

New Law Promotes Reading Interventions for Students with Disabilities

A new state law requires that IEPs for any child with a disability who is not beginning to read by the age of seven document the *evidence-based interventions* the school is using to build the child's ability to read OR document why such interventions are inappropriate. The law also requires the school to provide the interventions through extended school year (ESY or summer) services regardless of whether the child would otherwise qualify for those services.

For children who have struggled to read and their families, this new law presents an opportunity to ensure that students are receiving the instruction most likely to make them readers. Because different interventions target different needs and nearly any can call itself evidence-based, it is important to get more information about those proposed for your student. To ensure your child is getting the services they are entitled to, ask the following questions in advance of or at the IEP.

- What interventions are being used? Do the interventions go by any other name?
- What are the specific deficits in my child's reading ability and how does this intervention target those deficits?
- Who is delivering the intervention and how frequently?
- Who collects and analyses the data? (if data is not collected and analyzed, it is unlikely your child is receiving an evidence-based practice.)
- Is the data from this approach collected and interpreted the same way by all interventionists?
- Can the individuals administering the intervention or the environment it is administered in affect the data collected? How does the school or individual administering it safeguard against that?
- Is the person administering the intervention adequately trained to deliver it?
- Has the person administering the intervention been trained in the data collection process and analysis of the data with respect to literacy?

Resources:

You do not have to sign the IEP form, which confirms whether you agree or disagree with the plan, at an IEP meeting. You can choose to take it home to look up more information or give it more thought.

The [What Works Clearinghouse](#) run by the US Department of Education is a good resource for parents and teachers to see how specific approaches have been evaluated. If the IEP team suggests specific programs, ask if they go by any other names.

Johns Hopkins University's School of Education's Center for Data-Driven Reform in Education (CDDRE) offers the [Best Evidence Encyclopedia](#), a good resource for finding proven practices in reading and math. Evaluations of reading interventions include a special section for struggling readers.