



## MYTH #6:

A student's diagnosis or disability determines program placement.

## FACT:

Placement is not predetermined. A student's disability category does not drive placement in more restrictive settings.

### The Truth Is...

- For all students with IEPs, including students with significant cognitive disabilities, LRE is determined by student need, not disability category or label.
- General education placement should be considered before more restrictive options. For example:
  - The IEP team should consider general education placement with supplemental special education services for a student with autism before placement in a self-contained autism program.
  - Consider ways a student with a significant cognitive disability could attend their neighborhood school rather than a school with a specified special education program.

### EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE FACTS:

- [WAC 392-172A-020505](#): Special education services must be provided: "(1) To the maximum extent appropriate in the general education environment with students who are nondisabled; and (2) Special classes, separate schooling or other removal of students eligible for special education from the general educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in general education classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily."
- An IEP is tailored to meet student's needs. When an IEP is put in place to support a student's progress in general education, it is based on individual student needs; therefore, a prescribed program or placement plan is counterintuitive to this.

### STRATEGIES FOR DISPELLING THE MYTH:

- Prioritize all students attending their neighborhood schools and build the capacity of staff to teach all students in inclusive settings.
- Ensure that every student is on the roster of a general education teacher and has a seat in a general education classroom even if they currently are not in the general education classroom all day. This means that no one is having to negotiate where a student belongs in general education. It also clearly conveys that special education services are supplementary to general education.
- Consistently engage in placement discussions that strive to maximize the amount of time a student spends in general education settings with additional supplemental instruction and supports, before considering segregated placements.
- Monitor [district data related to disability categories, meaningful access to general education settings](#), and progress in the general education curriculum.