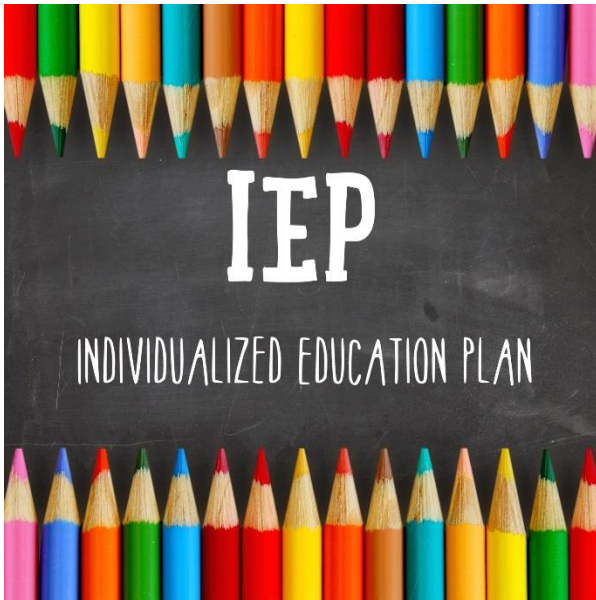


IEP Framework Guide



IEP Definition and Purpose

The Individual Education Program/Plan (IEP) is the backbone of the special education process. It represents the specialized instruction a student with a disability (under IDEA - 2004) is guaranteed. It is written by a team (IEP team) and used to specifically outline an individual student's current level of development and performance on his or her learning goals. The IEP also delineates accommodations, modifications, and related services a student might need to attend school and maximize his or her learning. It is a binding document for a period of 1 year, after which it is reviewed and revised based on the student's attainment of goals (IRIS Center, 2016).

Who develops the IEP?

The IEP is developed by a team of individuals that includes the child's parents or guardians, a special education teacher, general education teacher(s) an administrator or administrative designee, a person who can interpret the assessment result (typically the school psychologist), appropriate related service providers, the student themselves when appropriate, and any other person who is involved in the education of the child.

The team meets, reviews the assessment information available about the child, and designs an educational program to address the child's educational needs that result from his or her disability.

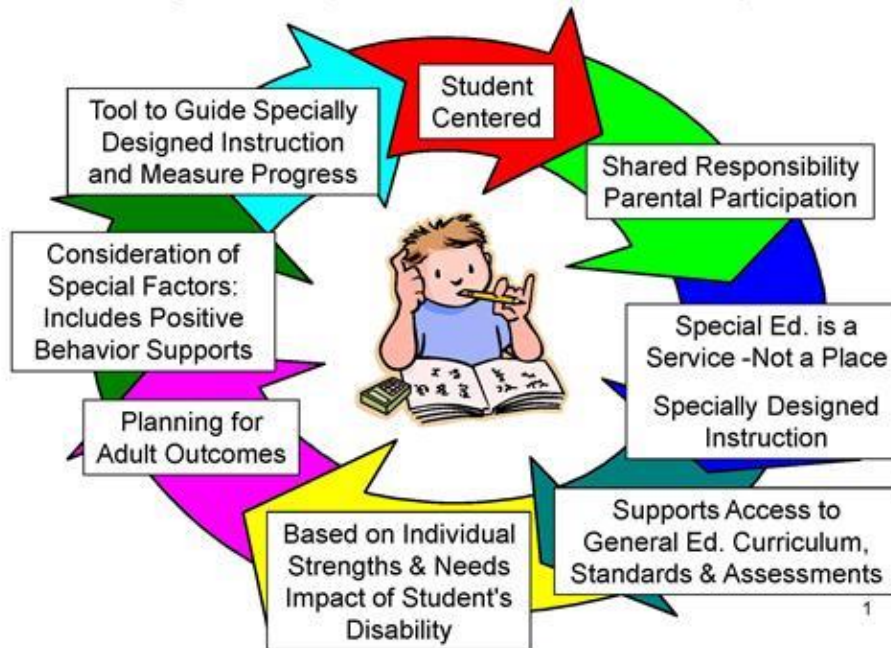
When is the IEP developed?

An IEP meeting must be held **within 30 calendar days** after special education eligibility (in one of the 13 disability categories) is determined, through a comprehensive individual evaluation. A child's IEP must also be reviewed at least annually thereafter to determine whether the annual goals are being achieved and must be revised as appropriate.

