



What is an IEP?

Q. WHAT IS AN IEP?

A. IEP stands for Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The IEP is a written document that describes the educational plan for a student with a disability. The IEP talks about the student's disability, what skills he/she need to learn, what the student is doing in school this year, what services the school will provide, and where learning will take place.

Q. WHY DO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES NEED AN IEP?

A. First, it's the law. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires each student with disabilities who receives special education services to have an IEP – an educational program written just for him or her.

Second, the IEP helps the school meet the student's special needs. It also helps plan educational goals for the student. That is why it is called an IEP – because it is an individualized education plan.

Q. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF AN IEP?

A. The purpose of the IEP is to make sure that everyone – the student, his/her family, and the school staff – knows what the student's educational program will be this year.

Q. WHERE IS THE IEP DEVELOPED?

A. The IEP is developed during the annual IEP meeting, where the people who are concerned with the student's education meet, discuss, and develop student-specific goals and objectives for the next year.

Q. WHO COMES TO THE IEP MEETING?

A. The IEP team meeting can be attended by:

- The child/youth
- Parents
- Teachers (special education and general education)
- Therapists (SLP, OT, PT)
- Counselor
- Principal
- Others the family or the school think can help plan this particular child or youth's IEP.

Q. HOW OFTEN IS THE IEP MEETING HELD?

A. The law requires that the IEP is reviewed and revised at least once a year. This means attending at least one IEP meeting each year. However, the student, his/her parents, or the school can ask for more IEP meetings, if any of the people involved think that it's necessary to take another look at the IEP.

Q. HOW LONG DOES AN IEP MEETING LAST?

A. At least one hour.

Q. WHY SHOULD THE STUDENT PARTICIPATE IN THE IEP MEETING?

A. It is the student's educational plan everyone will be discussing in the meeting. The student's opinions are an important part of this discussion, especially those 14 years and older.

Q. WHAT SHOULD A STUDENT DO IF HE/SHE WANTS TO PARTICIPATE IN DEVELOPING THEIR OWN IEP?

A. There are five basic steps students should do:

1. Talk to parents and teachers.
2. Review last year's IEP.
3. Think about your strengths and weaknesses in school.
4. Write your goals for this school year.
5. Practice what you want to say at the meeting.

