the home or hospital as a result of his/her condition. A physician or a parent should notify the campus that homebound services are being requested. The campus evaluation person will obtain the parent's permission to obtain medical information. When preliminary medical information is received, the evaluation person and the Homebound Coordinator will staff the case. If they determine that the campus can provide necessary support, such as skilled nursing care, to maintain the student's attendance, an ARD/IEP meeting should be held to discuss necessary changes to the student's program. If the student does appear to have a condition that requires confinement at home or in the hospital, the campus evaluation person will send required forms needed directly to the physician. Homebound

placement is the most restrictive setting available, as students are not able to participate in any campus-based events or community activities or participate in any activities with their peers. A strong justification must be made for selecting such a restrictive placement option.

This is not a comprehensive list, as individual districts may offer more or fewer programs than those described. In some cases, more restrictive placement options may be located on a separate campus/non-public school, specialized program site or residential facility. If a more restrictive setting is being considered, it is important to consult with your zoned school district to review available options, program criteria, and eligibility requirements.

