

FAPE Requirements for Charter Schools

TERM	EXPLANATION
Free	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A charter school may not charge the parents of students with disabilities for any of the special education services or related services delineated in students' IEPs. Free means "at public expense." ● Charter schools may not refuse to provide the special education services outlined in an IEP because of the cost of the services.
State standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The state educational agency establishes acceptable standards for the provision of special education services to eligible students. ● The special education and related services provided by the charter school must meet the state education agency standards.
Appropriate education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● "Appropriate" education is determined by the IEP team on an individual basis for each student receiving special education services. What is appropriate or provides educational benefit depends on the needs of the individual child. ● The IEP is a contract between the LEA and the student's parents concerning the services that will be provided. ● When a charter school develops an IEP for a student, it does not guarantee the student will meet the goals and objectives listed. However, the charter school is required to make a good-faith effort to help the student achieve those goals. ● The signed IEP commits the LEA to providing the listed education services.

In an inclusive classroom setting, all teachers need to be able to respond to the needs of students with disabilities and other students considered to be at risk of failure. To be truly effective, charter schools should have dedicated special education staff and an administrator devoted to this purpose. In addition to appropriate professional development and supervision, teachers can be supported by paraprofessionals or instructional aides but may need training in supervising and managing support staff.

Many students with disabilities require a variety of specialized services which are typically provided by an interdisciplinary team of educators and related service professionals (e.g., general and special education teachers, paraprofessionals, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, school psychologists, school social workers, and school nurses). As noted in Chapter 1, charter schools do not need to be able to provide all support services required by the full range of students in-house; schools can make arrangements with outside vendors or agencies to provide specialized services.