

IDEA, Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education Key Differences

	Early Intervention Colorado (Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)	Preschool Special Education (Part B, Section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)
Ages Served	Birth through age 2	3 – 5 year olds
Goals	Supports the family to meet the developmental needs of their child with a delay or disability.	Supports the child to access and participate in the general education preschool curriculum.
Eligibility	A child must have a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in a significant delay in development; OR the child demonstrates a significant level of developmental delay in one or more areas of development.	A child must be unable to receive reasonable benefit from general education without additional supports in the public schools because of a specific disabling condition.
Evaluation	Two or more professionals from different disciplines complete a developmental evaluation of all five areas of development to determine if a significant delay is present and to determine what the child and family need.	A team of qualified professionals determines if the child has an educational disability (as defined by state and federal criteria) and identifies all of the child’s special education and related services needs.
What the Child/Family are Eligible to Receive	Based on the identified needs of the child and family, Early Intervention Colorado provides early intervention services to support the family to help their child learn and develop.	A child determined eligible is entitled to a Free and Appropriate Public Education . Additionally, special education services are provided (typically within a preschool setting) in order to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum and in order for the child to be able to meet the educational standards. The child may also receive Related Services (such as transportation, developmental, and other supportive services) as are required for the child to benefit from special education.
Type of Plan	An Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) documents the family’s desired outcomes for their child, as well as the supports and services to be provided.	An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) documents the child’s educational goals, services and placement, including how progress will be measured.
Delivery of Services	Services are provided in natural environments – such as the child’s home, child care setting or other areas in the community where infants and toddlers without disabilities participate.	Children with disabilities and special learning needs are educated alongside children who are not disabled, in the “least restrictive environment” . Special classes, schooling, or other removal of the child from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature and severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.
Who is Responsible, and What are the Costs to Families?	All early intervention services included in a child’s IFSP are provided at no cost to families, and are coordinated through the local Community Centered Board (CCB).	Services listed in the IEP are the responsibility of the local school district and/or Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES).