



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 BEFORE 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 determine 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!

Before a Meeting

Remember that special education is a **service, not a place.**

Make sure you have all the necessary paperwork, such as previous IEP, any notes, assessments or tests from professionals that may be relevant to your child’s educational needs, and pertinent information from other schools or states if you have moved.

Request a copy of the proposed IEP goals (these are only proposed, or draft goals until the whole team agrees which goals are most appropriate for the student), and current assessments from teachers and therapists. Ask to have this at least 3 days before the meeting so you have time to think about it, and change or add any goals you think are important. Note that some school districts will not provide a copy of the draft beforehand. If you do not have the draft before your meeting, you can always decline to sign the IEP at the meeting and take it home to review.

Remember that you are a very valuable member of the IEP team, and that **you** are the expert on your child.

Check to make sure that each proposed goal is achievable, can be measured, and is clear (if not, ask questions!). Goals have to include measures so you and the school know how your child is progressing and when the goals have been reached, as reported at the end of each grading period when progress is reported.

Find out who will be attending the meeting, and let the school know if you are bringing anyone, such as a family member, friend, professional, advocate, or someone who works with your child outside of school. Try to bring an advocate or support person with you to help you. Bringing someone with you is very helpful in order to give you support and remind you of anything you may have forgotten to talk about.

Make sure the IEP team has scheduled enough time for the meeting, so you do not feel rushed. If you have a lot to talk about or have disagreements with the proposed plan, you can ask for a longer meeting or two meetings, one to go over your concerns and a second meeting to complete the formal plan.

Know what is very important to you, and what you are willing to compromise on. This will show you are willing to negotiate and work with the school team. It will help to make a list to remind yourself of all the points you want to make.

Know that you can ask, in writing, for an IEP meeting anytime you feel the team needs to meet. This is especially important when you are concerned about the plan. You can agree to try certain approaches and then ask to meet again in a few months to review progress. At that time, the IEP team can review any difficulties and reassess if the plan is working or it needs adjustment.

Additional Reminders

- The IEP needs to be created specifically for your child based on their strengths and areas of concern.
- The IEP meeting is where this will be discussed and created. It must be at a time that is mutually convenient for parents and school personnel, and a translator must be provided for parents who speak a language other than English.
- The IEP needs to contain **measurable** goals to work toward in school program.
- The IEP needs to state the placement of your child (regular classroom with supports, pull-out for help from special education teacher, a class for students with disabilities, or a school just for children with disabilities) with preference always given to being included in the typical classroom, with supports, for the majority of the day. That should always be the first placement considered.
- The IEP needs to list related services to be given, such as Occupational, Physical or Speech Therapy, Vision or Orientation and Mobility teachers, sign language interpreter, psychological counseling, Adaptive PE or Music Therapy, and where they will be provided.
- The IEP needs to list the amount of time per week special education services will be provided, who will give those services, and where those services will be given (pullout or in classroom).
- The IEP meeting is a meeting mandated by law under The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- Parents are to be a vital part of the IEP team, which also consists of the student (if appropriate), special education and regular teachers who will work with the child, any related service personnel such as physical, occupational and speech therapists, vision teachers, a person who is authorized to commit resources and programs, person who can interpret any assessments completed on the student.
- Parents, or the school, may invite other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including neighbors, friends, or advocates, as appropriate.

