

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I.E.P. Check List for Parents:

REQUIREMENTS

QUESTIONS

Present Levels of Educational Performance:

What areas are covered?
Does it describe how your child's disability affects his/her involvement and progress in the general curriculum?
Is it based on current information and states more than test scores?
Do the assessment results correspond to your knowledge of your child's ability?
Do the results describe your child's abilities as well as specific areas of need?

Annual Goals:

Are they based on assessment of your child's performance?
What changes are expected in your child's behavior?
Are positive behavioral supports included?
Given your knowledge of your child, are the goals appropriate?

Short-term Instructional Objectives:

Will they help your child reach the stated goals?
Can your child's progress on each objective be measured?
Could you tell if your child has mastered an objective or reached a benchmark?

Evaluation and Review Date:

How will your child's program be measured?
How will you be informed of progress?
When will the I.E.P. Team meet to review the I.E.P.?

Placement Recommendation:

What makes this placement appropriate to your child's needs?
How will your child participate in the general education curriculum?
What program modifications are included?

Special Education and Related Services:

What services does your child need?
Where will they be provided?
Who is responsible for providing the services?
When will the services begin and end?
How often will they be provided?
Does your child need extended school year services?

Participation in Statewide/District-wide Assessment:

Will your child participate in statewide/district-wide assessments?
Where will they be provided?
If so, how will the assessment be modified?
If your child will not participate, how will her progress be assessed?

Statement of Needed Transition Services:

What transition services are necessary?
Are interagency linkages needed?
Who will provide transition services?

Reporting of Progress:

When and how will your child's goals and objectives be reviewed?
How will progress be reported to you?
Is progress sufficient to achieve goals by the end of the year?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Q “I have just received a phone call from my child’s advisor/teacher that my child has been referred to a student intervention team. What does this mean?”**
- A This means that your child’s academic team of teachers feels that your child may have issues at school which are interfering with his ability to learn.
- Q If I have a child with exceptional needs, at what age do I notify the District that my child will need special services?**
- A Notify your local school principal or Special Education Office in the district at the earliest age possible.
- Q When do I know if my child needs a special program?**
- A If your child has demonstrated problems, which prevent him/her from functioning effectively without special assistance or demonstrates developmental delays, your child may be eligible for special education services.
- Q What should I do if I suspect my child has a disability?**
- A The first step is to request a Student Intervention Team meeting at your school site. Your child’s teacher(s) will meet with you to discuss concerns and strategies for addressing the problem(s).
- Q What behaviors would indicate my child might need special education?**
- A If your child is performing poorly in the general education classroom, even with adjustments and efforts made at school and home, there is concern. A child must have a disabling condition, which adversely affects educational progress. The conditions generally must exist for a longtime and to marked degree and not be caused by cultural, environmental, or economic factors such as bilingualism, poverty, or family instability.
- Q What do I do if school personnel believe my child needs special education but I don’t?**
- A You have the right to refuse that your child be assessed or placed in any special education program or service.
- Q How can I tell if learning is difficult for my child?**
- A Sometimes your child will not want to try new games or activities because he/she knows that they will be difficult. Children don’t want to look foolish or be laughed at by their peers.
- Q Can my child be placed in Special Education without my permission?**
- A No.
- Q If the team decides that a special education evaluation is necessary, do I have to give permission for this evaluation to take place?**
- A Absolutely. Teachers can refer a student to the Student Intervention Team without authorization from the parent but no special education evaluation can take place without your written consent.
- Q “What are the different areas that student’s can qualify in?”**
- A The current areas are:
- | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ▪ Autism | ▪ Mental Retardation | ▪ Speech/Language Impairment |
| ▪ Deaf-Blindness | ▪ Multiple Disability | ▪ Traumatic Brain Injury |
| ▪ Deafness | ▪ Orthopedic Impairment | ▪ Visual Impairment |
| ▪ Emotional Disturbance | ▪ Other Health Impairment | |
| ▪ Hard of Hearing | Specific Learning Disability | |

Q Who determines my child's Special Education needs?

A The I.E.P. Team, will determine your child's needs. The I.E.P. Team membership shall consist of—

- One or both of the pupil's parents, a representative selected by a parent
- Not less than one regular education teacher of the pupil, if the pupil is, or may be participating in the regular education environment.
- Not less than one special education teacher of the pupil.
- A representative of the local educational agency.
- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of the assessment results.
- At the discretion of the parent, guardian, or the local educational agency, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the pupil, including related services personnel, as appropriate.
- Whenever appropriate, the individual with exceptional needs.

Q Can I view the class where my child will be placed?

A Yes, you have a right to view the class and are encouraged to do so. Call the teachers or principal and make an appointment to view the class.

Q If I want to visit the school program or my child's classes, what procedure do I follow?

A Call your school where your child attends; they will help arrange a convenient time for both you and the teacher.

Q What if my child's physical impairment or health problems cause him to miss school regularly?

A Your child's teacher and school nurse will work together with you.

Q What if my family speaks a foreign language?

A The District will provide an interpreter for assessments and at I.E.P. Team meetings unless it is clearly not feasible.

Q Will vocational training be included in my child's program?

A Yes, pre-vocational training will be provided as determined by the I.E.P. team. The focus of the program is based on your priorities for your child.

Q Will my child participate in general education school programs?

A The object of IDEA is to include the child with special needs in the general education programs as much as possible.

Q If I move, will my child continue to receive services?