Principles of IEP Development

Developing a multifaceted Individualized Education Program/Plan for a student is no easy task. Keeping the **big** picture in mind can, however, ease the process. View the graphic below and reflect on the guiding principles for IEP development.

Guiding Principles for IEP Development



IEP Components

The U.S. Department of Education provides the following list and brief description of each IEP component.

1. A summary of Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP).

An IEP should always include a description of the child's current skill level in all areas of concern and explain how the disability affects the child's progress in the general education classroom and curriculum. This component of the IEP may address the following based on the needs of the child:

- academics (reading, writing, math)
- life skills
- physical functioning
- social and behavioral skills
- any other areas of concern affecting the child's ability to learn.

View these organizational tools for developing a thorough PLAAFP: [Federally Mandated Elements / IEP: Present Levels of Academic Achievement & Functional Performance](#)

Formal and informal assessments are utilized to determine the child's functioning and establish a baseline of performance.

2. Statements of Measurable Annual Goals

The IEP must contain information about a child's goals, and these goals need to be updated at least annually. Goal statements specify what a child is expected to learn in the coming year and may include academic skills, functional skills, physical skills, and/or social/behavioral skills.

Review the [PowerPoint presentation *Writing Measurable IEP Goals*](#)

3. How a Child's Progress Will Be Tracked

The IEP must contain an explanation of how progress toward goals and objectives will be measured and describe how that information will be reported to parents. This gives parents a clear idea of how their child's progress will be evaluated.

Three important questions to guide the IEP team discussion around tracking progress:

- **How** will the child's progress be measured?
- **When** will the child's progress be measured?
- **How well** will the child need to perform to achieve his or her stated IEP goals (and, for some children, benchmarks or objectives)?

4. Special Education Services a Child Will Receive

The IEP component includes a description of the student's special education program, specially designed instruction, and related services the child will receive to help meet educational goals. A description of the length of time and the location where the services will be received is also included.

Review the material at this site: [What Are Related Services for Students With Disabilities and How Are They Provided?](#)

5. How Children Will Participate in Mainstream Classrooms

The IEP team must also consider the most appropriate setting in which the child will receive special education services along a continuum. This is called the **least**

restrictive environment (LRE) or the extent to which a child will participate in the general education program with typical peers in a general education classroom. The IEP must specify the amount of time a child will participate in mainstream education programs and explain the rationale for that decision.

Take a look at this [Organizational Graphic](#) for keeping track of the students' participation in the educational setting as well as program modifications.

6. Testing Adaptations and Modifications

The IEP must explain identify the types of testing accommodations and/or modifications will be used for the student, and explain why they are necessary. If the child will participate in alternate assessments, the rationale for that decision must be included in the IEP.

Expert suggestions regarding testing accommodations and modifications.

- [What Accommodations Are Commonly Used for Students with Disabilities?](#)
- [What Should Teachers Know About Accommodations for Students With Disabilities?](#)
- [What Should Teachers Know About Accommodations for Students With Disabilities?\)](#)

7. Amount and Duration of Services Children Will Receive

The IEP must include a projected beginning and end date of services, the frequency of the services, and where they will be delivered.

- **Frequency** - Refers to **how often** the child will receive the service(s) (number of times per day or week). If the service is less than daily, then a weekly reference (e.g., each week, every 2 weeks) should be clearly stated.
- **Duration** - Refers to **how long** each session will last (number of minutes) and when services will begin and end (starting and ending dates)
- **Location** - Refers to **where services will be provided** (in the general education classroom or another setting such as a special education resource room)

8. Statement of Transition – Preparations for Adult Life and Independence

By the time a child reaches the age of 16, their IEP must include measurable goals for the student's anticipated postsecondary program and a description of the services needed for the child to reach those goals. These are referred to as an Individualized Transition Plan (ITP).

These transition goals should focus on instruction and support services needed to help the child move from the school environment and into a job, vocational program, or other program designed to promote independent living. Four domains are considered and included in the development of the ITP 1) domestic 2) Vocational/ Education, 3) Leisure, 4) Community

- Review this document: [What Is the Transition Planning Process for Students With Disabilities?](#) Take note of the table titled "An Overview of Transition Services" located lower on the page.
- Look at this sample [Individualized Education Program Post-Secondary Transition Plan.PDF](#)

The IEP Development Process

▪ **Before the IEP Meeting**

Both parents and teachers are anxious about what the new IEP year will mean for their child with disabilities. How has the child progressed on the current goals? Is he/she making adequate progress? What else can you do for this child to better prepare him or her for future success? According to Michael Remus (2010) These are just some of the questions parents and teachers consider before the all-important IEP meeting.

