

# IEP...

## Individualized Education Plan

A step-by-step guide on how to help your child reach his/her greatest potential in school.



### What is an IEP?

An individualized education plan (IEP) is a written education plan for students who are eligible for special education services. The IEP details classroom help and changes that are needed to meet the student's individual goals.

The IEP is created by a team of individuals from different specialties. The team may include a special education teacher or therapists to evaluate speech, writing and walking. It is reviewed every year to assess the student's progress. Before an IEP can be generated, a student must be considered eligible for special education.

Federal law states that a team of individuals with different specialties must determine that a student has a disability and requires specialized services to benefit from and be successful in a general education program.

### Categories of special education

- Autism
- Deaf-blindness
- Deafness
- Developmental delay
- Emotional disturbance
- Hearing impairment
- Intellectual disability
- Multiple disabilities
- Orthopedic impairments
- Other health impairment
- Specific learning disability
- Speech or language impairment
- Traumatic brain injury
- Visual impairment, including blindness

### What is in the IEP?

#### 1. Current levels of educational performance

This includes:

- Child's strengths and needs
- Classroom behavior
- Statewide and districtwide wide test scores
- Non-academic areas of concern, which may include speech or language development, behavior or social skills

#### 2. Goals and steps

Goals:

- Should be measurable and reasonable to accomplish within one school year
- Based on the student's present level of educational performance
- Should help the student within the general curriculum and may be academic, social, behavioral, or address other needs

#### 3. Special education and related services

After the IEP is written, the team thinks about ways the child can learn as much as possible along with his/her nondisabled peers. Specific specialized services are put in place as decided on in the IEP. The IEP will include:

- When the services will begin
- Where they will take place
- How long each service will last

Other related services to help the child meet their goals are agreed upon by the team.

Services may include:

- Behavior management
- Communication needs
- Assistive technology devices or services
- Necessary accommodations in the general education classroom

### Referral for an IEP

- Anyone can make a referral, but it must be in writing. Some schools have a specific form to fill out.
- Referrals must include:
  - Student's name, date of birth, and school
  - Date
  - Statement of why the referral is being made
  - Parent/guardian should keep a copy of the referral/letter for their records

### Intent to evaluate

By law, the school district must either send the parent/guardian a request for consent to an evaluation or a notice that no tests are needed within 15 business days of getting a referral.

### Evaluation

By law, the school has 60 calendar days after getting the parent/guardian's consent to do an evaluation and decide if the child is eligible for special education services. During this 60-day time period, the IEP team may evaluate the student by:

- Looking at past and present school data
- Giving more tests
- Observing the student in his/her classroom

### IEP team members

- Parents/guardians
- General education teacher
- Special education teacher
- A person who can explain results
- Representative of the school system; Local Education Authority (LEA)
- A person with special expertise (e.g., autism, CP) about the student

### Before

- Think about who might come to the meeting with you. It helps to have a trusted person who can listen and be supportive.
- Build a positive relationship with a person on the IEP team.
- Plan ahead and record any thoughts/questions to talk about in the meeting.
- If your child had a private evaluation done, send copies of the reports to the IEP team before the meeting.
- Review past and current school reports.

### During

- Remember: A parent/guardian is the most important part of the IEP team.
- Find ways to personalize your child. Discuss your child's strengths as well as needs.
- Talk about your concerns and ask for suggestions. Work with the team to decide what your child needs.
- Stay open-minded about other opinions.
- Do not hesitate to ask questions.
- Take the IEP home to review if a final decision is not made during the meeting.
- Request a follow-up meeting if needed.

### After

- Write down any concerns and send them to the school.
- Discuss the meeting with the child in terms he/she may understand.
- Write on a calendar the dates that your child's regular progress reports are due.
- Meet with the special education teacher to learn how you can work on your child's goals at home.

## Other resources

#### Special education in plain language

<http://www.specialed.us/pl-07/pl07-intro.html>

- Special education and the IEP in plain language

#### An introduction to special education

<http://dpi.wi.gov/>

- A helpful resource that explains the IEP process in detail

#### Wisconsin Facets

<http://www.wifacets.org/>

- Wisconsin family assistance center for education, training, and support for children and adults with disabilities

#### Disability.gov

<http://www.disability.gov>

- Federal government website for information on disability programs and services nationwide

#### Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA)

<http://www.cesawi.org/>

- For schools and other agencies that serve students in Wisconsin. The Statewide Network connects the 12 CESAs and helps deliver some services statewide.

#### Understood: For learning and attention issues

<http://www.understood.org>

- Free access to experts, a secure online community, practical tips, and more for parents of children with learning and/or attention issues

#### Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/cyshcn/index.htm>

- A program that promotes quality care for children and youth with special health care needs in Wisconsin



Created by:  
Meghan Miller, MA  
Clinical Psychometrist

MACC Fund Center  
PO Box 1997, MS MFRC 3018  
Milwaukee, WI 53201-1997