



# Special Education

*Family Matters* is an outreach effort from the ANN JERKINS-HARRIS Academy of Excellence— Department of Special Services --- SPED Program. *Family Matters* will provide parents with information about special education and other resources available to assist them to help their children.

# FAMILY MATTERS

**ANN JERKINS-HARRIS ACADEMY OF EXCELLENCE**  
 3891 Martha Avenue, Toledo, Ohio 43612

*A monthly newsletter from the Department of Special Services*

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**WORKING TOGETHER FOR FAMILY SUCCESS**  
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## SPED PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the ANN JERKINS- HARRIS Academy of Excellence SPED Program is to create and maintain an effective learning environment by establishing behavioral supports and the social culture needed for all students in our school to achieve social, emotional, and academic success.



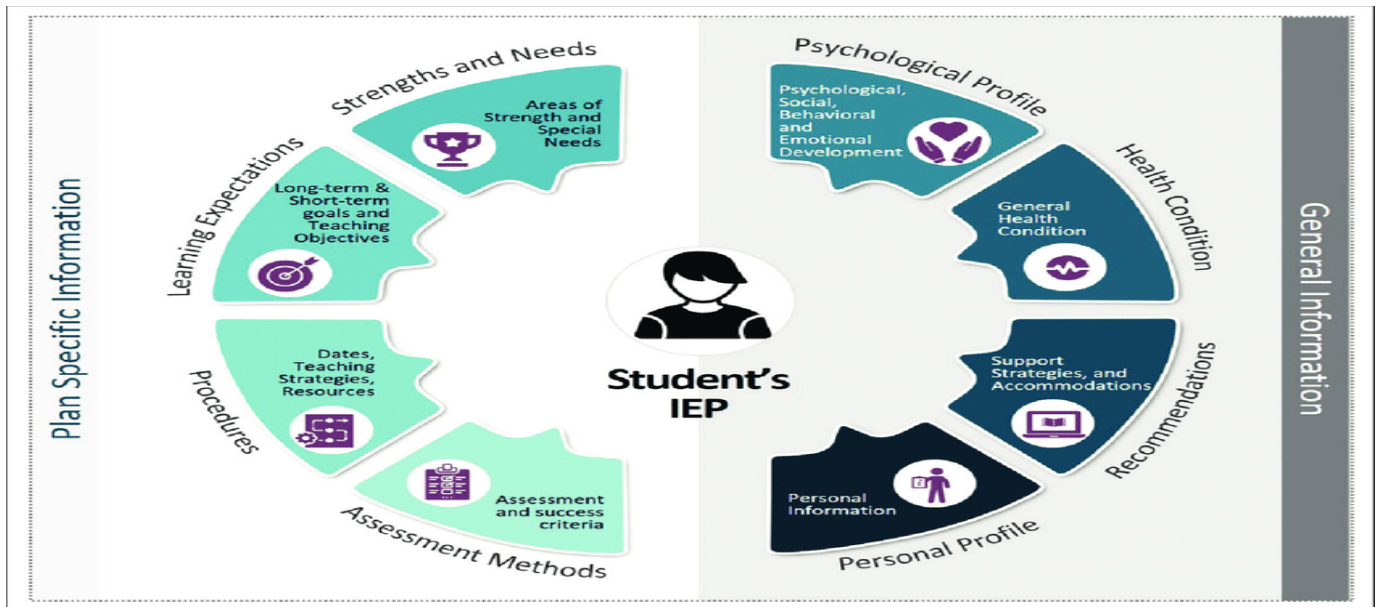
### ETR: Evaluation Team Report Comes before the IEP

<p>Parent/guardian requests full evaluation from school to determine child's eligibility for special education and related services.</p>	<p>An Evaluation Team Report (ETR) is created by the evaluation team and is a summary of findings from an initial evaluation or a re-evaluation.</p>	<p>At the end of the ETR meeting the team determines if the child qualifies for special education. If yes, eligibility in one of IDEA's 13 disability categories is listed.</p>	<p>If your child qualifies for services, an IEP meeting will be scheduled within 30 days, so that the team can create an Individualized Education Program for the child.</p>	<p>A reevaluation of the ETR takes place every 3 years or sooner (if the child is transitioning from preschool to school-age services, or when a change in disability category is to be made).</p>
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## IEP: INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

