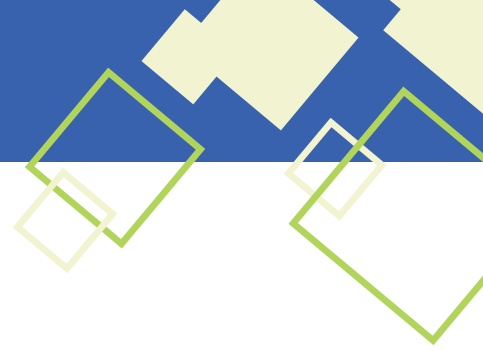




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HELPING YOUR FAMILY PREPARE

for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting

The IEP document is a legal plan for special education which is created by a team that includes educators and you, the child's family. The IEP contains goals to promote your child's success in school and should, if needed, include goals on improving their behavior. The IEP provides information about the specifically designed instruction, related services, and other supports for your child (often referred to as accommodations and modifications), the educators who will provide supports, and how progress on the IEP will be collected and reviewed.

The IEP team meets to create an IEP, for a yearly update, or for a new concern. Families might find it helpful to plan ahead for IEP meetings. For example, be prepared to talk about other areas of your child's life, such as health, eating habits, social behaviors, emotions, or academic level.

This tip sheet shares some ideas on preparing for the IEP meeting to promote full participation in your child's education program.



Before the Meeting

Notification—Read the letter (or email) closely and review the reason for the IEP meeting (such as to create an IEP, yearly update, or new concern). Find out if your child is invited to the meeting. If you want your child to attend, you can request it. If you or any people you have invited can't attend the meeting, you can request a change that works for everyone.

Gather & Organize—Collect relevant teacher communication or notes from school about behavior. If needed, ask to speak to teachers, specialists, or related service team members before the meeting. Request to review the notes and if created, the draft IEP document. Be prepared and write down questions or concerns you have and bring those with you to the meeting. Before the meeting, provide copies of any updated relevant documents (e.g., any outside of school medical records or evaluations) to the school.

Discuss Goals—Discuss areas of academic or behavioral supports you want to be included in the IEP so the team knows to assess your child's skills in those areas.

Support System—Contact the people you would like to have attend the meeting with you (for example, family advocate, other family member, member of your child's support staff). Check that the date and time provided for the IEP meeting works for those you are inviting. If English is not the language you usually speak, consider asking for a translator to attend the meeting.

- ✓ Make sure the meeting time works for your family.
- ✓ Write down questions you would like to ask in the meeting.
- ✓ Invite other people to support you in the meeting (such as a family advocate).

Tip: Bring a photo of your child to the meeting to remind the team to focus on your child. How has my child been doing academically? Behaviorally? Socially? Are there specific activities that seem more challenging than others?

During the Meeting

Be Proactive—Try to arrive 15-20 minutes early. Remember to bring your documents and questions with you. You are allowed to request a break at any time during the meeting. You are an expert and your child's biggest advocate!

- ✓ Share your ideas, opinions, and feelings throughout the meeting.
- ✓ Listen carefully. If something is not clear, ask for more details.
- ✓ Request a brief break if needed.

Collaborate—Make it positive! Ask the team members to introduce themselves and explain their role. Be open to sharing your thoughts, ideas, and questions. Listen to updates and ideas from other team members. The focus of the conversation should always be around your child and how the team can work together to promote your child's success.

Check for Understanding—Ask questions about anything that is unclear to you before signing the IEP. If you do not sign the document during the meeting or you have concerns, make a follow-up appointment to review those concerns and meet again as needed to develop a mutually agreed-upon IEP. See additional resources at <https://bit.ly/31w2waw>.

Address Behavior—If it is needed, IEPs might have behavior-specific goals and include a behavior support plans (BSP) to address specific student needs. A BSP is a document that describes a plan to address your child's behavior. For more information on FBAs & BSPs, see additional resources at www.pbis.org.

Tip: Communicating by email allows for a written record of what was shared and discussed at the IEP meeting. What types of goals are we including on the IEP? Are there other goals and supports we need to consider?

After the Meeting

Review—A final copy of the IEP document will be provided to you once all changes have been made. Review to make sure everything is correct. If changes are needed, ask for an immediate follow-up meeting.

Communicate—Decide whether to share the document with individuals that work with your child that might find it helpful to review the IEP (for example, behavior analyst or speech pathologist). If appropriate, ask your child if they have any questions about the process, meeting, or document. Check in with your child's teacher to review progress. Contact the school, district, local agencies or non-profits to request additional help if the team was unable to assist you.

Recognize—Let the team know you appreciate their time and hard work. Celebrate the progress and the program developed to support your child with your family.

- ✓ Address any concerns or questions.
- ✓ Consider sharing a copy of the IEP with other professionals working with your child.
- ✓ Celebrate your child's success in special education with your family.



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For more information on supporting behavior, visit pbis.org

