

PURPOSE OF THE IEP* MEETING

Before you begin the meeting, take time to review what you know about the situation and determine the purpose of the meeting. Is this an annual IEP meeting? A different type of meeting? What do you hope the meeting will accomplish? Based on that determination, either use the attached annual IEP meeting agenda or adapt it for your purpose, reviewing and discussing any agenda items that pertain to the specific situation.

If this is an annual IEP, the purpose of the meeting is to have the team develop an educational program for the student that will support progress in the general curriculum and meet other educational and functional needs resulting from the disability. After completing the agenda, you will have determined the present levels, goals, services and placement.

IEP MEETING AGENDA

- I. Introductions
- II. Review the purpose of the meeting and the agenda
- III. Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance
 - A. Strengths
 - B. Statements about how the student is performing in the home, classroom, community
 - C. Statement about how the disability affects the student's progress in the general curriculum
 - D. Evaluation data, parent reports, progress reports, test results
 - E. Needs
- IV. Create measurable annual goals and objectives; determine how the goals will be measured.
- V. Services
 - A. How will the student reach the goals? What special education services and supports would help the student be successful? (include time and frequency, and accommodations)
 - B. Who is responsible for the services?
 - C. Where will the services be provided and why? (placement and LRE)
- VI. Progress reporting to parents
 - A. Frequency
 - B. Method
- VII. Other items, as needed
 - A. Testing protocol
 - B. Transfer of rights
 - C. Behavior support plan
 - D. Extended school year
 - E. Transition
 - F. Graduation planning
- VIII. Accountability: next steps, meeting notes, meeting decisions
- IX. Closing

* References to Individual Education Program (IEP) includes the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) and the Individual Interagency Intervention Plan (IIIP)

**Troublesome Statements:
things that just don't work legally...**

The (principal, superintendent, special education director – someone in power but not present at the meeting)

- **said we must (whatever...).**
- **said we can't (whatever...).**

I'll check and see if that's OK with the...and get back to you.

The district can't afford that.

We don't offer that.

We don't do that.

We can't find anyone to do that.

This is our program for students with this disability.

Students with this disability are served in (whatever environment).

The only ESY available is our summer school program for all children.

The only ESY available is our special education summer school.

Holding the IEP Meeting

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PREPARATION FOR THE MEETING

When distributing the Notice of Team Meeting, you may wish to include the IEP preparation forms and the agenda for the meeting. Ask team members if they have any additional agenda items. If all of the student's regular education teachers will not be attending the meeting, send out the teacher preparation form to them and ask that they give their form to the regular education teacher who is attending the meeting, so (s)he can prepare a summary to present to the team.

If you plan to use a specific facilitation tool, such as brainstorming, be sure you have the equipment you will need, like a flip chart and markers, and the space you will need in the meeting room.

Determine who will be the timekeeper and note taker; be sure they understand their roles and are agreeable to play those roles.

If possible, offer refreshments, which is one way to set a congenial tone for team building.

BEGINNING THE MEETING

You may want to start with introductions which gives everyone respect and a voice at the beginning of the meeting. Review the meeting purpose and the agenda with the team. Assign agenda time limits, if you wish. As you assign the timekeeper and note taker, explain their roles. Assure the team that carefully recorded notes will be incorporated into a draft of the IEP and distributed to the team. Remind the parents that they will have an opportunity to review the document and, if needed, to request clarification or changes. Have the team agree on any meeting guidelines (one speaks at a time, careful listening, asking for clarification, if needed, no acronyms, etc.). If you plan to do any brainstorming, review the ground rules with the team.

Be sure to allow time for clarifying any ideas generated.

DURING THE MEETING

Follow the IEP process as detailed in the IEP Meeting Agenda below. Use any facilitation tools (brainstorming, consolidating and prioritizing strengths and needs, the "parking lot" or other techniques) that can help you attain your purpose.

- VI. Introductions
- VII. Review the purposes for the meeting and the agenda
- VIII. Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance
 - A. Strengths
 - B. Statements about how the student is performing in the home, classroom, community
 - C. Statement about how the disability affects the student's progress in the general curriculum
 - D. Evaluation data, parent reports, progress reports, test results
 - E. Needs
- IX. Create measurable annual goals and objectives; determine how the goals will be measured.
- X. Services
 - D. How will the student reach the goals? What special education services and supports would help the student be successful? (include time and frequency, and accommodations)
 - E. Who is responsible for the services?
 - F. Where will the services be provided and why? (placement and LRE)
- XI. Progress reporting to parents
 - A. Frequency
 - B. Method
- XII. Other items, as needed
 - A. Testing protocol
 - B. Transfer of rights
 - C. Behavior support plan
 - D. Extended school year
 - E. Transition
 - F. Graduation planning
- XIII. Accountability: next steps, meeting note, meeting decisions
- XIV. Closing

ENDING THE MEETING

You may want to spend a moment summarizing what has been accomplished and determining the next steps. Accountability is important in maintaining trust among team members. Be clear about how the meeting notes and the team's decisions will be memorialized. Assign responsibility and a due date for writing and distributing the draft of the IEP. Thank everyone for their participation and allow time for any closing comments the team wishes to express.

