

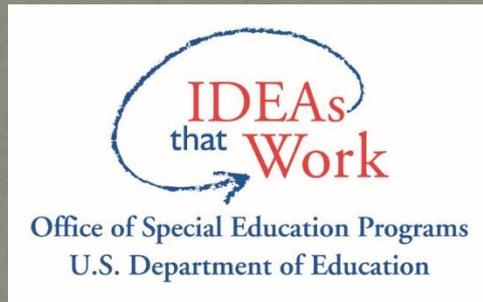
Understanding Your Child's Individual Education Program (IEP)

How to have a voice in your child's IEP meeting:
Before, During and After



Funding Sources:

- We are partially funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, through September of 2021.



- We have fund raisers and accept donations.

THE IEP

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a legal document developed by the IEP Team. This team can include:

- Parents
- Special Education Teacher
- General Education Teacher
- Administrators
- Related Service Specialists
- Student (@ age 14 & older)
- Advocate or other professionals



The IEP helps students with disabilities in reaching their goals. All students, regardless of age or disability, can be involved in the development of their own IEP.

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004, the IEP must focus on the student's preferences, interests, needs and strengths.

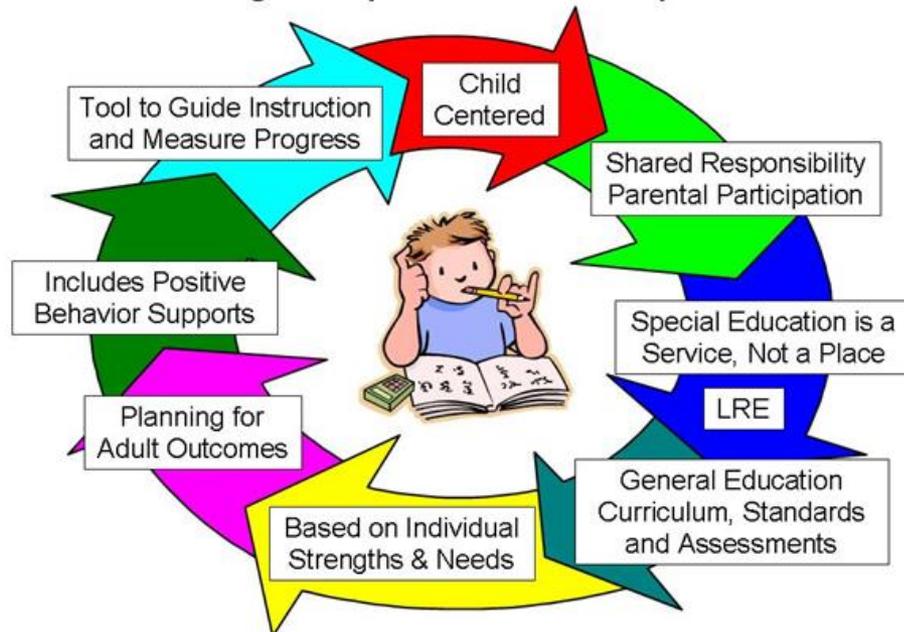
KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- The IEP document is written specifically for your child
- A new IEP is written at least every 12 months
- You have a right to invite anyone to the meeting
- Names & Signatures of all individuals attending the meeting is required
- When you sign, it does not put the form “in stone” for a year – you can always AMEND the IEP if you would like something changed.
- You may indicate on the form that you disagree
- If you have difficulty you may consider mediation

