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What Is Extended School Year (ESY)?

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Extended school year (ESY) is the providing of special education and related services during school breaks for students who are at significant risk of regression or “losing ground” for skills acquired during the school year. ESY is most often provided during summer break, but students can receive ESY during other school breaks such as winter and spring breaks. ESY is also not the same as summer school. If a student qualifies for ESY, it is a part of their *individualized education plan (IEP)*.

ESY instruction and services may take place outside of a student’s home school—possibly at another school building in the district or at the student’s home. Transportation to and from ESY may be provided by the school/school district or it may be a parent’s responsibility. A student may receive services from different instructors than those they have during the school year. ESY is different from a regular school day—instruction is generally a few hours a day, for a few weeks out of the summer, or a few days during shorter school breaks.

Who Qualifies for Extended School Year?

Qualifying for ESY varies from state to state. Students qualify for ESY for different reasons, and not all students qualify for ESY. In general, students are eligible for ESY if



the IEP team, made up of parents, therapists, and teachers, determine a student is likely to regress to the extent he/she cannot recover learned skills in a reasonable amount of time after a school break. Another reason for ESY placement is a student being close to making a breakthrough with a skill(s). The team will discuss the student’s progress and needs. Specific topics to discuss include severity of the disability, behavioral needs, history of regression over breaks, and age. Students may qualify in one or more areas, like special education, speech/language therapy, or occupational therapy. If a student qualifies for ESY, the instruction/services are individualized to his/her needs in order to maximize learning success. The decision whether or not a student qualifies for ESY must be based on data.

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