1. Prepare the Draft IEP: Data on current goals need to be collected and analyzed, and a draft IEP created.

Tracking progress on the current IEP goals should be ongoing (formative) as well as summative. Keeping accurate data records over the year is critical. When you are monitoring on-going progress on IEP goals, keep the following principles in mind:

- Identify and categorize academic, behavioral, or functional skills to be measured.
 - Determine who, where, and how often data will be collected.
 - Assess and collect multiple data points across time, settings, and occasions under typical learning conditions.
 - Score, summarize, and interpret data graphically as you go rather than waiting until the end.
2. The IEP meeting needs to be scheduled with the IEP team members.
 - Map out the end date for **all** students' IEPs on a calendar at the beginning of the school year.
 - Carve out a tentative IEP meeting date and time.
 - Determine **when** Conference Request forms need to be sent out (***no later than 10 days before the scheduled IEP meeting date***).
 - Indicate whether the IEP meeting is a re-evaluation (every 3 years) or an annual IEP.
 - Remind related service providers of the IEP end date.

***** Planning is key in Special Education to avoid a frenetic scrambling often associated with the IEP process.**

Schedule the IEP meeting with all participants (at least 10 days prior to the IEP meeting date). You may want to present team members with a predetermined but limited choice of dates and times (2-3 dates and times).

Participants include

- Parents
- Student (especially after age 16)
- General education teacher
- Special education teacher
- Member of evaluation team who can explain evaluations
- School representative who knows about general curriculum, knows about the school's resources, and knows how to adapt curriculum
- Person from an agency that pays for transition services (if transition will be discussed)
- Anyone the parents, student, or school wishes to invite

In his presentation [How to Write IEPs PDF](#) special educator Michael Remus recommends additional actions to consider **before** the IEP meeting.

- ***During the IEP Meeting***

The actual IEP meeting is an opportunity to collaborate with all parties associated with supporting the student's individual needs. Going into the meeting with a positive and proactive outlook will be contagious. Keep in mind the IEP is a working document. As the facilitator, it will be your responsibility to move the IEP along while listening to and engaging all participants. Michael Remus (2010) recommends presenting the following tips for conducting an effective IEP meeting.

- Ensure student information is accurate (address/phone numbers) on IEP cover page.
- Provide members with an agenda of the meeting and a copy of student's current performance and grades.
- Go over parent rights and procedural safeguards.
- Review progress of current goals and objectives and current behavior plan (if appropriate).
- Get performance descriptions from general education teacher and any related service teachers (OT, PT, SLP).
- Review present levels of academic and functional performance.
- Review determination/eligibility criteria.
- Develop new goals and objectives or update current goals and objectives.
- Discuss services needed (supplementary aids, services/program modifications).
- Discuss placement options and designated instruction and services (placement, frequency, location, duration).
- Write in and initial any changes made to the hard copy draft used at the meeting.

- Be sure all members of IEP team sign all necessary forms.
- Provide parents a signed prior written notice with a copy of full IEP and any additional resources.

- ***After the IEP Meeting***

Following up with IEP meeting participants, especially those responsible for implementing the IEP, is critical. Make sure they are aware of when the new IEP begins. If applicable and appropriate, provide a copy of the goals and a list of the accommodations/modifications they may be responsible for from the IEP. Don't **assume** they know or remember. Below are more tips from Michael Remus regarding next steps after the IEP meeting.

- Communicate successes. Let other IEP team members know when you are pleased with what they are doing.
- Continue to check to make sure things are working well. When necessary, call follow-up meetings.
- If you were given responsibilities or deadlines in the IEP Team meeting, carry them out.
- If there are problems, ask for help. Resolve problems as quickly as possible.

*Keep in mind that the **IEP** should create an opportunity for teachers, parents, school administrators, related services personnel, and students (when appropriate) to work together to improve educational results for children with disabilities. The **IEP** is the cornerstone of a quality education for each child with a disability.*

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