



“For Children with Special Needs, A Free Appropriate Public Education Means More than Just Teaching the 3 Rs”

By Tanya A. Alvarado, Esquire

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”) creates the possibility for children with special needs to live powerful lives. One such way is to require public schools, including charter schools, to provide children with special needs educational services beyond teaching the “3 Rs”—reading, writing and arithmetic. In fact, many children with special needs require additional services to participate in the classroom with their typically developing peers, socialize with their friends, participate in extra curricular activities, learn how to manage frustration and other emotional needs, and progress toward becoming independent, self-sufficient individuals before graduating from high school.

To accomplish this important task, the IDEA requires public and charter schools to provide these Related Services to children with special needs. Related Services are expansive and are designed to help students access and benefit from their educational program, learn how to interact appropriately with their friends and manage their emotional needs. Depending on the child’s needs, Related Services may include: speech and language services; transportation to and from educational programs provided by the public school; audiology and interpreting services for children who are deaf or hard of hearing; psychological services; counseling services; physical therapy; occupational therapy; therapeutic recreation; orientation and mobility services for students who are blind or visually impaired; social skills services; medical diagnostic and evaluation services to determine whether the student has educational needs; rehabilitation counseling for career development, employment preparation, achieving independence; vocational rehabilitation services; and parent counseling and training to assist parents to understand the special needs of their child and to learn how to help the student with their educational program. You and your child may access these services even though they attend a private school.

It is vastly important for a child to learn how to read, write and do arithmetic. However, the IDEA does not stop the learning process with the 3 Rs. Through the provision of Related Services, the IDEA offers students with special needs a true opportunity to create a life of being powerful, contributing, independent and successful adults in your community.

If you would like to receive an electronic copy or more information regarding this article, please visit our website at <http://www.mcandrewslaw.com/> or call (610) 648-9300.

McAndrews Law Offices, P.C.

30 Cassatt Avenue
Berwyn, PA 19312
Phone: (610) 648-9300
FAX: (610) 648-0433

Wyomissing, PA ● Phone: (610) 374-9900
Harrisburg, PA ● Phone: (717) 221-1422
Scranton, PA ● Phone: (570) 969-1817