

Understanding the Nuts and Bolts of Your Child's Individualized Education Plan

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Overview

- Why the Paperwork Matters
- What is an IEP? Who creates an IEP?
- The Cover Page
- PPT Recommendations and Meeting Summary
- Prior Written Notice
- Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance
- Goals and Objectives
- Accommodations and Modifications
- Service Grid
- COVID



Why the Paperwork Matters

- The IEP is a legal document
- The IEP is the framework for the year
- If it is not in the IEP, it doesn't exist
- If the goals and objectives are not measurable, you will not be able to effectively measure progress



What is an IEP

- A statement of measurable, annual goals, including academic and functional goals
- A statement of the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance
- A description of how the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals described will be measured
- A statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services to be provided, and a statement of the program modifications or supports
- Explanation if child not participating , and to what extent, in regular education



Who creates the I.E.P.?

- By law the following people must be involved in writing an IEP
 - Parents
 - Regular Education Teacher(s) (at least one, if the child is participating in the regular education environment)
 - Special Education Teacher(s) or provider
 - An individual who can interpret what the child's evaluation results mean (OT, SLP, Psychologist or Social Worker)
 - An individual representing the school system
 - The student (as appropriate)



You are an equal member of the Team!



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OUTNUMBERED?

The Cover Page

- Evaluation Dates
- Reason for Meeting
- Primary Disability
- Team Members



PPT Recommendations & Meeting Summary

- Try to ensure that the recommendations are as specific as possible-
- It is good practice to review recommendations at the end of the meeting
- Meeting summary only required for children ages 3 – 5. Most teams in this area will include a summary for older children.



Prior Written Notice

- The purpose of Prior Written Notice is to provide written communication to parents of the Action(s) that has been proposed or refused by a Planning and Placement Team.
- Actions typically proposed or refused by the PPT include: conduct an initial evaluation, conduct a reevaluation, determine the student is or is not eligible for special education and related services, implement an IEP, continue an IEP, revise an IEP, change placement, discontinue specific services, and exit from special education.



Present Levels of Academic Achievement & Functional Performance

- The Present Levels pages drive the rest of the IEP
- The school must use a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information
- Current classroom-based assessments, district and/or state assessments, and classroom-based observations, which includes parent, student and general education teacher input in all relevant areas
- Focus on how strengths and weaknesses impact the student's involvement in the general education curriculum



Breaking Down Present Levels

- Generally, standards should align with Common Core State standards and the grade level concepts and skills the student needs to progress to the next grade
- Should be parent friendly and easy to read and address both academic achievement and functional performance
- Present levels assessment should be based on evaluation data that is no more than one year old
- Each area that is not age or grade level appropriate and where there is a concern must be addressed in an annual goal- CHECK THIS ALWAYS!



Goals & Objectives

- Annual goals and short term objectives should relate directly to the information recorded in the present levels pages under concerns/needs
- Used to estimate what outcomes you can expect a child to achieve in an academic year, based on the student's present levels of performance.
- Annual goals and objectives should align with grade level common core standards
- Short-term objectives and benchmarks describe meaningful intermediate and measurable outcomes between the student's current performance level and the annual goal.



Goals & Objectives

The 2017 Supreme Court decision *Endrew F.* held that a child's educational program must be "appropriately ambitious" in light of the student's circumstances...the goals may differ, but every child should have the chance to meet challenging objectives.



Goals & Objectives

- Annual goals should be ambitious and achievable
- Designed to help close the achievement gap



Goals & Objectives continued

- Evaluation Procedures must provide an objective means of measurement.
- It is important that goals and objectives be specific, measurable and, to the extent appropriate, relate to the student's achievement in the general education curriculum and non-academic areas.



Sample Objectives

- Goal: A will demonstrate improved communication within her educational setting:
- Un-measurable Objective: A will identify the problem in her communication.
- Measurable Objective: A will identify the problem in a given picture/scenario during a) structured settings and b) incidental moments given the verbal cue “What is wrong here?”



Sample Objectives

Goal: A will demonstrate improved fine/visual motor abilities for greater success and independence with classroom tasks/activities:

- Unspecific Objective: A will legibly copy letters
- Specific Objective: A will legible copy the letters of her name.