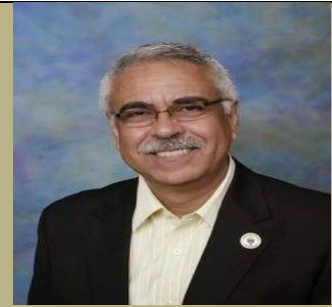
Driven by the ETR

<p>Within 30 days of the ETR's completion, the IEP team develops a written document called the IEP, which is designed to meet the unique educational needs of a student with disabilities.</p>	<p>The IEP serves as a program that outlines the child's current strengths, needs, present levels, goals, and related services to be offered.</p>	<p>Parent/guardian input is gathered when creating the IEP. Other IEP team members include, but is not limited to the Intervention Specialist, General Education Teacher(s), School Principal, School Psychologist, District Representative, and therapist(s).</p>	<p>The school Intervention Specialist is required to write, present, and finalize IEP's annually for every student who qualifies for SPED services.</p>	<p><b>Note:</b> If your child currently has an IEP, then he or she also has an ETR. If you need a copy of either document, reach out to the SPED school office to request one. Both the IEP and ETR must be made available to the parent/guardian.</p>
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## ANALYSIS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TRENDS

Dr. Israel I. Koppisch, Deputy Superintendent- Special Education

In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, it is essential for educators, administrators, and policymakers to remain informed about the latest developments and trends in special education. As more students with diverse learning needs enter our school systems, the demand for effective approaches to support their unique abilities has steadily increased.

Special Education encompasses the programs which serve students with mental, physical, emotional, and behavioral disabilities. The major law governing special education is the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which guarantees a "free appropriate public education" to children with disabilities and mandates that, to the "maximum extent appropriate," they be educated with their nondisabled peers in the "least restrictive environment."

It is highly necessary to note that in the U.S. overall, 14.7 percent of the student population were special education students (ages 3—21) in 2021-22. This percentage varied by state from 11.3 percent in Hawaii, 16.2 in Ohio to 20.5 percent in New York. At the AIHAE, currently 15.9 percent of our students participate in different special education related services, i.e: speech therapy, occupational therapy, differentiated instruction and/or in social/emotional/behavioral health programs.

### The Most Important Special Education Trends in 2024

#### Inclusive Education

Educators and policymakers are working towards creating an inclusive education system where students with special needs learn alongside their peers in general classroom settings.

#### Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

Schools are increasingly developing tailored educational plans to meet the unique needs, goals, and learning objectives for each student with special needs.

#### Assistive Technologies

The use of assistive technologies, such as communication devices, specialized software, and digital tools, are becoming more prevalent in special education to support student learning and independence.

#### Multi-Sensory Learning

Educators are incorporating multi-sensory learning strategies to support children with special needs, helping them engage with learning materials through various senses and modalities.

#### Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

UDL is an educational framework that focuses on designing learning experiences that are accessible and meaningful to all learners, including those with disabilities.

#### Early Intervention

Early identification and intervention for children with special needs are becoming increasingly important to ensure they receive the necessary support and resources from an early age.

#### Collaboration among Professionals

An interdisciplinary team approach is becoming more significant, with educators, therapists, support staff, and parents working closely together to meet the specific needs of children with special needs.

#### Social-Emotional Learning

More emphasis is being placed on teaching children with special needs the necessary social-emotional skills to develop healthy relationships and coping strategies.

#### Data-Driven Decision Making

Education professionals are increasingly using data to drive instruction, making better-informed decisions regarding educational support and programs for children with special needs.

#### Remote/Online Learning

Remote and online learning options are becoming more available and accessible for children with special needs, offering additional flexibility and personalized learning opportunities.

#### Cultural Competency

Educators are becoming more aware of the cultural and linguistic diversity of children with special needs and adapting their teaching methods and materials accordingly.

#### Transition Planning

There is a growing emphasis on planning for the transition from school to adulthood for children with special needs, including preparing them for post-secondary education, employment, and independent living.

#### Teacher Training and Professional Development

Ongoing training and professional development in special education are essential for teachers to maintain their skills, knowledge, and competencies in working with children with special needs.

#### Mindfulness and Mental Health

There is increasing recognition of the importance of mental health and self-care for both children with special needs and their educators, leading to the integration of meditation, mindfulness, and self-regulation practices into curricula.

#### Parental Involvement

Schools are increasingly encouraging parental involvement and collaboration, recognizing the crucial role parents play in supporting the educational and emotional needs of children with special needs.

## Implications

The future of special education is marked by a strong focus on creating inclusive learning environments with individualized support. By implementing inclusive education practices, students with special needs will have the opportunity to learn alongside their peers in general classrooms, promoting social integration and reducing stigma.

The increasing use of individualized education programs (IEPs) and assistive technologies allows for more personalized learning experiences, enabling students with special needs to reach their full potential. Furthermore, the incorporation of multi-sensory learning strategies, universal design for learning (UDL), and cultural competency in the classroom will provide more accessible and engaging learning opportunities for all students, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds.

The emphasis on early intervention and an *interdisciplinary team* approach is paramount in addressing the specific needs of children with special needs, as it highlights the importance of collaboration among educators, therapists, support staff, and parents. This collaborative and data-driven decision-making process will contribute to better informed and targeted educational support for students with special needs. As remote and online learning options continue to expand, children with special needs will have even more opportunities for personalized and flexible learning experiences.

