



# INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) MEETING

## Preparing for the IEP Meeting

Working with your school to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for your child is an important step in making sure they get the most out of their education. An IEP that best meets their needs is essential to your child's success. It provides specialized services and supports to meet the unique needs related to his/her disability.

### IEP Meeting Letter

You received a letter from the school stating that a meeting has been scheduled. One of the most important parts of developing an IEP is how you prepare for the meeting.

### Ask yourself

- What's the meetings date? NYS considers a notice of five (5) days to be adequate notice.
- Does the letter state the purpose of the meeting?
- If my child is 14 years old or is turning 14, did he also receive an invitation to the meeting in order to discuss transition planning?
- Who will be there? What do they do? Is there anyone not on the list that I think should be there or not be there?

### Reply and RSVP

Sign and return the invitation to the meeting and keep a copy for your records.

You can also include the following:

- Alternative meeting date or time, or a request to participate by phone.
- A list of the people you're inviting (this could be a friend, family member or professional).
- Your own list of concerns that you'd like to discuss.
- A request for a copy of the IEP draft (if any) to review before the meeting.
- A note if you're planning on doing an audio recording.

### Getting Organized

Organize your child's records/files. Look over your list of concerns and think about what records/files you'll need. If you're missing something make the necessary arrangements to get copies. Examples of things you'll need are:

- Past and current IEPs
- Evaluation/assessment results
- Progress reports
- Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP)
- Other documents of importance (i.e. medical records, report cards, new treatments, work samples, tutor reports, therapy reports or notes).

### Reflection

As you are getting ready for the IEP meeting, you want to think about your child and ask yourself these questions:

- Where has he/she really succeeded?
- Look at their accomplishments and ask, "What worked?"
- Also very important is, "What didn't work?"
- What am I worried about, what keeps me up at night? Ask your child if anything keeps him/her up at night, what do they wish could be better?

### Things to do

- Write down and prioritize your list of questions/concerns.
- Fill out our "About My Child" form and create a vision statement for your child.
- Create an agenda and make copies for the team.
- Have a conversation with your child about the purpose of the meeting and prepare him for what he might hear or see. Ask him/her to write their own list of concerns.
- Highlight the child, bring pictures or a short video.
- Ask teachers beforehand if they have any concerns that should be discussed during the meeting.



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## The IEP Meeting

It is important that you speak up. Your opinion matters and just as in any team, everyone is there to work together for the best outcome. In this case, it is the success of your child.

### Meeting Tips

- Bring any important documents/files or notes.
- Arrive early, greet everyone at the meeting.
- Ask if anyone is officially taking notes and review them periodically.
- Review your agenda (give copies to everyone) and the IEP team's agenda.
- Share your child's story. *Remember you are an expert on your child.*
- Always feel free to ask questions if something isn't clear. Don't move forward unless you understand.
- You can take a break if needed. Just ask.

### Before leaving the meeting

- Review your list of concerns and decide if they've all been addressed. Review all of the notes taken.
- Schedule another meeting if there are unresolved issues.
- Make an action plan. What are the next steps and who is responsible for them? Restate the next steps, say "Just to make sure I understand everything..."
- Sign the IEP if it is the first time your child has been found eligible for special education services and you agree with the recommendations. If you don't agree, state your concerns in writing.
- Close the meeting by thanking everyone for their time, participation, efforts and ideas.
- Make sure you have a copy of the IEP, even if a clean copy will be sent later.
- Ask how often you will receive progress notes and how you will receive them (many schools may not provide electronic grades or progress notes).

### After the Meeting

Reflect. Follow up. One of the most important things you can do after the meeting is to reflect upon your experience of the meeting. This way you can think of ways you can improve for the next meeting.

### Ideas to consider

- Write a letter/email to the team stating any specific tasks that were given out during the meeting and the person responsible (i.e. meeting minutes). This is a great way to get everyone on the same page.
- Write "Thanks You" notes to the team and those invited.
- Share copies of the IEP with other professionals working with your child.
- Make sure all of your child's teachers are aware of the IEP and/or that it has been updated.

### Long Term Strategy

Even more important than the follow up after the meeting is the long-term follow up. Remember that the end of the IEP meeting is the beginning of an appropriate education for your child.

Stay in contact throughout the year by:

- Paying close attention to your child's education. Ensure proper implementation of the IEP and that your child is making progress.
- Communicate with your child's teachers. Share successes and address any issues as they arise.
- Make time to review the IEP periodically and request an IEP meeting to discuss changes if needed.