

# Schools and Families Collaborating to Create Meaningful IEPs

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# Learning Goals

At the end of this presentation families will know:

- What to expect from their school before, during and after an IEP meeting.
- Effective ways to meaningfully participate in the IEP meeting.
- Collaboration and communication ideas when disagreements/concerns arise.

I hope you walk away feeling empowered to be a very active participant in your child's IEP meeting.

# A little bit about me...



# Rationale for Collaboration

- When families and schools collaborate, a meaningful IEP is created and the student ultimately benefits.
- Families and schools have the same goal – to help the student make progress.
- Families know their child best and should feel empowered to actively contribute to the IEP.

# Before The IEP Meeting

# What You Can Expect From Staff Before the Meeting

They will:

- Contact you to schedule the IEP meeting at an agreed upon time. It's ok to say a proposed time will not work for you.
- Invite the student to the meeting or gather input from them, if 14 years or older.
- Invite a language interpreter to the meeting if needed.
- Notify you who will attend the IEP meeting.
- Send you the meeting details in an IEP Notification Letter.
- Send a meeting reminder prior to the meeting.

# What You Can Do To Prepare For The IEP Meeting

- Collaborate with school staff to schedule an agreed upon day and time for the IEP meeting.
- Notify the school if the agreed upon IEP meeting date does not work for you.
- Notify the school team if you need a language interpreter and the school has not invited one.
- Notify the school team if you are inviting additional participants to the IEP meeting.
  - You have the right to bring other people to join.

# What You Can Do To Prepare For The IEP Meeting

Areas you will be asked to provide input on at the meeting:

- Your Child's Strengths
  - Your Concerns
  - Things that work at home
  - Reinforcers or motivators that work at home
  - Thoughts you have about accommodations – you know what has worked or not worked in the past
  - Your goals for your child
  - Updated medical information
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- Parents share that it's helpful to think about these questions ahead of time and bring notes to the meeting.



# Collaboration Prior to The IEP Meeting

- Discussing with the IEP casemanager what the most important topics of the IEP meeting are for both the family and school.

# During The IEP Meeting

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- There may be many people from the school present. This might feel intimidating but it's important to have everyone who has information about your child present.
- Families should feel free to bring anyone to the IEP meeting.
- Most districts have special education administrators available to attend IEP meetings at a family's request. This person can help facilitate or advocate for the child.

# What You Can Expect From Staff During the Meeting

They will:

- Provide a draft copy of the IEP so the team has a draft to look at during the meeting.
- Share data.
- Introduce all team members and their role in your child's education.
- Facilitate discussion about your child's strengths and educational needs ensuring all team members contribute.
- Ensure you can meaningfully participate.
- Ensure all paperwork is signed at the end of the meeting.

# How You Can Participate During the IEP Meeting

- Contribute ideas to the development of the IEP, including strengths, concerns, and strategies that work.
- Ask for clarification if staff use terms or acronyms that you aren't familiar with.
- Ask for an explanation of the data used to develop IEP Goals.
- Ask questions throughout the IEP to ensure you understand your child's plan.
- Sign the required forms:
  - Initial Provision of Services (if first IEP)
  - IEP Attendance Page

# Collaboration During the IEP Meeting

Good communication is  
the bridge between  
confusion and clarity.

# Document Non-IEP Related Concerns During the Meeting

- The team should document all non-IEP related concerns discussed during the meeting.
- Before the team ends the IEP meeting, a separate meeting should be scheduled to discuss these non-IEP related concerns to ensure they are addressed.

# In The Event of Disagreement

- Staff and parents/guardians should share, listen to one another and acknowledge that differences may occur between home and school.
- Communicate your concerns to staff. Be clear if you disagree.
- Ask staff if there are other solutions to address your underlying concerns.
- Ask for an administrator or facilitator that has not been involved to help the team come to consensus.
- It's ok to ask for a pause and take a break.



# After The IEP Meeting

# What You Can Expect From Staff After the IEP Meeting

They will:

- Make final adjustments discussed in the IEP meeting.
- Send you the final copy of the IEP.
- Ensure non-IEP related concerns shared at the IEP are addressed.
- Update the IEP Progress Report with data about progress toward IEP goals and send a copy to you each quarter.
- Recommend changes to the IEP if your child is not making progress.

# Continued Collaboration After the IEP Meeting

- When you receive the copy of the final IEP, review it to make sure that the IEP accurately reflects the discussion at the IEP meeting.
- Ask the IEP team for clarification if any section of the IEP is unclear or confusing.
- When you receive the quarterly IEP Progress Report, review the data and ask the team any questions you have.
- If "Insufficient Progress" is marked on the IEP Progress Report for a goal, ask the IEP team what changes will be made to address the lack of progress.

# Questions?