Establish and Maintain Parent/Professional Partnerships

Tips and Strategies

A relationship between parents and professional service providers that is based on mutual respect and trust is the most critical factor in the development of a quality partnership. Developing a respectful and trusting relationship will not happen automatically, only by the choice of **both** parties. To begin, each person must:

- Let go of old negative attitudes or adversarial biases
- Eliminate the need for guarding one's own position of power
- Keep working at it, even if it may seem tedious, unnatural or illogical

Parents and professional service providers need one another. They cannot afford to become adversaries, because neither alone can do what needs to be done. Both parents and professionals want what is best and are focused on the child with a disability, but their perspectives may be very different.

Parents:

- Understand they have a lifelong commitment and responsibility for their child
- View the present as one small segment of a long distance marathon
- Assume complete responsibility for their child
- Do not choose this role

Professionals:

- Do not typically have long term contact or follow up for a number of years
- Address a deeper, narrower segment of life, compared to 'running a sprint'
- Are responsible to various governing boards and/or taxpayers
- Choose this role in life

As parents and professionals come together to advise on policy and program issues in special education, both are enriched. Professionals learn more about family strengths, resources and individuality. Parents develop new skills, competence and confidence. Both develop an expanded view of the other and gain an appreciation of the expertise and experience that each brings.

Keep in mind the following tips:

1. *We cannot control what other people say and do, but we can control our own response.*

- Do I believe others are capable?
- Do I validate the contributions of others and give them honest credit?
- Do I make an effort to 'walk in their shoes' learning to see things from another direction?
- Do I reframe behaviors that irritate me, looking for the positive characteristics of that behavior?

2. *We can practice basic rules of courtesy, treating others as they wish to be treated.*

- Do I say what I mean and mean what I say?
- Do I follow through and do what I say I will do?
- Am I respectful of others' time?
- Am I respectful of others' opinions?
- Do I use the opinions and expertise of the whole group in decision-making, not functioning as a 'solo act' with my own self-interest in mind?

3. *We can decide to reduce tension between us by maintaining ongoing communication with one another.*

- Do I check in with others regularly enough to ensure that the direction of our thoughts and efforts are mutually understood?
- Do I talk with others directly if I have an issue, avoiding a gossip triangle?
- Am I available and easy to reach, keeping appointments and returning calls promptly?
- Do I listen and respond honestly to what others say?

Only together will parents and professionals be able to draw on the rich experiences and insights they each bring to engage in creative, collaborative planning to enhance the future of children with disabilities through special education.

From: Effective Local Special Education Advisory Councils (SEACs)

Dear <Parent>,

I'm sending you a proposed agenda for us to use at <Student's> IEP meeting. If you have additional agenda items, please let me know. I'd like us to use an approach that encourages clear communication, mutual understanding and collaboration. Together we will develop an educational program for your child that will support progress in the general curriculum and meet other educational and functional needs resulting from the disability. In preparation for the meeting, please consider these questions:

What are your child's strengths at home, at school and in the community?

What are your child's needs?

What special education services and supports would help him/her to be successful?

After completing the agenda, we will have determined the annual goals and objectives, necessary services and placement for <student>. During the meeting, or soon after, carefully recorded notes will be incorporated into a draft of the IEP and distributed to the team. You will have an opportunity to review the document and, if needed, to request clarification or changes.

If <student> won't be attending, would you have <him/her> complete the questionnaire, independently or with your assistance, so <his/her> input can be shared with the team?

I look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

<IEP Manager>

<Phone number>

Encl

IEP meeting agenda
Student letter

Dear <Student>,

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting has been scheduled for you. In preparation for your meeting, please consider the following questions. If there are issues or concerns you would like to discuss before the meeting, feel free to contact me. If you wish, you can bring this sheet with you to the meeting.

Sincerely,

<IEP Manager>
<Phone Number>

What do you see as your strengths at school, at home or within your community?

What is easy for you at school?

What is difficult for you at school?

What helps you to be successful in school?

Are there some things you need to learn that you feel are more important than other things?

Adapted from the Northern Lights Special Education Cooperative

Student _____

Dear <Teacher>,

An IEP meeting has been scheduled for a student in your class. We would like to know how the student is performing in your classroom and any needs you have identified for this student. The meeting date and time are listed below. Please complete the information requested to assist the team in meeting this student's needs. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions. When you are done, please give this form to the <Regular Education Teacher> who will represent you at the meeting. Thank you!