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR IEP DEVELOPMENT

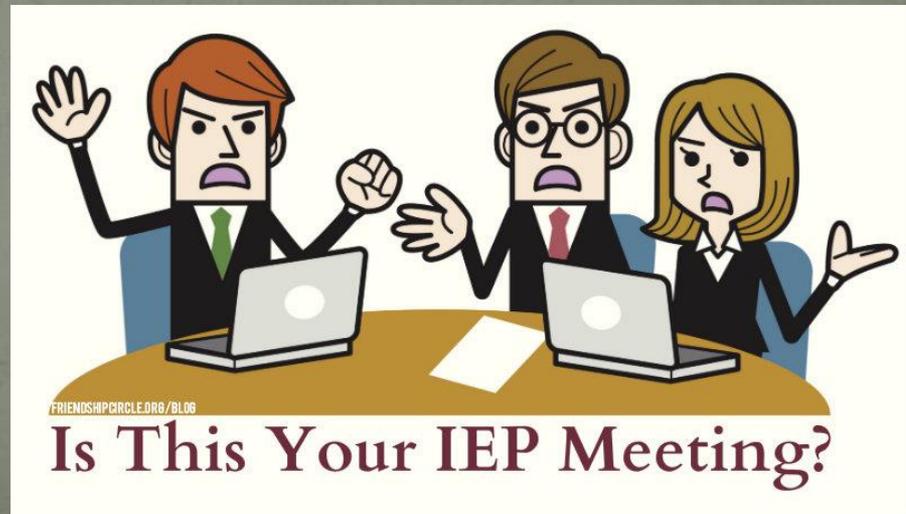
IEP Development

Guiding Principles for IEP Development



TO HAVE AN EQUAL VOICE IN CREATING THE IEP

- IEP document represents shared opinion or consensus of the IEP team
- The Team includes you, the Parent, as an equal partner
- Try to have a cooperative approach with the members of the team



BEFORE THE IEP MEETING:

- Ask for a copy of the IEP draft a week in advance
- Ask for a copy of all draft documents
- Make all of your requests in writing
- Make notes of tasks/skills your child has mastered
- Review records and reports from school
- Visit your child's class and/or observe other classes
- Collect any current medical information
- Collect information on your child's specific disability
- Talk to your child about their interests, likes and dislikes
- Know what the components of the IEP include
- Make notes about the services you want to discuss
- Read all invitations and other materials
- Sign and return the invitation

AT THE IEP MEETING:

- Arrive on time
- Take someone with you to the IEP to take notes
- Bring a copy of previous IEP
- Share your notes, ideas, and information
- Bring a copy of articles that may be relevant
- Ask questions when you don't understand
- Be polite but assertive
- Listen to those who disagree
- Make your points clearly
- If you disagree – ask that they include it in the IEP document under Parent Concerns on the PLOP page
- If you think you hear “no”, ask for options
- Be realistic about your child's abilities
- Voice your opinion in a constructive way
- Be sure you receive a copy of the final agreed upon IEP

IMPORTANT COMPONENTS OF THE IEP

- Present Level of Performance = PLOP.
Current statement of performance levels
- Measurable annual goals/objectives to address areas of concern or weakness
- Related Services delivery hours - if applicable
- Testing & Classroom accommodations
- Transition Plan (14 and older, or by 8th grade)
- Extended School Year
- Placement – where the child will receive their education,
LRE = Least Restrictive Environment

THE PLOP

PRESENT LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE

Required Components

- The student's strengths
- The unique needs of the student
- How the student's disability affects involvement/ progress in general education curriculum
- Parents' concerns – this is where you add any and all of your concerns.
- Any discussions that take place during the meeting should be noted in the PLOP.

TRANSITIONS

Transitions:

- Early intervention to Preschool
- Preschool to Elementary school
- Elementary school to Middle school
- Middle school to High school

However –

- In an IEP, a “*Transition Plan*” refers to a federally mandated plan that addresses the transition from School to Adult Life (Career, Post Secondary Education, Independent Living)
- Planning is mandated to begin no later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student turns 14
- The student must be involved in making these plans if at all possible

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Do the goals address the needs that are identified in the PLOP?

ARE THE GOALS...

Specific	Based on needs (both academic and functional) and identified in the PLOP
Measurable	Progress is objectively determined at frequent, defined data points
Achievable	Realistic, related to the most critical needs, achievable in one year
Results-oriented	With a Standards' outcome in mind
Time-bound	Clearly defined beginning and ending dates; within one year

