



Overview

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides federal funding for the education of children with disabilities and requires, as a condition for the receipt of such funds, the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for children with disabilities.

The IDEA is one of the largest educational programs overseen by the U.S. Department of Education (ED). The IDEA's predecessor legislation, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142, passed in 1975), responded to increased awareness of the need to educate children with disabilities, and to judicial decisions requiring that states provide an education for children with disabilities if they provided an education for children without disabilities.

In its current form, the IDEA both authorizes federal funding for special education and related services and, for states that accept these funds, sets out principles under which special education and related services are to be provided. Over the past four decades, the IDEA has been the subject of numerous reauthorizations to extend services and rights to children with disabilities.

The most recent reauthorization was P.L. 108-446 in 2004.

The Structure and Funding of the IDEA

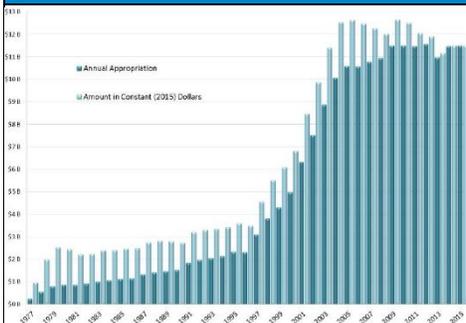
The IDEA consists of four parts:

- Part A contains the general provisions, including the purposes of the act and definitions.
- Part B contains provisions relating to the education of school aged children (the grants-to-states program) and the state grants program for preschool children with disabilities (Section 619).
Permanently Authorized
- Part C authorizes state grants for programs serving infants and toddlers with disabilities.
Annually Re-Authorized
- Part D contains the requirements for various national activities designed to improve the education of children with disabilities.
Annually Re-Authorized

| IDEA Part | Description | FY2016 Funding | Percentage of Total IDEA Funding |
|---|--|---|----------------------------------|
| Part A—General Provisions | Includes findings, purposes, and definitions | — | — |
| Part B—Assistance for Education of all Children with Disabilities | Contains provisions relating to the education of school aged children and authorizes the grants-to-states program (Section 611) and state grants program for preschool children with disabilities (Section 619) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 611, Grants to States • Section 619, Preschool Grants | \$11,912,848 \$368,238 Subtotal, Part B | 91.8% 2.8% 94.7% |
| Part C—Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities | Authorizes state grants for programs serving infants and toddlers with disabilities | \$458,556 | 3.5% |
| Part D—National Activities to Improve Education of Children with Disabilities | Contains the requirements for and authorizes various national activities | \$227,133 | 1.8% |
| IDEA Total | | \$12,966,775 | 100% |

Source: Table prepared by CRS based on a review of the IDEA. Funding amounts are from Department of Education budget tables for FY2016, <http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget16/justifications/i-special.ed.pdf>.

Current IDEA Funding



Part B is the largest and most often discussed part of the IDEA, and it received nearly 95%, \$12.3 billion, of the act's total funding in FY2016.

Part B's funding is authorized in two different sections:

- Section 611, which covers children between the ages of 3 and 21 receiving special education and related services in public schools, received \$11.9 billion in FY2016.
- Section 619, which provides supplementary preschool grants for children between the ages of 3 and 5, received \$368 million in FY2016.

Despite recent fluctuations in Part B appropriations, funding for the Part B grants-to-states program increased steadily for most of its first four decades.

BCPS Legislative Platform IDEA Initiative

Fulfill the commitment to allocate 40 percent of the national per pupil average expenditure to implement the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Bill.