

Fairfax County Public Schools
Individualized Education Program
Extended School Year (ESY) Services

Extended school year (ESY) services refer to special education and/or related services provided beyond the normal school year for the intent of providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to a student with a disability in accordance with the child's individualized education program (IEP) at no cost to the family.

The purpose of ESY is to provide services defined by the IEP team, which has determined that the benefits a child gained during the school year will be significantly jeopardized if the student does not receive services during an extended break. ESY services are intended to address critical life skills.

***Critical Life Skills as defined by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE):** A critical life skill is any skill determined by the IEP team to be critical to the student's overall educational progress, including social and behavior skills. In determining critical life skills for the specific needs of the student, the IEP team may consider those skills that lead to independent living, including toileting, feeding, communicating, dressing, and other self-help skills. In some cases, the school division may consider and address academic and behavior issues. Depending on factors such as a student's age, ability, and the number of years the student has left in school, the areas of reading, math, and written language could be considered critical life skills.

The IEP team must discuss ESY services at the initial and every annual IEP, or at the request of the parent or guardian. The IEP team may discuss ESY services through an addendum to the annual IEP. A discussion must be initiated about ESY services when documentation suggests that the student may need services beyond the normal school year.

Factors that the IEP team should consider are listed below. Any of these factors, alone or in combination, can indicate the need for ESY if it is determined that the benefits the student has received during the regular school year will be **significantly jeopardized** with the extended break.

- **Regression/Recoupment** - The IEP team determines whether there is a likelihood of *substantial* regression of critical life skills* caused by a school break **and** a failure to recover those lost skills in a reasonable time following the school break (e.g., six to eight weeks after summer break) which would significantly jeopardize gains made in his or her educational placement during the regular school year.
- **Degree of Progress** - The IEP team determines whether, without these services, the student's degree or rate of progress on IEP goals or objectives that address critical life skills* will significantly jeopardize gains made in his or her educational placement during the regular school year.
- **Emerging Skills/Breakthrough Opportunities** - The IEP team reviews all IEP goals targeting critical life skills* to determine whether any of these skills are at a breakthrough point, and whether interruption in services and instruction on those goals during the school break is likely to significantly jeopardize gains made during his or her educational program during the regular school year.
- **Interfering Behaviors** - The IEP team determines whether any interfering behavior(s) such as ritualistic, aggressive, or self-injurious behaviors targeted by the IEP goals or documented in a behavior plan have prevented the student from receiving benefit from his or her educational program during the current school year. The team also determines whether the interruption of programming that addresses the interfering behavior(s) is likely to significantly jeopardize benefits gained from his or her educational program during the regular school year.
- **Nature and/or Severity of the Disability** - The IEP team determines whether, given the nature and/or severity of the student's disability, a break in services is likely to significantly jeopardize gains made during the regular school year.
- **Special Circumstances or Other Factors** - The IEP team determines whether, without ESY, there are any special circumstances that will significantly jeopardize gains made in his or her education program during the regular school year.

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ESY services may be delivered through a variety of settings and through various methods. While these are not the only options the IEP team can consider, the following models are representative of the continuum of services provided during the school year.

- Consult Services
- Preschool Resource Services
- Direct, Class-based Services
- Homebound
- Home-based

Depending on the individual needs of the student, ESY services may vary in type, intensity, location, and length of time. However, the division is not required under the least restrictive environment provisions of IDEA to create a general education setting for delivery of ESY services.

Summary:

ESY services are uniquely designed to provide FAPE to students with disabilities, if it is determined by the IEP team that the benefits a student gained during the school year will significantly be jeopardized if the student does not receive services during an extended break. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize that these services:

- Must be discussed at each annual IEP meeting, while recognizing that it may be necessary to convene the team for an IEP addendum later, if additional data is needed to make decisions regarding ESY.
- Must ensure that the individual needs of the student are addressed and that the services are provided based on those needs. IEP teams should identify the specific goal(s) and/or objective(s) from the current IEP that require services since all goals may not be affected.
- May vary in type, intensity, and duration to meet the unique needs of the student.

For further information see the *Virginia Department of Education Technical Assistance Resource Document: Extended School Year Services, December 2007:*

<https://www.doe.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/32701/638047251239170000>