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Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Information Booklet

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Overview

An IEP is an individualized educational program, or plan, for a child who is qualified to receive special education and related services. Each IEP is designed for that specific child and is truly an individualized document. Our nation's special education law, IDEA, is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This act requires that definite information be included in each IEP. It is true, however, that certain states and local school systems often include additional information in order to document that they have met certain aspects of federal or state law. The IEP is a binding contract between the state and the family regarding the services a child will be provided.

When a child is considered for special education services, there is a process that is implemented. During and after this process the IEP will be created and implemented.

The Process

1. Child is identified as possibly needing services.
2. Child is evaluated.
3. Eligibility is decided.
4. Child found eligible for services.
5. IEP meeting is scheduled.
6. IEP meeting is held and IEP is written.
7. Services are provided.
8. IEP is reviewed.
9. Child is reevaluated.

The Timeline for Assessment and IEP Implementation

1. Student Study Team will observe the child and when appropriate send a courtesy letter to parent(s) notifying them that their child may be eligible for special education services.
2. A written referral and proposed assessment plan will then be created within 15 days. This will be sent to parents, as it requires a parent signature. If they do not sign this form, the timeline does not begin, and the process is resolved. If they do, then with informed consent, an assessment and an IEP meeting will be established within 50 days. This is for the purpose of reviewing the complete evaluation and IEP.

3. The development of the IEP and its implementation follow immediately.
4. Reviewing the IEP occurs annually or upon request from anyone on the team. This includes parents or service providers.
5. There is a mandatory tri-annual evaluation. It is up to the SST team to determine what the evaluation will look like. This may or may not include standardized tests.

For those districts on year-round calendars, the same timelines remain in effect except that days between school terms or sessions are not counted. Saturdays, Sundays and holidays do count toward the timeline. The exception to this is when they exceed 5 days off, and then they do not count.

People Required in Attendance of the IEP Meeting

- ✓ Parents
- ✓ Regular education teacher if child attends regular education facility.
- ✓ Special education teacher and/or providers.
- ✓ Local education agency representatives who provide/supervise special education services and are knowledgeable about district resources and general education curriculum.
- ✓ Individuals who performed assessments and who can interpret educational implications of those assessments.
- ✓ Individuals at discretion of parents or agency who may have special knowledge/expertise regarding the child.
- ✓ When appropriate, the child.
- ✓ At age 14, the student must be invited to develop transition service plans and any agencies responsible for implementing services.

There are options available to the parents if they do not agree with the plan provided in their child's IEP. By law they can challenge decisions about a child's eligibility, evaluation, placement, and services schools provide. If this occurs, there is a process available for resolution.

1. Try to reach an agreement
2. If parent(s) and the student support team cannot reach an agreement, the parent(s) may file a due process complaint to the Board of Education.

3. Then, a 30-day mediation process begins. Parental participation is highly recommended and is a prerequisite to an impartial due process hearing.
4. If agreement is still not met, an impartial due process hearing will begin.

There Are Items That Each IEP Must Contain

- ✓ Current performance
- ✓ Annual goals
- ✓ Special education and related services
- ✓ Participation with disabled and typical children
- ✓ Participation in statewide tests
- ✓ Date and place of IEP meeting
- ✓ Transition services needed at age 14 and 16
- ✓ Age of majority (At age 18, needed transition from services).
- ✓ Measuring progress

Additional Concerns Necessary for Consideration

- If child's behavior interferes with learning or other's learning. The IEP team will utilize strategies to address behavior.
- Limited proficiency in English
- Visual impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Communication needs
- Assistive technologies

Information Included in the IEP

Once an IEP is created, it is reviewed annually. The IEP contains a great deal of information regarding the child. This information covers a wide range.

Student Information:

- Name, address, phone, birth date, and parent(s) name(s)
- District of residence and student's residential status

- Foster/licensed agencies possibly associated (i.e. CA Child Services, CMH, Regional Center)

Eligibility/Instructional Setting:

- Rationale for certification (i.e. cognitive, social, language deficits)
- Services being provided (i.e. speech, APE, OT, NPA)
- Service options considered or recommended

Present Level of Education/Performance:

- Academic
- Speech & language
- OT

Special Factors (Part 1):

- Concerns of parents
- Areas of education to be addressed
- Student participation with disabled children and non-disabled children
- Supplemental aids, services, and modifications provided to student
- Extended time to complete tasks or shortened assignments
- Breaks
- Increased verbal response time
- PECS
- Special program modifications for school personnel
- Specific behavioral intervention strategies and support

Special Factors (Part 2):

- Three-year evaluation for assistive technology
 1. Alternative assessment
 2. Braille instruction
 3. Communication
 4. Graduation status
 5. Transition

Annual Goals and Benchmarks/Short term Objectives:

- Measurable annual goals
- Dated benchmarks
- Short-term objectives

This is a program, or plan, to assist the child in the best manner of education. The quantity and nature of goals for the child is specific. An IEP is a legally binding document intended to support the family and the agencies involved in providing the necessary services for the child.