

# Tennessee Individualized Education Account (IEA) Program

## Parent Handbook Overview

### Aug. 1, 2017–July 31, 2018

## Introduction

This document provides an overview of the content of the IEA Parent Handbook. Parents should read the entire IEA Parent Handbook posted on the IEA webpage before enrolling their child in the IEA Program. Click [here](#) to find the IEA Parent Handbook.

## What is the IEA Program?

The IEA Program creates individualized education accounts (IEAs) for eligible students with disabilities to use public funds for educational purposes. The program provides options for parents/guardians to **choose the education opportunities** that best meet their child’s own unique needs.

The average amount of IEA awards across the state for the Aug. 1, 2017–July 31, 2018 term will be approximately \$6,600, but will vary across school districts. The IEA amount is based on the school district in which the student resides. The IEA per-pupil funding amount that account holders (parents/students) would receive for the Aug. 1, 2017–July 31, 2018 term will be posted on the IEA webpage ([here](#)) in July 2017.

## Who is eligible for the IEA Program?

The IEA Program is for students in grades **K–12**. Students who reach 22 years of age on or before Aug. 15 would not be eligible to receive an individualized education account (IEA) for that school year.

An “eligible student” must be a Tennessee resident who meets **all of the following criteria**:

- 1) has an active individualized education program (IEP) in effect at the time of request for participation in the program (If you have questions about your child’s IEP status, please contact the public school district in which your student is enrolled.); **and**
- 2) has one of the following disabilities identified in the active IEP as the primary or secondary disability at the time of request for participation in the program:
  - autism,
  - deaf-blindness,
  - developmental delay,<sup>1</sup>
  - hearing impairments,
  - intellectual disability,
  - multiple disabilities,<sup>2</sup>
  - orthopedic impairments,
  - traumatic brain injury, and/or

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<sup>1</sup> Beginning May 5, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Beginning May 5, 2017.

- visual impairments; **and**
- 3) meets at least **one (1) of the following requirements:**
- was previously enrolled in, and attended, a Tennessee public school for the one full school year immediately preceding the school year in which the student receives an IEA,
  - is entering kindergarten **for the first time,\***
  - moved to Tennessee within six months prior to the date the student receives an IEA, or
  - received an IEA in the previous year.

\*If a student has an **active IEP prior to enrolling in kindergarten (i.e., in pre-K) and the IEP is active at the time of request for participation in the IEA Program**, the student will be eligible to receive an IEA without having to attend a Tennessee public school; however, the student may have to be enrolled in a public school (e.g., pre-K) to keep the IEP active through the date the IEA application is submitted. Please note: for more information about IEPs, parents should contact their school district.

For more information, see Chapter 2 of the [IEA Parent Handbook](#).

## What are my child's educational choices in the IEA Program?

Students enrolled in the IEA Program **cannot** be enrolled full-time in a public school.

Students can either be:

- enrolled in an **independent home school** registered with the school district, **or**
- enrolled in a **private school** (including private virtual schools and umbrella programs/schools).

Students can transfer from one school to another during the school year. For more information, see Chapter 3 of the [IEA Parent Handbook](#).

## What educational expenses are approved in the IEA Program?

1. Tuition, fees, and/or required textbooks at participating private schools
2. Tuition or fees for a nonpublic online learning program or course
3. Tuition, fees, and/or required textbooks at eligible postsecondary institutions
4. Tutoring services provided by qualified tutors (pre-approval required)
5. Educational therapies or services provided by qualified therapists (pre-approval required)
6. Curriculum and supplemental materials required by that curriculum
7. Computer hardware or other technological devices (pre-approval required)
8. Transportation fees paid to a commercial transportation provider
9. Contributions to Tennessee ABLE accounts
10. Contributions to Coverdell education savings account
11. Fees for nationally standardized, norm-referenced achievement tests, AP exams, or any exams related to college or university admission
12. Services provided under contract with a public school, including individual classes and extracurricular programs
13. Debit card fees for IEA debit cards

For more information, see Chapters 8 and 9 of the [IEA Parent Handbook](#).

## What are my child's rights in the IEA Program?

By enrolling your child in the IEA Program, you are agreeing to:

1. take **full legal responsibility** for the education of your child, including obtaining services necessary to educate your child; *and*
2. **waive all of your child's rights to services** under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which means that your child will no longer have an active Individualized Education Program (IEP).

While enrolled in the IEA Program, your child's school district is not obligated to provide any services to your child and is not accountable for his/her academic progress. This means that students in the IEA Program:

1. will not receive any **services or accommodations** through the public school system;
2. will no longer have an active **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**;
3. will not be eligible for the services listed in the IEP through the public school system, including test accommodations; and
4. will not be able to get a services plan through a public school district.

For more information, see Chapter 4 of the [IEA Parent Handbook](#).

## What are my responsibilities as a parent in the IEA Program?

As a parent you are responsible for the following:

1. Complying with all state laws, rules, and procedures for the IEA Program.
2. Taking full responsibility for your child's education, including all services necessary to educate your child. This includes enrolling your child in a nonpublic school and providing an education in at least the subjects of English language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science.
3. Submitting quarterly expense reports to the department along with receipts for all expenses paid using IEA funds. All IEA funds must be used for the educational benefit of your child.
4. Notifying the school district concerning any changes to your child's participation status in the IEA Program.
5. Notifying the department concerning any changes to your child's participation status in the IEA Program.
6. Annually testing your child if he or she is in grades 3–8, using a nationally norm referenced test approved by the department or state test (Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program). The tests must measure, at minimum, mathematics and English language arts (ELA).
7. Submitting a renewal application each year your child participates in the IEA Program.
8. Regularly checking the the email address listed on your IEA application, and the mail at your physical home address for emails/letters/communications from the department.

For more information, see Chapter 4 of the [IEA Parent Handbook](#).

## What happens if I want to withdraw my child from the IEA Program?

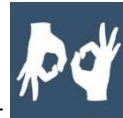
An account holder may withdraw a student from the IEA Program any time during the school year. Account holders should consider the following before withdrawing a student from the IEA Program:

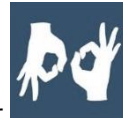
- There is only one application window each school year for the IEA Program. If a student withdraws from the IEA Program, he or she will not be able to enroll in the IEA Program until the next school year.
- Parents/guardians must ensure their student is meeting the compulsory school attendance requirements set by law.
- If the account holder requests, in writing, an evaluation for eligibility pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Tennessee public school district shall treat the request as a request for an initial evaluation under 34 C.F.R. § 300.301. Upon receiving the request, the public school district must, within **sixty (60) calendar days**, conduct an evaluation to determine eligibility. If the student is determined eligible, pursuant to 34 C.F.R. § 300.323(c)(1), the public school district must conduct a meeting to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) within **thirty (30) calendar days** and make specialized instruction and related services available as soon as possible following development of the IEP.

For more information, see Chapter 11 of the [IEA Parent Handbook](#).

## IEA Program Contact Information

If you have any questions or need additional information about the Individualized Education Account (IEA) Program, please contact the IEA team at: (615) 253-3781 or [IEA.Questions@tn.gov](mailto:IEA.Questions@tn.gov).



If you need accommodations to access IEA materials, si habla español, or , please contact the IEA team at [IEA.Questions@tn.gov](mailto:IEA.Questions@tn.gov).