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## **ABOUT THE TEAM PROCESS**

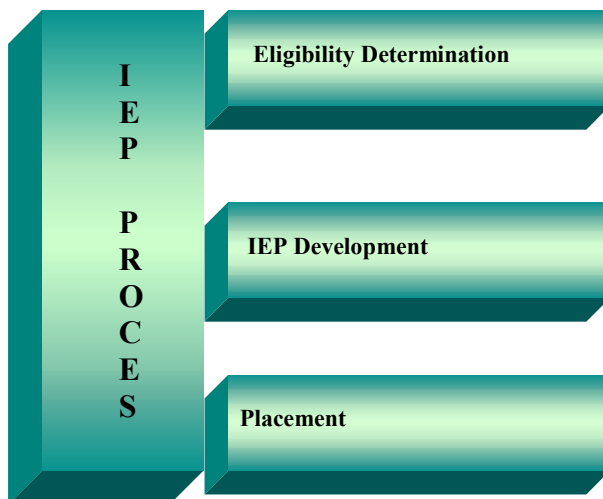
### ***The Team process has three important, integrated steps.***

Under IDEA-97, the IEP process is a focal point for reaching improved outcomes for students with disabilities. The process, critically important to children with disabilities, must be carefully managed to ensure that the unique needs of the student are addressed and to ensure full compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.

The Team has **three** important and integrated activities to manage. Each is of equal importance and interdependent on the quality of the other.

1. Eligibility determination: The Team must first determine whether a child is eligible for special education services. This determination starts with the careful and thorough evaluation of the child in all areas of suspected disabilities.
2. Development of the IEP: Next, if the Team has found the student eligible for special education, the elements of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) must be discussed, planned and then captured in a written document. Input from parents, the student, general educators and special educators is necessary to complete this service contract that sets high expectations for a student and then guides that student's special education services for the next year.
3. Placement decision. Once all the elements of the IEP are determined, including services and supports, a placement decision must be made. The first placement option considered for each student with a disability must be the general education classroom with the provision of needed aids and services. The law requires that students do not get placed outside of the general education classroom unless their disability requires another setting. The Team must always consider the unique needs of the student before making the final placement determination.

The guide discusses these three activities separately to clearly describe each area. However, most often, these activities will occur within a single meeting for students who are found eligible for special education.



### ***About the Icon:***

The icon was designed to visually represent the three steps of the IEP process. The icon is fully shaded when we refer to the process in its entirety. When we refer to a specific part or parts of the process, only the referred to section(s) of the icon is shaded.

The icon is found in this section of the guide and in direction sections of *IEP Forms and Notices*. The icon will help you connect the process description to form and notice directions and form and notice use.