



HANDS &
VOICES™



ADVOCACY
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TRAINING



GUIDE BY
YOUR SIDE™

IEP MEETING PLANNER

What to do BEFORE, DURING, and AFTER your child's IEP/Case Conference Meeting

BEFORE

1. *Review your child's records*

- Compile and review the following:
 - ✓ Your child's current IEP
 - ✓ Progress reports toward annual goals in the IEP
 - ✓ Related services and accommodations on your child's current IEP
 - ✓ Report cards
 - ✓ Recent work samples
 - ✓ Performance on district/state assessments
 - ✓ Results of most recent evaluations
 - ✓ Communication with teacher/school
 - ✓ Communication or recommendations from professionals outside of school (i.e. Audiologist, ENT, private therapist)
 - ✓ If your child is working, letters or reviews from their supervisor
- Organize this information in a 3 ring binder and plan to take it with you to the IEP meeting.
- Make copies and share any information you believe to be new with the IEP team/case conference team, prior to the meeting.

Note: You have the right to inspect and review any educational records relating to your child.

2. *Network*

- Join local parent groups (www.handsandvoices.org).
- Attend trainings that will help you understand IDEA and your rights.

- Contact your Parent Training and Information Center for information on your state's special education laws.
- Search websites.

3. Review Case Conference/ IEP Meeting Notice; This should be sent to you 10 days prior to the meeting

- Ensure that the date and time work for you and anyone you would like to attend.
- Ensure that the time works for your child to attend
 - This is an important opportunity for your child to work on their self-advocacy skills.
 - Start bringing him/her as young as possible and gradually increase his/her participation expectations.
 - Be sure to prep your child regarding the purpose of the meeting and what to expect.
- Ensure that a reasonable amount of time is scheduled for the IEP/Case Conference meeting.
- If your child will turn 16 (or younger if your law exceeds the IDEA), ensure attendance by representatives from appropriate transition agencies.
- Ensure all appropriate school personnel are listed as participants.
- Contact the school if you are feel there are school personnel who should attend and are not listed.
- Ensure that there will be at least one school or district person in attendance who has the authority to allocate funds or make decisions on behalf of the district.
- Send a courtesy notice to the school informing them of person(s) you have invited to attend the meeting with you (e.g., friend, advocate, family member, private service provider).

Note: You may request alternate means of attendance if you or someone who you believe needs to attend cannot attend in person. This may include teleconferencing or video conferencing. Please notify the school in advance so that they can make the necessary arrangements.

Note: The IEP/Case Conference meeting notice may include a proposal to excuse a team member(s) from attending either the entire meeting or part of the meeting for one of the reasons below. Parents have the right to approve or reject the excusals.

- The team member's area of curriculum or related service is not being modified or discussed during the meeting or
- The team member's area of curriculum or related service is being discussed and the team member will submit written input to the parents and the team prior to the meeting.

4. Review your Procedural Safeguards Notice / Parent Rights

5. Learn the IEP Form

- Become familiar with the IEP form and the order of the contents prior to the meeting; be sure that special considerations or special factors are included.
- The meeting order should follow the order of the IEP form.

- Check to see whether your state has any addendum forms to the IEP plan they will be using (e.g. communication plan, behavior plan).

6. Request a Draft IEP

- Call at least 10 days prior to the scheduled meeting and ask if a draft will be completed.
- If a draft is going to be completed, request a copy of the draft IEP to be received at least 5 days prior to the IEP/Case Conference meeting.
- Pay close attention to the annual goals and submit any suggestions to the goals. In most cases the goals should be designed so that your child can achieve one year's progress during the school year. These suggestions may include:
 - The amount of progress you want to see your child make in the coming year;
 - Any strategies that you suggest may work for your child;
 - How progress will be monitored, how often will it be monitored, and by whom.
- Once you've reviewed the draft, you may submit in advance your feedback and additions to the draft or bring them to the IEP/Case Conference Meeting.

7. Develop a Parent Report that should include:

- Your educational concerns for your child.
- What you believe are your child's strengths and weaknesses.
- Your goals for your child.
- Your input regarding particular strategies that are or are not working.
- What you believe are your child's educational/social needs.

Note: Share this report with the school personnel prior to the IEP/Case Conference meeting. This will allow the school personnel the opportunity to include your parent report information into a drafted IEP if they plan to prepare one.

DURING

8. Arrive early

- Provide copies of your parent report and any additional documentation to others in attendance.
- Bring a Hands & Voices Advocate or someone else who can take notes and digest the discussion for processing with you later.

