

exceptional children ^[1]

Type of Speech:

noun ^[2]

Definition:

Designation for students who have different educational needs than the average child. Many children in exceptional children's (EC) programs have physical, mental, or social disabilities, but in North Carolina academically gifted children are also classified as EC.

See also [gifted education](#) ^[3].

Additional Information:

Every child has the legal right to a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment possible. EC programs are designed to meet each child's educational needs. Examples may include:

- A deaf child may be able to participate in regular classes with the help of a sign language interpreter.
- A mentally disabled child may need a specialized academic curriculum but may still be able to participate in physical education with other children his age.
- A child with an autism spectrum disorder may benefit from specific training in social skills.
- A student with learning disabilities may need extra time to complete standardized tests.
- An academically or intellectually gifted student may benefit from additional educational challenges.

EC programs provide these services and accommodations.

Students are often referred for possible EC placement by their teachers. Before a student enters the EC program, efforts should be made to meet his or her needs in the regular classroom using general education resources. If a team of educators and the student's parents agree that EC placement should be considered, an assessment is then conducted to determine whether the student qualifies. School psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, and EC facilitators may assess different aspects of the student's functioning. Teachers are usually asked to contribute their understanding of the student's behavior, academic progress, strengths, and weaknesses.

If the student qualifies and enters the EC program, classification must be reviewed every three years to determine whether the student requires different services or should exit the program. Temporary accommodations (e.g., for a child who has been injured or hospitalized) do not require EC placement and can instead be provided under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

An individualized education plan (IEP) is designed for each student classified as disabled. The IEP specifies the services and accommodations the students will receive, how much time the student will spend with non-disabled peers, and the student's goals for the coming year. IEPs are revised annually. Teachers should be familiar with their students' IEPs.

Each child classified as having a disability is served by an EC program is classified under one of the following terms, which are specified by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

- [Autism](#) ^[4]
- Behavioral-Emotional Disabilities
- Deaf-Blindness
- Hearing Impairment
- Multiple Disabilities
- Mental Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disabilities
- Speech/Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Developmental Delay
- Visual Impairment

Students classified as academically or intellectually gifted are served not under IDEA but under state guidelines. Their services have state rather than federal funding. Students are placed in a gifted program based on academic performance and academic or social need. Each gifted student is served through an annually reviewed Differentiated Education Plan (DEP) or Individual Differentiated Education Plan (IDEP), which lists the learning environments, content modifications, and special programs available to the student during that year.

For further explanation:

- The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Exceptional Children's Division ^[5].

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