



## Direct and Indirect Services

In Minnesota, children with disabilities who receive special education instruction and related services do so through **direct or indirect services**. This handout explains these terms.

Federal special education law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), states that the Individualized Education Program (IEP) must include a statement of the special education and related services ... to be provided to the child or on behalf of the child... 300.320(a)(4)(i). Minnesota's Special Education Rule 3525.0210 defines these services further.<sup>1</sup>

The IEP defines the goals a child is expected to achieve in one IEP year as well as any other services the child may need to fully participate at school. The IEP team, which includes the parent, then determines how much and what kinds of services are needed to achieve the goals. The team's decisions for direct and indirect service times are written in the IEP, typically in the services and modifications section.

**Direct instruction and services** are those provided directly to a child by a special education teacher or related services professional. Direct service can be provided to an individual child or to a small group of children with similar needs. Direct instruction and services are provided to help a child meet the goals and objectives on the child's IEP. For example, a special education teacher could provide direct service in written language instruction to address a goal for written language.

**Indirect services** are not provided directly to a child. A special education teacher or related service professional provides these services to others who are working directly with a child. Indirect services may include activities such as:

- Staff consultation with a regular education teacher or other school staff on situations resulting from a child's disability
- Modifying curriculum or environment for a child
- Observing a child
- Monitoring a child's progress in a specific area
- Monitoring equipment or assistive technology used by a child

**For both direct and indirect services**, the IEP states the beginning date; frequency per week or month; minutes per session; location; and anticipated duration of the service. For indirect service, the IEP should specifically list what the services will be, not just the number of minutes the service will be provided.

When thinking about direct and indirect services, parents might ask and discuss the following questions with others on the IEP team:

- Has my child made adequate progress with the current services?

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<sup>1</sup> 3525.0210 Subpart 14 "Direct services means special education services provided by a teacher or a related service professional when the services are related to instruction, including cooperative teaching."

3525.0210 Subpart 27 "Indirect services means special education services which include ongoing progress reviews; cooperative planning; consultation; demonstration teaching; modification and adaptation of environment, curriculum, materials, or equipment; and direct contact with the pupil to monitor and observe. Indirect services may be provided by a teacher or related services professional to another regular education teacher, special education teacher, related services professional, paraprofessional, support staff, parents, and public and nonpublic agencies to the extent that the services are written in the pupil's IEP and IFSP."

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- Does the amount of direct service time seem adequate to help my child achieve the IEP goals in one IEP year?
  - What setting or location is the most appropriate for providing direct services: a regular education classroom or a special education classroom?
  - If my child will receive direct special education instruction with other children, how many children will be in the group? Do they have similar needs?
  - How much indirect service time will be set aside to implement accommodations or modifications? Does the amount seem adequate?
  - If my child's IEP includes indirect service time, who will provide services to whom, and what services will be provided?

In summary, direct and indirect services are provided for children in special education to help them accomplish their IEP goals and fully participate at school.