

Special Education continuum of services and design considerations – rules of thumb

Placement	% of time in general classroom	What services typically look like	Design considerations
Full Inclusion (~64%)	80% - 100%	Students could receive services as <i>push-in</i> (special educator goes in to the general education classroom) or <i>pull-out</i> (student meets with a special educator outside the general education classroom, typically in a resource room or small group room).	For push-in, ensure classrooms are large enough to accommodate small breakout groups. Might design small alcoves or rooms within or between classrooms. For pull-out, ensure resource/small group rooms are situated within the general neighborhood; these rooms can be smaller than general education classrooms. Avoid clustering with other special education rooms.
Partial Inclusion (~16%)	40% - 80%	Same as full inclusion, but services are typically more intensive and therefore we see more pull-out.	<i>Same as full inclusion.</i>
Substantially separate (sometimes called “self-contained”) (~14%)	0% - 40%	Students spend the majority of their day in a specialized program, outside the general education environment.	Locate these classrooms among the general education classrooms; they should be a part of the neighborhood. Rooms should be same size as general education classrooms, given that students are spending the majority of their days in these rooms. Avoid clustering with other special education rooms, unless it’s part of a larger, multi-classroom program.
Collaboratives	0% - 40%	<i>Same as substantially separate.</i>	<i>Same as substantially separate.</i>
Public Day Programs or Schools (~3%)	0% - 15%, depending on district	Students benefit from more intensive programming, typically in a separate setting. Students may participate in some programming & extracurricular activities. Without space at a public day program, they would likely be placed out of district.	Often day programs have a separate entrance, separate dining, and are in a separate part of the building (or separate building entirely). Programs and space requirements would be highly specific to the population of students they serve at the day program.
Private Day	Out of dist.		
Residential	Out of dist.		
Institution	Out of dist.		
Home/Hospital	Out of dist.		

Least restrictive

Most restrictive

Questions to Ask When Reviewing Facilities for Students on IEPs

Question	Yes/No or Comment
Ensuring Access	
1. Do the facilities and classrooms for eligible students maximize their inclusion into the life of the school?	
2. Do all eligible students have access to school facilities including, but not limited to, those areas necessary to implement the student's IEP?	
3. Are resource rooms and separate classrooms for students with disabilities given the same priority as general education programs for access to and use of instructional and other space in public schools?	
4. Is the school providing whatever equipment and making whatever physical adaptations are necessary, including acoustical and lighting treatments to remove physical communication barriers for students who are visually impaired, deaf, or hard of hearing?	
Ensuring Equality	
5. Are the facilities and classrooms serving only students with disabilities at least equal in all physical respects to the average standards of general education facilities and classrooms?	
Minimizing Stigmatization	
6. Specifically, does the plan place a classroom serving only older students with disabilities in a part of the school building in which all the classrooms are occupied by elementary school students? Vice versa? (if yes, it's a violation)	
7. Does the plan place all, or a significant proportion, of special education facilities together in one part of a school building? (if yes, it's a violation)	
8. During a school construction project, is the plan to move classrooms of students with disabilities to locations apart from the general education program? (if yes, it's a violation)	
9. Is the plan to place a sign saying "special class" or "resource room" on the front of a special education classroom? (if yes, it's a violation. Only room numbers, please.)	

State Regulations

603 CMR 28.03(1)(b)

(b) **Facilities.** The school district shall provide facilities and classrooms for eligible students to maximize the inclusion of such students into the life of the school. Facilities and classrooms serving only students with disabilities shall be at least equal in all physical respects to the average standards of general education facilities and classrooms. Resource rooms and separate classrooms for students with disabilities shall be given the same priority as general education programs for access to and use of instructional and other space in public schools in order to minimize the separation or stigmatization of eligible students.

1. All eligible students shall have access to school facilities including, but not limited to, those areas necessary to implement the student's IEP.
2. School districts shall provide whatever equipment and make whatever physical adaptations are necessary to comply with this provision, including acoustical and lighting treatments to remove physical communication barriers for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.
3. The Department may make unannounced inspections of facilities.
4. The following examples illustrate aspects of this requirement and shall not be construed as limiting or defining its scope:

(i) Placing a classroom serving only older students with disabilities in a part of the school building in which all the classrooms are occupied by elementary school students would violate the requirements of 603 CMR 28.03(1)(b).

(ii) Placing a sign saying "special class on the front of a substantially separate classroom would violate the requirements of 603 CMR 28.03(1)(b).

(iii) Placing all special education facilities together in one part of a school building would violate the requirements of 603 CMR 28.03(1)(b).

(iv) Moving classrooms of students with disabilities to locations apart from the general education program because of financial or construction considerations violates the requirements of 603 CMR 28.03(1)(b).

Special education facilities and classrooms – PQA review criterion #55

The school district provides facilities and classrooms for eligible students that

1. maximize the inclusion of such students into the life of the school;
2. provide accessibility in order to implement fully each student's IEP;
3. are at least equal in all physical respects to the average standards of general education facilities and classrooms;
4. are given the same priority as general education programs in the allocation of instructional and other space in public schools in order to minimize the separation or stigmatization of eligible students; and
5. are not identified by signs or other means that stigmatize such students.

Federal Requirements

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973