DISABILITIES SERVICED IN KILLEEN DISTRICT

 NAME:

 INSTITUTION:

 DATE:

**Disabilities Serviced in Killeen District**

Disability is an impairment that limits an individual's participation in activities on an equal basis with others. Such impairments could either be mental, intellectual, physical or sensory. One can be born with a disability, or it can develop later on in life perhaps. This paper will focus on the disability services offered at Killeen Independent School District, the least restrictive environment for each and how this is determined for the placement of each disability. The paper will also examine the disabilities not serviced in the district and the reason why and where they are serviced.

Killeen Independent school district is located in the state of Texas. It has a special education program for students with disabilities in agreement with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004. This statute regulates special education activities in the state. Its aim is to ensure that children with disabilities are also given an opportunity to access public education which promotes the life goals. It, therefore, obligates all schools to cater for students with disabilities in a special education program that meets their individual needs. The federal law establishes a criterion to be followed when determining whether a child needs special education. A child must have a disability which requires them to access special education. According to the Act, it must be proven that the child has one or more kinds of disabilities it has listed. The list includes; visual impairment, autism, deaf-blindness and orthopedic impairment among others. As such, the Killeen ISD offers the following disability services to its students as a way of abiding by the law.

**Disabilities serviced in the district**

Visual impairment is the first disability which the Killeen Independent school district has put measures that help the students with such disabilities. Visual impairment could be total or partial blindness that a child is born with or develops as they grow. Once a student has passed the eligibility test on whether they deserve special education on the grounds of visual impairment, they are assigned to a particular school that accommodates their needs. The school district has itinerant certified teachers to handle students with visual disabilities. They teach students unique skills such as use the Braille, tactile and recorded materials, large prints and assistive technology (Killeen Independent School District, 2016).

Secondly, the Killeen district offers services to those with disability in speech or language. It offers speech and language therapy to those students who after the evaluation test are found to have disability disorders in their speech or use of the language (Killeen Independent School District, 2016). As a fact, the school has employed certified speech and language pathologists to provide therapy to this category of students.

Thirdly, the school district is also committed to offering services to students with hearing impairments. The special education department has teachers that conduct itinerant services to the Regional Day School for the Deaf where these children are placed to give them the needed assistance (Gibson Consulting Group, 2013).

Fourth, the Killeen district has services with intellectual disabilities. Students that have intellectual disabilities are placed under a special education program. The Killeen Independent school district Special Olympics provide competitive training to children with mental disabilities and other closely related developmental disabilities like autism. The mission is to improve their physical fitness, joy, and demonstration of social skills (Gibson Consulting Group, 2013). The training sessions are tailored made to develop decision making and leadership skills of the students with the mental disorders.

Fifth, the district also provides services to students with orthopedic impairments and non-categorical early childhood disabilities. To that effect, it has an infant program for students below three years who have been identified with various disabilities (Gibson Consulting Group, 2013).

On another note, Killeen school district does not provide services to severe mental and intellectual disorders. The severe cases are dealt with in mental health facilities where psychiatrists can correctly diagnose a problem. There are several mental health facilities in Texas where these children can be treated. For example, the Austin state hospital and Waco Center for Youth provide inpatient child/adolescent psychiatric services for those with severe emotional or behavioral disorders (Heward, 2013). The school district does not have these mental health facilities because they are very expensive to set up and that the school lacks resources to employ psychiatrists on a full-time basis. Additionally, the school is only limited to providing special education services to mental health children which do not extend to severe cases which require attention in a mental health facility.

**Placements for each disability**

Placement is the act of placing someone in a particular place for a particular purpose. According to the federal law in Texas, the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee identifies a student's needs and then makes the appropriate placement where those special needs can satisfactorily meet. There exists a broad range of special education placements. All placements should take into consideration the least restrictive environment.

 The first placement option should be the general education classroom or regular classes. Killeen school district has a continuum of instructional placements besides the regular classes (Killeen Independent School District, 2016). It has unique classes such as the resource class and the Positive Behavior Support (PBS) And Therapeutic Learning Classroom. The resource class is designed to cater for students who are lagging behind in several grade levels hence the need for content modification through intensive academic assistance (Killeen Independent School District, 2016). The Positive Behavior Support (PBS) And Therapeutic Learning Classroom is a unique placement for students from grade k to grade 12 who have with specific behavioral and emotional needs that cannot be comfortably handled in the general education setting (Gibson Consulting Group, 2013). Besides, the district has special schools, for instance, the Regional Day School for The Deaf (RDSPD) which a separate school with its certified deaf teachers. It provides special services to students with hearing impairments. The district also has supplementary services such as assistive technology and physical therapy which are used in the course of regular classes.

The school district does not offer placements to hospital facilities or in a treatment facility (Gibson Consulting Group, 2013). The reason is simply that a hospital is a high restrictive setting which would hinder the effective enforcement of the least restrictive environment principle. Placement of students with disabilities in hospitals would deny them comprehensive benefits acquired in the least restrictive environment such as a general education program.

**Least restrictive environment for each placement**

Least restrictive environment is one of the main principles of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA). This law demands that students with disabilities be educated together with able children to the greatest extent possible. The main idea is to have all students regardless of their disability learning in the same classroom and school (Heward, 2013). In the implementation of this principle, students with disabilities are involved in the general education programs through additional help and services (Heward, 2013). Therefore placing a student with a disability under an individual education plan needs clarification as to what extent it will be done.

 The standard least restrictive environment in the district is the general/regular classroom. However, the least restrictive environment for each child varies depending on their respective needs (Crockett & Kauffman, 2013). Determining the least restrictive environment in the placement of a student with disabilities is done on an individual basis based on the individual education plan rather than the child’s type of disability (Crockett & Kauffman, 2013). This fact is reinforced by the availability of a continuum of alternate placements. The auxiliary arrangements ensure that students with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive setting possible to achieve maximum gain. The placement team reviews the placements each year based on the child’s individual education plan to align them with the least restrictive environment rule. The decision is mostly to place the student in a regular school or classroom they would attend were it not for the disability (Heward, 2013).

 The significance of least restrictive environment for each placement is that it gives students with disabilities the maximum benefit of the free appropriate public education in a way that meets their specific needs (Crockett & Kauffman, 2013). It also enables the students with disabilities to have a successful transition back to the general education setting.

In conclusion, this paper has discussed the disabilities serviced at the Killeen Independent school district to include but not limited to visual impairment and orthopedic impairments. The District has specialized in some alternative placements like the special schools and classes. It is, however, notable that it does not offer hospital placements. The least restrictive environment rule continues to be of great significance in the determination of the most suitable placement solution for those with disabilities.

**References**

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