The Learning in Functional Environment (LIFE) Program facilitates a therapeutic environment designed to meet the needs of students whose handicapping condition or combination of impairments are so severe or unique that they cannot be met in any other special education program.  Placements are available for students with sensory and/or orthopedic disabilities, as well as students with the characteristics of autism, moderate to severe mental retardation, and inappropriate behaviors that interfere with learning.

The student demonstrates concomitant impairments (such as intellectual disability and visual impairments, intellectual disability and orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational problems that the problems cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments.  The term does not include deaf/blind.

The goal of the program is to assist the students in developing appropriate functional adaptive behaviors given the nature and severity of their disability.  Emphasis will be placed on the development of skills in the areas of communication, self-help, motor, social, vocational, emotional development and community.  Each classroom is staffed with a teaching team of a certified special education teacher and instructional assistant.  Additional services and support for each student may include physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech/language therapy, transportation training, community-based instruction, vocational training and any other necessary service as determined by a multi-factored evaluation and the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP); hence, providing a therapeutic environment for the students.

Enrollment in an instructional program which primarily serves children whose exceptional characteristics are either profound or multiple in nature shall have an average of (5) students. Class size can be increased.  Partnerships are formed between parents and teaching teams to monitor and foster the progress of students enrolled in the LIFE programs. Instruction has a focus on functional academics and community-based instruction as they relate to everyday life situations and independent living skills.  This instruction is delivered through the student’s consistent involvement in instruction in the classroom to learn skills to apply in the community such as:  in the grocery store as money recognition, label matching and requesting assistance and attending school related activities. These skills can be transferred to the home environment by students accompanying their families on shopping trips, making purchases with family members and attending family outings.

Overall, instruction and services in the program are designed to provide specific learning activities and opportunities for students with multiple types of disabilities.