The individualized education program (IEP) is a foundational piece of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which requires that children with disabilities receive a “free appropriate public education” in settings where typically developing children learn. [1] It is important for communities to have an idea of the number of children needing special education services for effective planning. The number of children with IEPs also can signal the various needs of children in a particular school district as well as the strengths or weaknesses of a district’s ability to support children with special needs.

The purpose of the IEP is to ensure that eligible children receive special education and related services appropriate to their needs. Noonan and McCormick (2014) state “at the most basic level, the IEP is an agreement between the parents and the school specifying what the child’s needs are and what the school system will do to address those needs” (p. 59). [2]

Preschool for All (PFA) in Illinois provides inclusive services for preschool children with IEPs across the state. The following maps show the number of students with an IEP enrolled in PFA in 2014 as well as the number of children with an IEP enrolled in kindergarten through third grade in 2014. [3]