



## Quick Guide – Educational vs. Medical in the IEP

In the IEP process, understanding whether a service is educational or medical supports both compliance and student-centered planning. Documentation should reflect the need, not the funding.

### Key Distinctions

Educational Services	Medical Services
Support access to academics, behavior, or progress	Address a diagnosed health condition
Focus on instruction or skill-building	Focus on treatment or health management
May be delivered by educational staff	Should be delivered or overseen by licensed professionals
Not SHARS billable	May be SHARS billable (if medically necessary & in IEP)

### Three Filters to Guide Classification

- What is the purpose of the service?**  
Learning-based = likely educational.  
Health-based = may be medical.
- Would a nondisabled student receive it?**  
If yes → likely educational.
- Is it tied to a diagnosed condition?**  
If yes → assess for SHARS medical necessity.

### Same Task, Different Purpose

Task	Educational Purpose	Medical Purpose
Feeding	Life skills instruction	Dysphagia support due to diagnosis
OT for Writing	Support legibility for schoolwork	Address neuromuscular condition like cerebral palsy

### Documentation Pointers & Reminders: Where to Document in the IEP

Section	What to Include
FIE	Eligibility info, related services, medical diagnosis, if applicable
PLAAFP	How the condition affects school functioning/access
Goals	Aligned to purpose: academic = educational, health/function = medical
Services Schedule	Minutes, provider, frequency, location
Accommodations/Modifications	Specific supports tied to instruction, not vague (“as needed”)
Supplements	PCS, Transportation, Assistive Tech, BIP, Transition, etc.
ARD Deliberations	Explain the <i>why</i> – how the service supports access or success

### Common Missteps

- Listing services without goals or needs
- Using task-based language without purpose (e.g., “help with math”)
- Missing supplements
- Describing a medical service as instructional
- Vague phrases like “as needed” or “support with tasks”

### Final Reminders

- Every IEP should be a map of the student's needs.
- SHARS is one tool – not the compass.
- If you're unsure, pause and collaborate. IEPs should be written as a team.
- Clarity in documentation protects services, students, and the district.

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