Special education teachers often consult and train staff members. Consideration of typical development and achievement of developmental milestones can help staff determine if a student needs a referral for a special education evaluation. This information is often used to select assessments and identify the effects of a possible disability. If eligibility is determined, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is developed. IEP teams describe an individual’s strengths, interests, preferences, and needs, while considering the characteristics of a given disability and its effect on a student. The IEP defines the specially designed instruction, accommodations, related services, and supplementary aids and services that will best support a student in accessing and achieving goals aligned with the general education curriculum. When teachers understand the effect of a disability on learning, they are able to prepare the classroom environment and use specially designed instructions to support students with disabilities.

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