

Parent IEP Checklist

Meeting Date: _____

Check each step after you do it. Keep this checklist for your records.

- Ask for written notice of the meeting, even if the school phones you to schedule it. (DO NOT give up the right to written notice of an IEP meeting unless it is an emergency for your child.)
- Read the notice form to see what the meeting will be about and who will be there.
- If you can't attend at the time listed, ask school staff to change the meeting time so you can attend.
- Ask if everyone has planned enough time to complete the meeting.
- Ask the school for copies of any information you do not have, including:
 - Latest special education evaluation
 - Any new testing done by the school
 - Last IEP and progress reports that match it
 - Classroom testing information or progress notes
 - Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks (MCF) for your child's grade level/age
 - Student Handbook for your child's school
 - Drafts of the IEP that will be discussed at the meeting
- Get reports you have from doctors, outside therapists, tutors, consultants or others.
- Make a list of your child's gifts and talents
- List other things your child needs to learn in the upcoming year. Be ready to talk about:
 - How will learning this help your child?
 - Will your child be able to participate more fully in school life? How?
 - Will your child be more independent? How?
 - How will your child's life change or improve if your child learns this?
- Look at your list; mark 4-5 things that are most important for your child to learn. Make copies to share at the meeting; ask the other IEP team members to use them to develop IEP goals.
- List areas in your child's life that would improve with assistive technology (communication, mobility, etc.). Be ready to ask for assistive technology if your child needs it.
- Ask a friend, relative, or advocate to go with you to the meeting.
- Meet with teachers, testing experts or related service providers before the meeting if necessary.
- If you want to tape record the meeting, gather and test your equipment. You must give written notice 24 hours in advance.
- Be ready to have fun....planning a good program for your child is exciting and interesting!

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Step 1: Opening the Meeting

- Introduce yourself and anyone that has come to the meeting with you.

Step 2: Review of Present Level of Performance PLP

- Share your ideas about your child's progress. Show pictures or other documentation about what your child can do outside of school, including assistive technology solutions that are helpful. Remind the team you want your child's program to help him or her use and build on strengths and abilities. The IDEA requires the IEP Committee to address your child's strengths; you are the best source of this information.
- Share any reports you have from outside therapists, tutors, consultants or doctors.
- Make sure you understand whether your child has made progress on IEP goals as a results of the services he or she has received.
- Ask questions if something is not clear. At this point, you should have a clear picture in your mind about how your child is doing in school.

Step 3: Writing Goals and Objectives

- Talk about what you want for your child after high school. Make sure the goals you include will lead to further education, employment with people who do not have disabilities, independent living and/or community participation.
- Ask what students at your child's age without disabilities are learning and how your child might also learn that information. (Note: You can get the information in advance by looking at the MCF for that grade level).
- If the school has developed a draft or proposed goals ahead of time, remember they must include your input. The IEP should not be written in advance so that your participation is only to come to the meeting and sign it. Talk about all the goals suggested by you and school staff. Help the team decide which ones should be included, keeping in mind the long-term outcomes you want for your child.
- As you review the proposed goals, remember the IEP must be designed to meet your child's needs and you and the school staff make up the IEP Committee. Your job is to revise, add or delete goals until the IEP reflects the most important goals your child should achieve in the coming year.
- Ask questions if you do not understand how your child's progress will be measured, what services your child will receive during the school day, who will provide each service, and how much time each day your child is with students who do not have disabilities.

Step 4: Deciding on Related Services

- Make sure related services, supports or modifications needed to implement the IEP goals are discussed.
- Review all evaluation reports to see which related services should be considered for your child.
- Find out before the IEP meeting if you will need a doctor's letter or other medical referral before the school will provide a particular related service.

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Step 5: Thinking About Other Important Things (Consideration of Special Factors)

Make sure you think and talk about them if your child has needs in any of these areas:

- Braille
- Positive Behavior Support
- Communication
- Assistive Technology
- Limited English

Step 6: Deciding on Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment

After agreeing on goals and objectives, the LAST step is to decide placement (where the special education and related services will be provided).

Keep in Mind:

Even if placement in a general education classroom is rejected, the IEP Committee must document why the general education placement, with the use of modifications and supplementary aids and services, is not appropriate.

A student-even one with significant disabilities-cannot be removed from the general education classroom solely because your child needs modifications to the general education curriculum.

Discuss all supports, modifications or assistive technology your child needs to reach his or her IEP goals and be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Specific learning and teaching strategies;
- Adapted expectations, curriculum or material;
- Help from a paraprofessional aide;
- Therapies that can be provided in the general education classroom;
- Adaptive equipment; and/or
- Assistive technology devices, (simple or high-tech).

Ask questions like these:

- What is needed to implement the IEP in general education classes?
- How would the student's daily schedule look?
- When would the student and/or teacher need these supports?
- Who is available to provide them?
- Who is responsible for any modifications of the curriculum?

Remember your child cannot be excluded from general education classes because he or she needs: related services; special equipment; modifications to the general curriculum; more intensive services (smaller student/teacher ratio); help from a paraprofessional; or a physically accessible classroom or building.

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- Work toward agreement. Even when parents and school members of the IEP Committee disagree; there is a process in place.** If you are not in agreement with the student's IEP or placement, the school can implement the IEP, and you may:
 - File a State Complaint with the Mississippi Department of Education
 - Request Mediation (a meeting where an outside person qualified to help two sides solve disagreements will help you and the district solve yours)
 - File a Due Process Complaint (if you choose this option, you will be asked to go to a Resolution Meeting to discuss the Due Process Complaint, the facts and to give the district an opportunity to solve the disagreement. In most cases, if you file for a due process hearing, your child will remain in the placement with the program on which you last agreed.)

The Last Step: Closing the Meeting

- Review the completed IEP and minutes. Do not have your name listed on the IEP until you have read it. At times things are discussed, and not written into the plan. You can take a copy home to read.
- If you have read and agreed to the IEP, ask for a copy. You are entitled to a copy of all the IEP either at the IEP meeting or within a reasonable time thereafter.
- If your child has several teachers, ask the IEP Committee who will give each teacher a copy.
- If needed, ask to have the IEP translated into your native language.
- Review the checklist to see if all issues have been discussed. If all members agree on the parts of the IEP and the recommended placement, you are ready to close the meeting. Congratulate the team (including yourself) on a job well done!

Ways to Stay Involved After the Meeting:

You have just spent a great deal of time and effort developing an appropriate IEP for your child. Now make sure it is followed and make sure your child is progressing in the general education curriculum:

- Give positive feedback to teachers and administrators about things that work well for the school as a whole and for your child;
- Be involved and visible; volunteer in the classroom, library, or other school program; go to school events and meetings; join the PTA and participate on the school improvement team;
- Communicate regularly with teachers (notebooks, phone calls, emails, meetings and conferences);
- Share articles and other resources of interest with teachers and other school personnel;
- Read the progress reports you get from the school. Bring questions, concerns and/or praise to parent/teacher conferences. Celebrate progress!