A Within the district, your child can continue to receive the same services. If the services your child needs are not provided at the new school, the district will transport your child to the school nearest your new home where he/she will receive the services specified on the I.E.P. Outside the district, take your copy of the I.E.P. to the new school. The school personnel there will know what to do and will assist you in obtaining services in the new district for your child.

Q Can outside agencies provide additional input to an I.E.P. Team?

A Yes. The I.E.P. Team will consider additional assessment information from private doctors, clinical psychologists, educational psychologists, community health agencies or mental health agencies, or any concerned individual.

Q What if my child has social or emotional issues that prevent him/her from participating in the educational program?

A Accommodations and modifications as deemed appropriate by the I.E.P. team will be reviewed. You should also contact the school psychologist to discuss a possible referral to County Mental Health agency.

Q Will my child be labeled?

A The emphasis is to provide programs and services to meet the needs of each child, rather than seeking a special label. However, a need still exists to identify “handicapping” conditions for purposes of state and federal reports.

Q What should I do if I am unhappy with my child’s placement?

A Request an I.E.P. meeting from your child’s special education teacher. Explain your concerns when you make the request and ask him or her to invite the appropriate Program Manager to the I.E.P. meeting. Placement changes cannot be made without a Program Manger present.

Q What should I do if I have a concern or problem with the program or services my child is receiving?

A Talk with your child’s special education teacher. If the problem is not resolved, request an I.E.P. meeting from your child’s special education teacher. The District is required to schedule an I.E.P. within 30 days upon your request.

Q If I am not happy with my child’s progress in school or special education program, who should I contact first? If I still do not get the situation satisfactorily resolved, to whom can I speak?

A First, contact your child’s teacher. If you are not able to resolve the problem, then speak to the principal or the Program Manager for your child’s school. If you are still having difficulty resolving the problem, schedule an I.E.P. meeting.

Q What do I do if I am dissatisfied with the assessments?

A You need to schedule a meeting with the Program Manager for your child’s school, to discuss the assessment and develop a plan for additional assessment if it’s determined necessary.

Q What if I disagree with the I.E.P.?

A It is okay to disagree.

1. If you disagree with any part of the I.E.P., you can request that the team reconsider the plan.
2. Unresolved issues may be brought to a district-level meeting. Agreed upon parts of the I.E.P. will be implemented with your written consent.
3. You may choose to participate in Alternative Dispute Resolution. Local ADR procedures include:
 - a) Involvement of resource parent or parent advocate to assist at the I.E.P. meeting.
 - b) Informal fact-finding meetings with the SELPA Director, school administrator, etc.
 - c) Facilitated I.E.P. meetings with an outside facilitator.
4. A local resolution meeting will typically consist of director or assistant director, parent(s), and an advocate or friend or the family if the parent chooses. No lawyers.
5. You may request a state-level mediation, which involves a mediator from the State that will meet with all parties concerned.
6. You may choose to file for a due process hearing.

Q Will my child receive a report card?

A Yes, your child should receive a report card beginning at 'K' grade with each report card you should receive progress reports towards your child's I.E.P. goals.

Q How long will my child receive special education?

A As long as the I.E.P. team and parents agree that special assistance is needed. This will be based on the ongoing evaluation of your child's needs.

Q Under what circumstances will my child receive special transportation?

A Special arrangements will be made if the I.E.P. Team determines that age, handicapping condition, or distance prevents your child from either walking to school or riding the general education school bus.

Q When does transition planning take place?

A At the last I.E.P. before a child reaches 16, a transition plan will become an additional part of your student's I.E.P. At this age, planning focuses on the student's course of study. At age 16, or younger if appropriate, the Individual Transition Plan (I.T.P.) should address post-secondary goals.

Q What are my Parent's Rights?

A Under federal law (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004), parents of students with special needs are afforded rights. Parents shall be given a copy of their rights and procedural safeguards only one time a year, except that a copy also shall be given to the parents upon initial referral or parental request for assessment, upon the first occurrence of the filing for a due process hearing and upon request by a parent. If you have questions regarding the rights (they can be very cumbersome), please ask for help in understanding them.

Q What items need to be kept in my child's file?

A As the parent of a child with special needs, you will have collected much information about your child from various professionals and agencies. Since you are the primary decision maker, observer, and advocate for your child, it would help to keep complete and up-to-date records. You may want to organize them in a binder. Some of the sections yours might include are:

- Background information:
 - Developmental history
 - Medical history
 - Information regarding medication(s)
 - Family health history
 - Educational history;
- Educational, psychological, and therapy reports;
- Copies of I.E.P.s, school progress reports and report cards;
- Samples of your child's past and present work;
- Copies of letters and notes sent and received;
- Notes about conversations with school and health professionals;
- Current listing of names and phone numbers of your child's general and special education teachers, support staff, administration, District Office and CAC resources person.

NOTE: It is advisable to keep each section in a chronological order with the most recent information on top.

Q How do I see my student's educational records?

A Contact the administrator for your child's program and asked to see the records. It is your right, as a parent, to review all your child's school records.

Q "What is a 504 plan?"

A A 504 plan is provided to any student who has been diagnosed with a "handicapping condition" which significantly impacts the ability to perform in school. The requirements for a student to qualify for a 504 plan are somewhat less restrictive than special education criteria. A 504 plan is most often utilized for students who are diagnosed with some form of physical, mental health, or medical condition (such as attention deficit disorder) but otherwise do not meet eligibility requirements for special education services.

Q Is there a preschool program available?

A There are programs available for children with special needs beginning from birth. From children birth to 3, there are programs available for a child with disabilities or at risk of developmental delays due to other factors. There is also a preschool for children who have less intensive needs.