

Disability & Education Laws — National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities

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Since the 1960s, there has been a virtual avalanche of federal legislation that relates directly or indirectly to individuals with disabilities, particularly children and youth.

Use the links below to explore several of the most influential laws. These form the core of current protection against discrimination and current guarantees of equal educational opportunity that individuals with disabilities have in our nation.



[IDEA—the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#)

IDEA, the Individual with Disabilities Education Act, is our nation's special education law. The IDEA guides how states, school districts, and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities.

[NCLB—No Child Left Behind Act](#)

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, Public Law (PL) 107-110, is the nation's latest general education law. It amends the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and has brought sweeping changes to our educational systems. What does the law require, what does it change about education, how are states responding, and what does the law mean for children with disabilities?

[Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act](#)

Before there was IDEA, there was the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Section 504 of this Act continues to play an important role in education, especially for students with disabilities who may not qualify for special education services under IDEA.

[Americans with Disabilities Act – The ADA](#)

Passed by the Congress and signed into law by the President in July 1990, the ADA is the first comprehensive declaration of equality for people with disabilities. The ADA protects the civil rights of people with disabilities in all aspects of employment, in accessing public services such as transportation, and guaranteeing access to public accommodations such as restaurants, stores, hotels and other types of buildings to which the public has access.

[Assistive Technology Act](#)

Assistive technology can greatly improve the access and function of people with disabilities in school, work, home, and community. The Assistive Technology Act is intended to ensure that people with disabilities have access to assistive technology devices and services. Find your state's AT program!