Transition planning is critical to ensure that children with special needs are well-prepared for post-secondary education, employment, and independent living. This planning process acknowledges the importance of teaching social-emotional skills and mental health practices, as well as fostering parental involvement in the education process. Lastly, the ongoing professional development and training of educators in special education will help maintain and enhance their skills and knowledge, ultimately leading to better outcomes for children with special needs. Overall, these trends signify a brighter and more inclusive future for special education, where all students are given the opportunity to thrive and succeed.

## Conclusion

In closing, it is evident that special education trends have come a long way in ensuring a more inclusive and tailored education for students with unique needs. Through early intervention, assistive technology, teacher training, social-emotional support, and a collaborative approach with parents, special education programs are now better equipped to deliver quality instruction to students with diverse needs.

As we move forward, it is crucial to continue monitoring these trends, implementing relevant policies, and investing in resources that can further enhance the effectiveness and inclusivity of special education programs. It is our collective responsibility to create a world where every child, irrespective of their abilities or disabilities, is empowered, supported, and given equal opportunities to reach their fullest potential.

Inclusion in special education refers to the practice of educating students with disabilities alongside their peers in general education classrooms. At AJHAE, this approach fosters a more accessible and equitable learning environment where students can benefit from diverse experiences and perspectives while promoting social and academic growth. Currently, our educators are implementing various strategies to support social-emotional learning for students with special needs, such as providing explicit instruction on social skills, modeling and role-playing appropriate behavior, embedding social-emotional learning into academic curriculum, and creating a positive, inclusive, and supportive classroom culture.

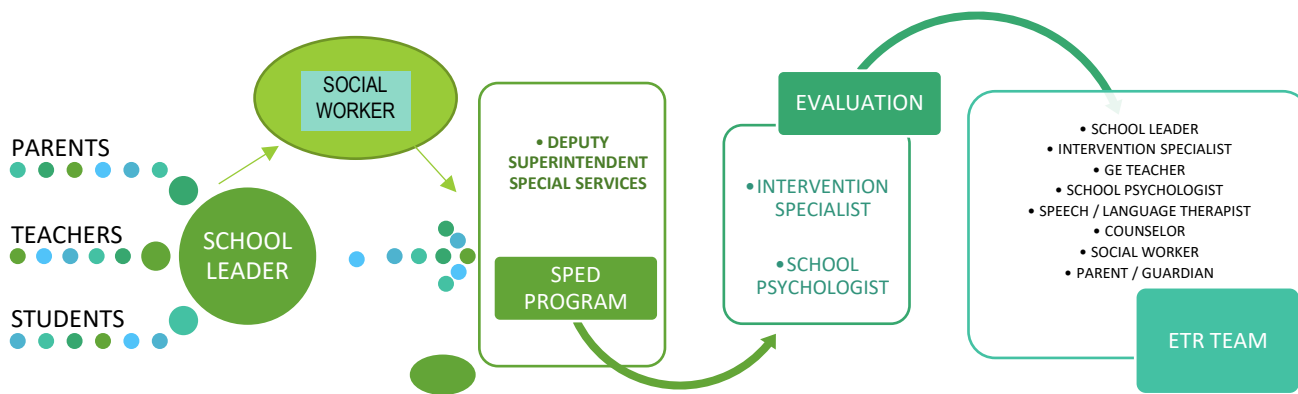
Some of the current trends in the Special Education Program at AJHAE includes increased inclusion of our students into their classrooms learning experiences, providing differentiated instruction and personalized learning plans for the special needs student, use of assistive technologies when necessary, and a focus on the social-emotional learning.



## ANN JERKINS-HARRIS ACADEMY OF EXCELLENCE

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# AJHAE: SPECIAL EDUCATION ROADMAP CASE MANAGEMENT



Teacher's must conduct 6 weeks of intervention with data showing effectiveness.  
 GED Teacher must write up a Referral, and have parent sign a permission form authorizing evaluation. This consent form must be presented to the School Leader

REFERRAL DAYS= 30 Days



PLANNING PROCESS= 60 DAYS



IEP= 30 DAYS

AT AJHAE WE ARE COMMITTED IN:  
Empowering your child's best Advocate: YOU

Parents of a child with special needs must learn to effectively navigate the maze of special education laws and go to bat for their kids. In a nutshell, this means parents must learn to be advocates.

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ANN JERKINS-HARRIS Academy of Excellence  
-Department of Special Services and its SPED Program-.

*Family Matters* is here to provide parents with information about special education and other resources available to assist parents to help their children.

Information is power, and parents need to start with the facts about their child's special needs. Try and keep emotion out of it; as parents you need to have fact-based knowledge from your child's doctors, specialists, special education experts, parents of kids with similar special needs, attorneys, teachers, and anyone else who can provide information.

**ANN JERKINS-HARRIS ACADEMY OF EXCELLENCE**  
FAMILY MATTERS COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM  
Department of Special Services - SPED Program and Related Services

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