



**Support for Caregivers Navigating the IEP Process**  
**An Offering of the Chris Walsh Center for Educators and Families of MetroWest**  
Week 1: March 2, 2023

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## **Welcome**

### **Mission statement of Chris Walsh Center**

*To provide information for families and educators about the continuum of educational support available to students with disabilities, students who are gifted, and students with unmet needs. The center will offer support, workshops and other programming for families, educators, student support professionals, administrators, and advocates in the MetroWest area. The center also will engage in scholarly research, educator preparation, and professional development.*

### **Introductions**

Courtney and Carol  
Attendees

### **Purpose of the Group**

Provide accurate, objective information for people to learn and use or apply to their own individual situation. We welcome questions about the process or the information presented but please refrain from asking questions about how the information we present should or might be applied to individual circumstances.

### **Group guidelines and expectations**

- Confidential safe space
    - Don't expect answers to specific questions
    - Respect each other's confidentiality
    - Share ideas not names
    - It's expected that we have different experiences. We're here to listen, inform, not advise or judge
    - Assume good intentions
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**Topic:** Overview of the Process, Laws, Purpose, Flowcharts and Forms

**What governs the rules for students with disabilities in schools? ([see table](#))**

- Congress/DOE
  - MA State Legislature/DESE
    - General Education
      - ★ Must comply with Federal and State Laws
        - Office of Civil Rights - ADA
        - Federal Law - Rehab Act of 1973 Section 504 subpart D (Colleges are subpart E)
      - ★ Special Education
        - Must comply with Federal and State Laws and
        - IDEA

**What is the Purpose of Education for Students with Disabilities?**

To ensure children with disabilities receive access to a free and appropriate education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) that meets each student's specific learning needs and provides access to the curriculum.

- FAPE
- LRE

**Identification and Eligibility for Students With Disabilities Special Education**

**Overview**

**Child Find ([Fact Sheet](#))**

**Pre-referral [process](#)**

**Referral Process**

- 1) 504 Referral
- 2) Special Education [Referral](#)

**School Team Evaluation**

**Independent Evaluation**



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Notes:



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**A Comparison of IDEA, The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Section 504, and ADA**

What these laws provide	IDEA	Section 504	ADA
Legal rights for people with disabilities	X	X	X
An Individualized Education Program (IEP) for eligible K–12 students	X		
Special education and related services to meet a student’s unique needs	X		
A 504 plan for eligible K–12 students		X	
Accommodations (like audiobooks or extra time) for K–12 students	X	X	
Accommodations for college students		X	
Reasonable accommodations in workplaces (with 15 or more employees)			X
A requirement that public schools find and evaluate — at no cost to families — kids who may have a disability	X		
Education funding for schools	X		
A free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) for students	X	X	
Procedural safeguards that protect families’ rights (like access to school records)	X	X	
Due process (or an impartial hearing) for resolving disputes between families and schools	X	X	
Freedom from discrimination at private schools (including colleges and universities) that get federal funding		X	X
Freedom from discrimination in workplaces (with 15 or more employees)			X
Access to places that offer goods and services to the public, like restaurants and websites			X