



IEP

A PEATC Do You Know Factsheet for Virginia's Parents

“Individualized education program” or “IEP” means a written statement for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in a team meeting in accordance with this chapter.

The IEP specifies the individual educational needs of the child and what special education and related services are necessary to meet the child’s educational needs. (34 CFR 300 .22)

“Individualized education program team” means a group of individuals described in 8VAC20-81-110 that is responsible for developing, reviewing, or revising an IEP for a child with a disability. (34 CFR 300 .23)

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Do You Know

What you need to know about DURING and AFTER your Child’s IEP?

This is a very important meeting for you and your child. This is where you meet with educators and school administrators to discuss and decide on your child’s education plan for the school year, and how services will be provided. It can be a little intimidating for parents and for the child, but as you learn more about what services are available for students with disabilities, your child’s rights, and how to develop an effective plan, you will become more confident. We have some tips that will help!

During the Meeting

Go into the meeting with a positive attitude, assuming that everyone there wants the best for your child.

School personnel will be dressed in business attire, so you may want to dress in something that makes you feel confident.

Do not sit across from the school team, sit next to them--it creates a friendlier environment and will make you feel less intimidated.

Start by sharing your dreams for your child, as well as your nightmares. Share your vision of what you want your child’s life to look like now and in the future, as an adult. This will not take very long, and will help the IEP team to see how goals can help to achieve those dreams.

Make sure your child’s strengths are talked about and not just areas of concern. Children learn differently and your child’s strengths will include his learning styles.

Always ask questions if you do not understand something. You can repeat back what you think you heard for clarification. Invite the team to ask you any questions they may have. The team will work better if everyone feels comfortable.

Show the other members of the team respect, and expect them to respect you.

Acknowledge and thank anyone who has been helpful to you or your child.

As proposed goals are read, tell about any changes you wish, or any other goals you think are important, and why. Ask how progress will be reported to you. The report card alone may not give you detailed information on your child’s IEP progress.

If you find your emotions are getting the best of you or you feel overwhelmed, you can ask for a short break to relax, refresh, and get ready to continue.

Remember that you are all there to develop a plan to help your child, and keep the meeting focused on that purpose.

Make sure the designated note taker includes your input into the notes. You should read over the notes yourself before you agree to or sign the document.

Remember that a signed IEP is a legal document, and must be followed.

The IEP should have information about who is responsible for working on each goal for your child. Each service your child will receive must be listed in the IEP, including who will be making any needed adaptations and modifications, the frequency and duration of services, timelines for accomplishing goals, and how each goal will be monitored, by whom, and evaluated.

Any statements about lack of funding or the school not having the staff for that is not an acceptable reason for not providing a needed service for your child. While staffing may be a problem, ask the team how this problem will be resolved, when it will be resolved, and what they plan to do in the meantime. If a school cannot provide a service that is needed then they may need to send her to a private provider, such as a therapist, at the school's expense, or to another school that can provide the service.

Any assistive technology your child needs, or a behavior plan, transition goals and extended school year services must be written into the IEP.

As the meeting ends, you will be asked to sign that you agree with the IEP. Read it completely yourself (or have your advocate read it to you) BEFORE you sign anything. Be sure your input is written there. If you do not agree with it, you should not sign it. If you do not sign, they will schedule another meeting within 10 days to see if everyone can come to agreement. You can also ask to take a copy home so you can reread it and think about it before you sign.

If you sign, they should make a copy of each page for you to take home (at no charge to you).

After the Meeting

Put the new IEP in a file or notebook so you can always find it.

If someone was especially helpful, send them a note of thanks. This is not only good manners; it helps build relationships.

If your child was at the meeting, talk to him/her about it.

Use the IEP to help keep track of progress. The IEP goals and progress toward them are the basis for your child's report card.

Remember that the IEP must be implemented within 10 days of the document being signed.

Ask for a meeting with any of the personnel working with your child if you have concerns or questions.

