



What to expect in the IEP process

Overview of the steps involved in creating an IEP

Step 1. Child is identified as possibly needing special education and related services. A school professional or parent can ask for an evaluation. Parental consent is needed before the child may be evaluated.

Step 2. Child is evaluated. If the parents disagree with the evaluation, they have the right to take their child for an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE). They can ask that the school system pay for this IEE.

Step 3. Eligibility is decided by a group of qualified professionals and the parents look at the child's evaluation results. Together, they decide if the child has a disability as defined by IDEA. Parents may ask for a hearing to challenge the eligibility decision.

Step 4. Child is found eligible for special education services. The IEP team must meet to write an IEP for the child within 30 calendar days after the child is determined eligible.

Step 5. IEP meeting is scheduled by school staff. If parents need an interpreter they must request one. The parents may invite people to the meeting who have knowledge or special expertise about their child.

Step 6. IEP meeting is held and the IEP is written by the IEP team. The child begins to receive services as soon as possible after the meeting if the parents give their consent. Parents have rights and can challenge the IEP determinations. If this occurs they can (1) Try to reach an agreement with school officials, (2) Request mediation or a due process hearing, or (3) File a complaint with the state education agency.

Step 7. The school is responsible for making sure services are provided as written in the IEP. Parents are given a copy of the IEP. Each of the child's teachers and service providers has access to the IEP and knows his or her specific responsibilities for carrying out the IEP. This includes the accommodations, modifications, and supports that must be provided to the child, in keeping with the IEP.

Step 8. Progress is measured and reported to parents. The child's progress toward the annual goals is measured, as stated in the IEP. Parents are regularly informed of their child's progress and whether that progress is enough for the child to achieve the goals by the end of the year. These progress reports must be given to parents with the same frequency that regular progress reports are issued to nondisabled children's parents.

Step 9. IEP is reviewed at least once a year or more often if requested by the parents or school. If necessary, the IEP is revised. Parents, as team members, must be invited to attend these meetings. Parents can make suggestions for changes, and can agree or disagree with the IEP goals and with the placement. Parents have rights if they do not agree with the revised IEP and placement: 1) They can try to reach an agreement with school officials (2) Request additional testing or an independent evaluation (3) Request mediation or a due process hearing, or (3) File a complaint with the state education agency.

Step 10. Child is reevaluated at least every three years. However, the child must be reevaluated more often if conditions warrant or if the child's parent or teacher asks for a new

evaluation.

Adapted from [U.S. Department of Education](#)

What type of information is included in an IEP?

According to the IDEA, your child's IEP must include specific statements about your child. These are listed below. Take a moment to read over this list. This will be the information included in your child's IEP.

Your child's IEP will contain the following statements:

- *Present levels of achievement and educational performance.* This statement describes how your child is currently doing in school. This includes how your child's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general curriculum.
- *Annual goals.* The IEP must state annual goals for your child, meaning what you and the school team think he or she can reasonably accomplish in a year. The goals must relate to meeting the needs that result from your child's disability. They must also help your son or daughter be involved in and progress in the general curriculum.
- *Special education and related services to be provided.* The IEP must list the special education and related services to be provided to your child. This includes supplementary aids and services (such as a communication device). It also includes changes to the program or supports for school personnel that will be provided for your child.
- *Participation with nondisabled children.* How much of the school day will your child be educated separately from nondisabled children or not participate in extracurricular or other nonacademic activities such as lunch or clubs? The IEP must include an explanation that answers this question.
- *Participation in state and district-wide assessments.* Your state and district probably give tests of student achievement to children in certain grades or age groups. In order to participate in these tests, your child may need individual modifications or changes in how the tests are administered. The IEP team must decide what modifications your child needs and list them in the IEP. If your child will not be taking these tests, the IEP must include a statement as to why the tests are not appropriate for your child and how your child will be tested instead.
- *Dates and location.* The IEP must state (a) *when* services and modifications will begin (b) *how often* they will be provided (c) *where* they will be provided, and (d) *how long* they will last.
- *Transition goals and services.* No later than when your child is 16, the IEP must include measurable postsecondary goals related to training, education, employment, and (when appropriate) independent living skills. Also included are the transition services needed to help your child reach those goals, including what your child should study.
- *Measuring progress.* The IEP must state how school personnel will measure your

child's progress toward the annual goals. It must also state how you, as parents, will be informed regularly of your child's progress and whether that progress is enough to enable your child to achieve his or her goals by the end of the year.

Adapted from [National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities](#)