



Tips for a Successful IEP Meeting

Suggestions to help you feel at ease and able to participate as a full member of the team that plans your child's special education program.

Provided by: Family and Educator Connection

Tips for a Successful IEP Meeting

Parents often feel overwhelmed when they attend an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting. Educational terminology may be new and confusing, yet you want to be a full participant in the meeting. Here are some suggestions to help you feel at ease and able to participate as a full member of the team that plans your child's special education program.

Before the meeting

Build a positive relationship with someone on the IEP team, such as the teacher, principal or AEA staff member. Plan ahead and write your thoughts down so you won't forget the things you want to discuss.

Be prepared to:

- Discuss your child's strengths, interests and preferences
- Identify special considerations such as transition, behavior, or communication
- Identify concerns about your child's education
- Establish priorities to be considered for goal areas

If you wish to share a private evaluation, send the report to the IEP team ahead of time so they can be familiar with the information before the meeting. Review current reports, last year's IEP if applicable, and "The Procedural Safeguards" manual that you receive annually. Invite someone to attend the meeting with you to provide support. It may be a spouse, friend, Family & Educator Connection (FEC) Coordinator, or someone who has special knowledge of your child. Let the school know who will be coming.

During the meeting

Understand that you are an integral part of the IEP team. Federal law requires schools to ensure that IEP teams include parents. You know your child and have valuable information to share—strengths, talents, interests, and needs. Professionals have evaluation information to assist in educational planning. Stay positive and focus on questions you have and your child's needs, not on specific methods of teaching. Don't hesitate to ask questions and seek clarification at any time. Include your child in the IEP process to the extent appropriate for his/her age. Transition services begin by age 14. At age 18 your child will be an adult making decisions about his/her own program so it is never too early to include them in the process. The IEP will be implemented immediately or on a date specified in the IEP. If you are unable to reach an agreement regarding services at an IEP meeting, another meeting will be scheduled. In the meantime, the current IEP will continue to be implemented. Ask when you will receive progress reports. This is at least as often as students without disabilities receive reports and is usually when report cards are sent home and when parent/student teacher conferences are held.

After the meeting

You will receive a draft copy of the IEP at the meeting, when an amendment is completed, or within five school days of the IEP meeting or completion of an amendment. Review the IEP and ask for clarification if needed. If you have concerns, contact the district as soon as possible to schedule another meeting. Communicate often with the teacher and staff responsible for the IEP. Share observations and ask what you can do at home to reinforce the skills and strategies being taught at school. Keep the IEP and other school notices and reports in a secure place, such as in a notebook or file. Review progress reports when you get them. The IEP is reviewed at least once a year. However, if you or the teacher feel that your child isn't making progress or has achieved the goals sooner than expected, a meeting can be scheduled to revise the IEP by sending a written request to the school. Whenever an IEP team recommends a change in service or placement, a Written Prior Notice will be given to you. This gives you time to consider the recommendation.

Need more information?

Contact your Family & Educator Connection Coordinator if you have questions or need support before, during or after the IEP meeting. The FEC can also provide information on trainings, conferences, and workshops.

Connect with the Family & Educator Connection at:

Clear Lake: Sandy Kraschel 800-392-6640,
641-357-6125 or skraschel@aea267.k12.ia.us

Marshalltown: Andy Lawler 800-735-1539,
641-753-3564 or alawler@aea267.k12.ia.us

Cedar Falls: Deb Paton 800-542-8375,
319-273-8250 or dpaton@aea267.k12.ia.us

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(A copy of the IEP Planning Form is on the next page)

IEP Planning Form

This form provides a guideline for your input at the IEP meeting and can be used as a basis for discussion. Please share a copy with your child's special education teacher prior to the meeting.

Date: _____

Child's Name: _____

My child's strengths, interests and preferences:

My child needs the most help with:

The most important goal(s) for my child for next year:

What works for my child, effective strategies or rewards:

Special considerations such as transition, social or behavioral issues:

Questions or concerns:

Other information the school should know:

For more information

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