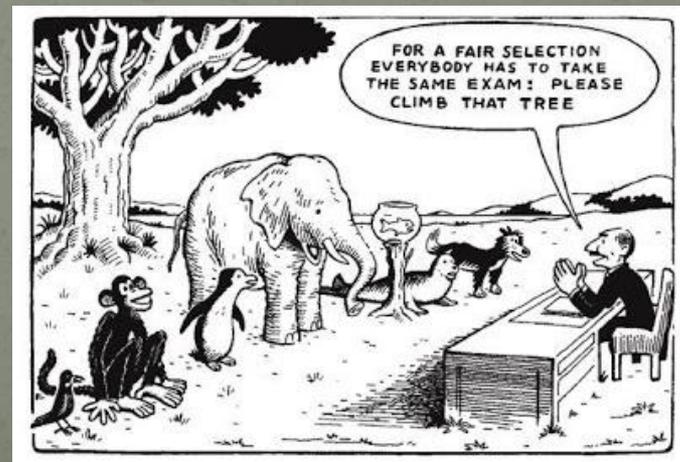
THINK TO YOURSELF:

- What are your hopes for your child?
- What are your fears for them?
- Are you advocating from your hopes or your fears?

MEASURING GOALS

Examples of ways to measure progress

- ✓ Tests
- ✓ Daily work samples
- ✓ Portfolio
- ✓ Benchmark tests
- ✓ Statewide assessment information
- ✓ Objective evaluation



HOW WILL YOU KNOW?

How will I know how my child is doing on each goal?

On Reporting progress...

- IEP must state how the student's parents will be regularly informed of their child's progress toward the annual goals
- Regulations require that the frequency of reporting must be at least as often as reporting for parents of typical children
- Send home progress reports as frequent as you would like
- Write in a Communication Notebook

RELATED SERVICES

Related services supplement the activities provided in the classroom. These may include:

- Assistive technology
- Audiology
- Counseling Services
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Psychological Services
- Speech-Language Therapy

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT “LRE”

When deciding Special Education Placement: The most appropriate placement in the Least Restrictive Environment

This means, as much as possible, with regular education peers. This will be determined after the goals and objectives have been developed. Many school districts provide a range of placements, and the team's goal is to decide which is the most appropriate.

The IEP must state how much time the child will spend in the general education classroom and how much will be in Special Education classes and/or Related Services.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations are changes that make it easier for your child to learn. They don't change *what* your child is learning. They change *how* your child is learning. It's a way to make sure your child's learning and attention issues don't get in the way of showing what he knows.

Accommodations might be necessary to measure academic achievement and functional performance on state and district wide assessments.

What ever accommodations are selected for testing use are the same ones to be used for classroom instruction.

- **Presentation:** A change in the way instructions and information are presented. Example: Letting a child listen to audiobooks instead of reading a text.
- **Response:** A change in the way a child completes assignments or tests. Example: Allowing a child give spoken answers instead of written ones.
- **Setting:** A change in the environment where a child works. Example: Allowing a child to take a test in a separate room with fewer distractions, or in smaller group.
- **Timing and scheduling:** A change to how much time a child has to complete a task, or being allowed to take breaks. Example: Providing extra time on tests for a child.

MODIFICATIONS

Modifications are changes to what's taught to or expected from a student. In some cases, a skill that would normally be taught at a certain grade level is changed, eliminated or postponed.

- **How things are graded:** Some teachers use pass/not pass instead of letter grades.
- **How tests are handled:** A practice test might help the student prepare for the real deal. Or there may be two rather than four answer choices on a multiple-choice test.
- **How things are taught:** The teacher might use more prompting and cueing to help the student determine the right answers. Class material may be written at an easier level of understanding.
- **Homework and classwork:** Sometimes students who work at a slower pace will be given fewer or shorter class assignments and less homework.

MORE MEETINGS?

- You will meet annually to update your child's IEP. It must be on or before the "Annual date" on the IEP
- You can update or make changes to the IEP at any time. You just need to request a meeting.
- You will meet every 3 years to see if your child is still *eligible* for Special Education Services. This is called "Eligibility" and it is possible your child will go through an assessment (testing) process.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A PARENT

- Get child to school on time
- Look at your child's schoolwork daily
- Be sure child is eating and sleeping well
- Volunteer to help out at school
- Monitor progress of IEP goals & objectives
- Schedule conference with various educators... if necessary

ALWAYS STAY INVOLVED IN YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION

**My child has an I.E.P.
(Involved Educated Parent)**

NEVER BE AFRAID
TO ASK
QUESTIONS.

GOOD LUCK!

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