9. Request introductions

- Have everyone introduce themselves and state their role.
- If your child attends, have them introduce themselves. Consider a tool to help them. For example, for younger kids, a few pages of their own drawings or as the child gets older, a PowerPoint they either create themselves or with the help of their Teacher of the Deaf and you. Items to consider including:
 - All about me page – activities the child enjoys doing;
 - History – where the child has previously attended school;
 - Technology page – information about the child's technology;
 - Communication page – how the child prefers to communicate;
 - What is difficult for me – list of challenges in the school environment;

- How you can help me – accommodation ideas that could support the student from the student’s perspective.

10. Request to review your parent report

- Much of the information on the parent report is part of the IEP content.

11. Work as part of the IEP/Case Conference Team to develop all required components of the IEP

- You might consider utilizing some tools provided by Hands & Voices at <http://www.handsandvoices.org/resources/docs.htm> these include:
 - IEP/504 checklist;
 - PARC Placement Checklist;
 - Sample Communication Plans.

12. Finalize the IEP

- You don’t need to sign the IEP at the meeting. Understand that the parent’s signature on the IEP indicates attendance at the meeting, not approval of the document. While some state laws indicate otherwise, which is their prerogative, there is nothing in IDEA that gives parents the right to approve or disapprove of the IEP by signing it.
- If you want time to review the IEP or share it with others, you may ask to take a copy home and return it within 10 instructional days (check your state specific timeline).
- Your signature on the IEP can indicate:
 - Agreement;
 - Partial agreement;
 - Refusal.

13. Remain Calm

- Work collaboratively and value others opinions.
- Be open, honest, and respectful.
- Remain positive; you can agree to disagree.
- Be appreciative of their time and interest in supporting your child.

AFTER

14. If you don’t agree with the IEP as written, you can request an additional meeting to work towards resolution of the issues. Formally take steps by sharing with the IEP team:

- Your concerns in writing.
- Your request for specific changes.
- Your refusal of what’s written, and a request for additional meeting or mediation, or written notice that you intend to file a complaint or pursue Due Process to resolve the issues.

15. If everything is acceptable about the document, then review the IEP with your child

- Ensure they are aware of their goals and how they will be monitored.
- Discuss how, when, and who will help your child on the goals.

- Discuss what you and your child can do at home to work on the goals.
- Decide how often you and your child will discuss progress.
- Consider setting up a rewards system for progress.

16. Monitor progress. Ensure you receive reports on a regular basis. These may include:

- IEP progress reports at the same interval as report cards;
- Report Cards;
- Common assessment data;
- State assessment data.

17. Communicate regularly with your child’s IEP team

- If you have concerns about your child’s progress, do not wait. Call a meeting with your child’s IEP team.
- Communicate your home observations of your child’s progress on a regular basis to the IEP team.
- Check in with your child’s Teacher of Record and Teacher of Service on a regular basis.
- Volunteer when possible at school so you can observe your child at school.
- Remember to provide positive feedback to the IEP/Case Conference Team when possible.

Adapted with permission from the original “IEP Meeting Planner”
<http://www.nclld.org/learning-disability-resources/checklists/iep-meeting-planner>,
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“BE”LIEVE IN PARENT – PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION

- **BE accepting:** Accept and value others opinions
- **BE accountable:** Follow through with your obligations
- **BE assertive:** You know your child best
- **BE calm:** Anger doesn’t get you anywhere
- **BE courteous:** You will be remembered for your professionalism and respect
- **BE factual:** Stick to the facts
- **BE flexible:** Look for creative ideas and solutions
- **BE giving:** Share resources and information with the professionals
- **BE honest:** Don’t manipulate and always tell the truth
- **BE informed:** Do your homework and know the facts about your child
- **BE inquisitive:** Ask lots of questions
- **BE observant:** Read body language and know who to direct your questions to
- **BE open:** Share with the professionals your family values and dynamics
- **BE positive:** Share with the team that you believe there will be a positive outcome
- **BE prepared:** Have a parent report

- **BE professional:** Act, not react, as you would during a business meeting
- **BE prompt:** Respect everyone's time
- **BE respectful:** Listen to their concerns, opinions, and advise
- **BE supportive:** Find ways to collaborate and support their work
- **BE thankful:** Acknowledge all positives
- **BE wise:** The goal is a cohesive, supportive team that is all working together

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