Sincerely,

<IEP Manager>
<Phone Number>

Meeting Date:
Time:
Location:

Please give a brief summary of this student's performance in your classroom and list any strengths you have observed.

Please list any areas in which this student needs to improve. (Academic, study skills, motor, emotional, behavioral, attending, etc.)

Adapted from the Northern Lights Special Education Cooperative

Brainstorming Ground Rules

The facilitator sets a time limit for brainstorming and sticks to it. This tool can generate a large volume of creative ideas and it helps participants feel collaborative in tackling a problem.

1. Each team member will be asked for only one answer at a time, proceeding around the circle. Work for quantity – the longer the list of ideas, the better. Out of quantity will come quality.
2. Encourage parties to expand on other's ideas.
3. No repetition or discussion.
4. No evaluation so people can speak freely and all ideas are welcomed.
5. Each person is valued for his or her unique expertise.
6. Any member may pass if they have no comment or others have made their comment.
7. Passing once does not mean a team member can't speak the next time around.

Once you have brainstormed and have a list of possibilities, you will want team members to rank order or, in some way select, which possibilities make the most sense. Don't forget to use the parking lot as appropriate!

The following is one method for writing measurable goals and instructional objectives.

Goals and objectives in a student's IEP focus on the skills and behaviors the student needs to learn in order to be involved and progress in the general curriculum.

Goals are broad statements which describe what a student can reasonably be expected to accomplish within a twelve month period of time in a special education program.

Each goal includes these components (present level may be implied):

- Direction of change
- Skill/behavior to be changed
- Expected annual ending level of performance

Direction of change	III. Skill or behavior	Present level (may be implied)	Expected level of achievement
The student will: increase decrease maintain	academic skill behavior	FROM: _____	TO: _____
EXAMPLES:			
The student will decrease	talking out behavior	FROM: 5 times per hour	TO: talking out one time per hour.
The student will increase	written language skills	FROM: writing only phrases	TO: writing a complete simple sentence, with initial capitalization and ending punctuation.
The student will maintain	attention span using strategies for concentration		AT the current level of all 5's on his/her daily point chart.

Objectives are measurable, intermediate steps leading to the attainment of the goal. They describe the student's behaviors. Objectives must include criteria for attainment and there must be at least two objectives per goal.

Objectives contain the following components:

- conditions for evaluation
- skill/behavior to be performed
- criteria and procedures for attainment

Conditions for evaluation	Skill/behavior to be performed	Evaluation criteria, procedures
Circumstances under which behavior is to be performed: • environment • specialized instructional materials/equipment • assistance	• observable • verifiable	What will be used to measure performance? • method • instrument • course of action
EXAMPLES:		
When in a group setting:	the student will verbally participate in conversation	in 9 out of 10 trials, as measured by daily chart.
After reading a story of his/her own choosing:	the student will give an oral book report	summarizing the content of the story, with accuracy measured by teacher checklist.
When given fifteen 3-digit addition problems and no calculator:	the student will compute them	with no more than 3 errors, in 2 out of 3 trials.

Goal Writing Tutorial: Early Childhood

The following is one method for writing measurable goals and instructional objectives.

Goals/outcomes reflect what a student could be reasonably expected to accomplish within one year while receiving special education instruction and services.

IFSP educational outcomes contain the same components as **IEP goal** statements.

Each **goal** statement includes the following **components (present level may be implied)**:

- **Direction of change**
- **Behavior to be performed**
- **Expected annual ending level of performance**

Direction of Change (may be implied or embedded in behavior)	Behavior to be performed (for older children- should be functional)	Present level (may be implied)	Expected level of performance (Must be qualitatively or quantitatively described)
The child will: increase decrease maintain	behavior developmental milestone	FROM: _____	TO: _____
EXAMPLE:			
The child will:	pull self upright	FROM:	TO: a balanced standing position

Objectives are measurable, intermediate steps leading to the attainment of the annual goals/outcomes. IFSP educational objectives contain the same components as IEP objectives. They describe the child's behaviors. There must be at least two objectives per goal.

Objectives contain the following components:

- **conditions for evaluation**
- **behavior to be performed**
- **criteria and procedures for evaluation**

Conditions for evaluation	Behavior to be performed	Evaluation criteria, procedures
Circumstances under which the activity or behavior occurs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • environment • specialized instructional materials/equipment • assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • observable- stated in understandable language • qualitative or quantitative description • verifiable as defined by the IEP/IFSP team 	What will be used to measure performance? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • method • instrument • how • by whom
EXAMPLES:		
During daily playtime:	the child will reach upward to grasp a toy placed slightly beyond arm's length.	as designed, observed and documented by multiple caregivers.
When offered physical assistance from an adult during daily playtime:	the child will consistently pull to stand.	as observed and documented by parent or teacher.
During daily activities and in a variety of settings:	the child will use stable objects placed within reach to consistently pull self to stand.	as observed and documented by parent or teacher.