

IEP Tip Sheet for Parents An Overview of the IEP



What to Know About Your Child's IEP and How It Is Developed

This tip sheet reviews the elements of the individualized education program (IEP) and the IEP development process. To learn more, review the additional resources and check with your state law for any additional requirements.

What is an IEP?

An IEP is a written statement developed for each eligible child with a qualifying disability between the ages of 3 and 21 who attends a traditional public or charter school. The IEP is developed by a team. You are an important member of the IEP team. The IEP documents your child's current performance, learning goals, and the supports and services needed to help your child to be successful and make progress toward their goals.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) section 300.320 outlines seven requirements that must be part of the IEP as well as additional requirements once your child reaches transition age.

Element	What does it mean?	Where can I learn more?
 Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) or Present Levels Statement	<p>This statement describes your child's current performance, strengths, and needs. The statement includes information about academic areas (reading, writing, and mathematics) and functional areas (social skills, behavioral skills, dressing, eating, mobility, and more).</p> <p>This statement also includes how the disability impacts your child's involvement and progress in general education.</p>	 IEP Tip Sheet: PLAAFPs  IDEA Regulations Section 300.320(a)(1)
 Measurable Annual Goals	<p>This statement outlines your child's learning goals. This is the progress the team expects your child will make during the next year. These goals should connect to the needs that were identified in the present levels statement.</p> <p>If your child is taking an alternate assessment, the team will also identify short-term goals or objectives that act as steppingstones toward the annual goals.</p>	 IEP Tip Sheet: Measurable Annual Goals  IDEA Regulations Section 300.320(a)(2)
 Monitoring Plan	<p>This plan outlines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• how the team will measure your child's progress over time toward the IEP goals.• how and when that information will be shared with you.	 IEP Tip Sheet: Measuring Progress Toward Annual Goals  IDEA Regulations Section 300.320(a)(3)



Element

What does it mean?

Where can I learn more?



Statement of Special Education and Services and Aids

This statement describes the special education, services, and supports provided to your child to allow them to make progress toward the IEP goals and to participate, as much as possible, with peers in the regular education setting, extracurricular activities, and nonacademic opportunities.

This statement also includes supports to help your child's educators and you implement the IEP.



[IEP Tip Sheet: Overview of the Statement of Services & Aids](#)



[IDEA Regulations Section 300.320\(a\)\(4\)](#)



Explanation of Educational Setting

This explanation describes the extent your child will not participate with peers in the regular education classroom. Districts are required to provide a continuum of options for students with disabilities, but they must ensure that your child will participate with peers without disabilities to the maximum extent possible.



[IEP Tip Sheet: Explanation of Educational Setting](#)



[IDEA Regulations Section 300.320\(a\)\(5\)](#)



Participation in Assessment

This statement details whether your child needs accommodations to participate in state and districtwide assessments or if your child will participate in an alternate assessment.

- Accommodations change how your child is tested but do not change what is tested.
- The alternate assessment changes what is tested, so the team must explain why an alternate assessment is needed.



[IEP Tip Sheet: Participation in Assessment](#)



[IDEA Regulations Section 300.320\(a\)\(6\)](#)



Dates, Frequency, Location, and Duration of Services

This portion describes

- when your child's services will start,
- how often your child will receive services,
- where your child's services will occur, and
- how long your child will receive services.



[IEP Tip Sheet: Dates, Frequency, Location, and Duration of Services](#)



[IDEA Regulations Section 300.320\(a\)\(7\)](#)



Transition Plan and Age of Majority

Once your child turns 16 (or earlier in some states) the IEP must include a transition plan with your child's goals for after graduation and the transition services needed to help your child reach those goals.

In addition, after your child reaches the age where they are recognized as a legal adult in your state, the IEP must include a statement that your child has been informed of their rights and any rights that will transfer to them.



[IDEA Regulations Section 300.320\(b\) Section 300.320\(c\)](#)



How is the IEP developed?

The IEP is developed, reviewed, and revised each year, or as frequently as needed, by the IEP team.

Developing the first IEP

After it is determined through a comprehensive evaluation that your child requires special education, an IEP team meeting must be held within 30 calendar days.

At that meeting, the IEP team reviews information about your child and develops the IEP to support your child.

Following that meeting, your child's school will implement the IEP that was developed by the team and will share periodic updates with you.



Reviewing and updating the IEP

After the initial IEP is developed, the team meets *at least* once a year to determine whether your child's annual goals are being met and to revise the IEP to address lack of progress and any anticipated or new needs.

The team may meet more than one time per year, if needed.

At least once every 3 years, unless you and the public agency (district) determine it is unnecessary, the school will conduct a reevaluation. The IEP team uses this information to identify additional academic or functional needs and update the IEP.

Where can you learn more?



Developing Your Child's IEP (Center for Parent Information & Resources). This webpage provides an overview of the IEP development process and the components of the IEP document.



Helping Families Prepare for an IEP Meeting (Center on PBIS). This tip sheet shares some ideas to support families in preparing for and participating in the IEP meeting.



Disability & Special Education Acronyms (Center for Parent Information & Resources). Special education includes lots of acronyms. This list includes some of the common acronyms that you might come across during the IEP development process.



IEP Checklist (WI FACETS). This checklist provides helpful considerations for getting ready to participate in an IEP meeting.



PROGRESS Center Website. The PROGRESS Center website includes additional information about developing high-quality IEPs and additional tip sheets for each component of the IEP.

PROGRESS Center

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