Accommodations & Modifications

- Document what the student needs to access the regular education curriculum
- Are put in place to help the student advance appropriately toward attaining his/her annual goals
- Provide access so the student can participate in extracurricular and other non-academic activities
- Support the student's inclusion with non-disabled peers



Accommodations & Modifications

- Accommodations are changes to instruction that change *how a student learns* without requiring a fundamental alteration of the content
- Modifications are changes to the content, which affect what the student learns. *Modifications include curricular changes in the content standards or the performance expectations.*



Examples of Accommodations

- Preferential seating
- Have student restate information/ review of directions
- Weekly home-school communication tools (notebook, daily log, phone calls or email messages)
- Dedicated space in the classroom for movement or breaks
- Assistance in maintaining uncluttered space
- Additional time for assignments
- Support auditory presentations with visuals



Examples of Modifications

- Word bank of choices for answers to test questions
- Projects instead of written reports
- Reworded questions in simpler language
- Modified workload or length of assignments/tests
- Provide alternative books with similar concepts, but at an easier reading level.



Frequency and Duration of Supports

- Federal law requires the IEP to include supports that staff might need in order to implement the IEP
- Supports could be in the form of teacher training, paraprofessional support in the classroom or consultation by a special education teacher or related services provider.



Examples of Supports outlined in this section

- All staff who will work with the student should receive ten hours of disability- specific training in the area of Autism. This training should be provided during the first two weeks of school by [title, role, or competency area of person providing training]
- The school psychologist will collaborate with the child's teacher for 20 minutes per week for the first six weeks of school to cooperatively plan activities which will encourage the child to establish and maintain friendships with classmates



Service Grid

The intent of Page 11 is to give the reader a “snapshot” view of the service provisions of the student’s IEP. It includes a description of:

- Special Education Services
- Related Services - Supportive services that are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education, Speech/Language, OT, Physical Therapy, Counseling
- Service time requirements
- Least Restrictive Environment information



Ensure that your Concerns are Addressed

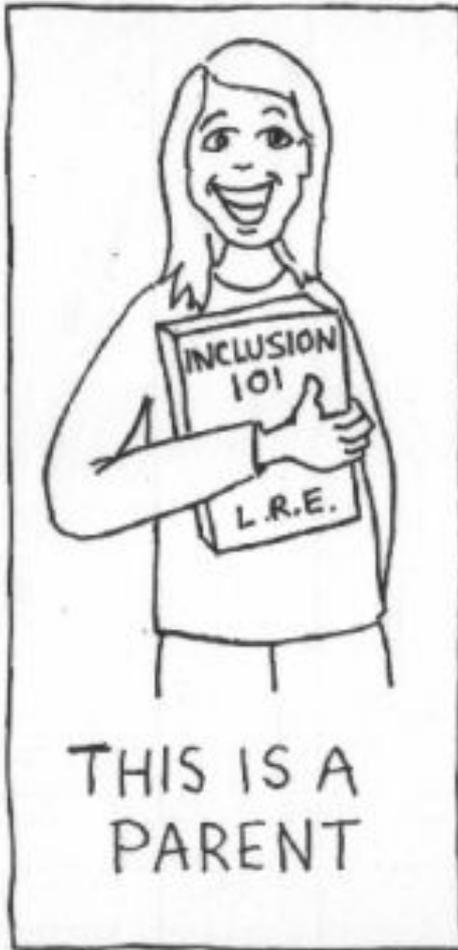
- Parent and Student Input and Concerns on Page 4
- Prior Written Notice Page
- Parent Agenda can be added to school team agenda - be sure to submit at least three days in advance of the PPT meeting
- Meet with key team members in advance of the PPT meeting if needed
- Review IEP when received, if you still have concerns write follow up letters to document next steps



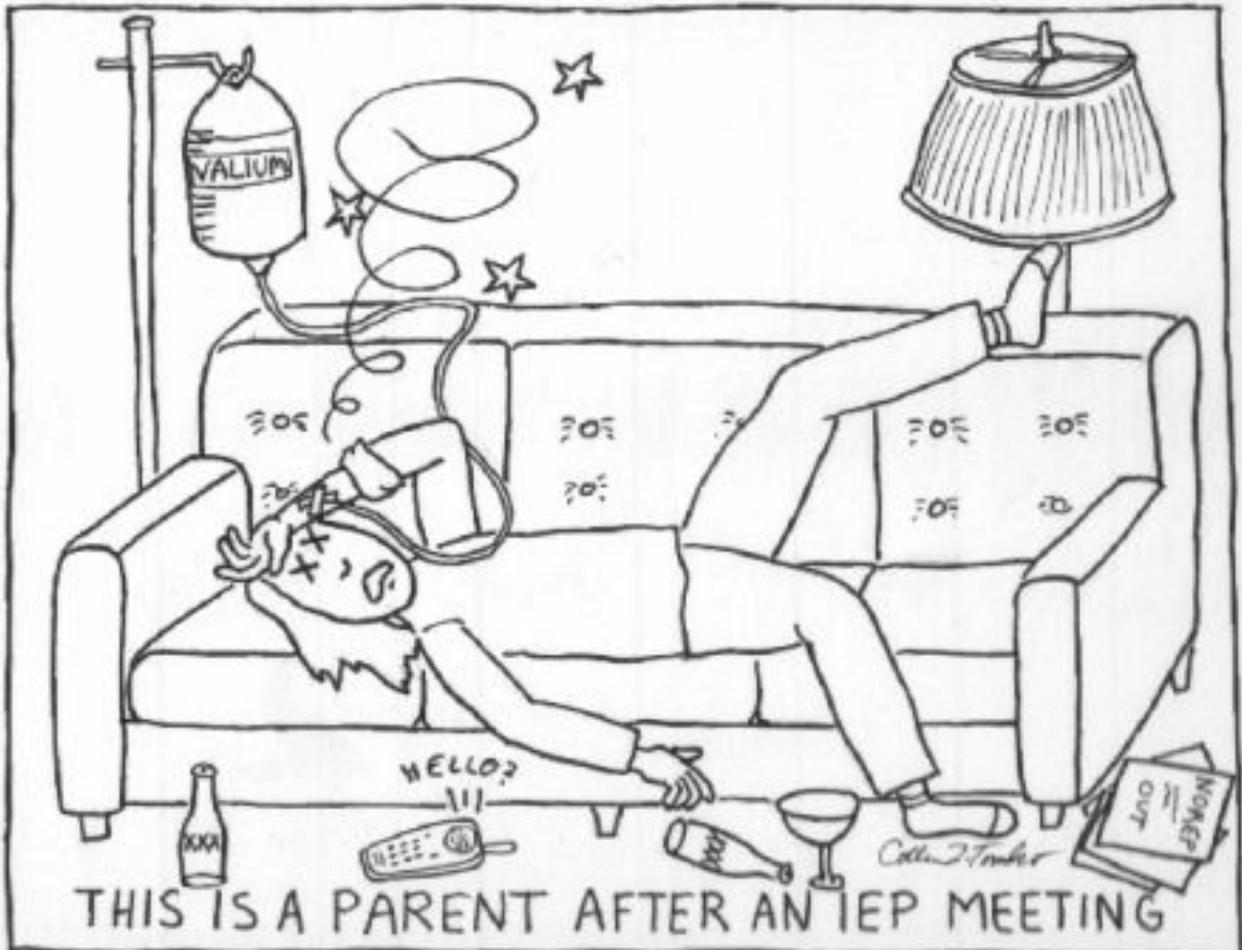
Is Your Child Making Progress?

- Take time to compare goals and objectives from year to year. Is there repetition of objectives?
- Ask for annotations to the objectives on the progress report.
- Ask for the data! Which progress monitoring assessments are built into your child's program?
- Do we need more information (IEE)? Do we understand the true nature of the child's disability?
- Communication is key! Ask to meet with the team or the service provider if you have concerns





THIS IS A PARENT



THIS IS A PARENT AFTER AN IEP MEETING

ANY QUESTIONS?

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And then there was.... COVID

- What is an Implementation Plan?
- Keep lines of communication open
- Do not be afraid to reach out
- Administration here for you! Our go-to answer



Resources

- www.sde.ct.gov - A Parent's Guide to Special Education in CT
- ["IEP Guide - Page by Page" - a resource to understand each page of the IEP and prepare for PPT meetings](#)
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DDS/family/IEP_Guide_page_by_page.pdf
- Fairfieldschools.org
- www.ctserc.org- CT State Education Resource Center
- <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/COVID19/COVID-19-Resources-for-Families-and-Educators>



Q & A

"Every child deserves a champion; an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best they can possibly be."

Rita F. Pierson

