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A Family for Every Child

Individualized Education Plans

What is an IEP?

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written statement of the educational program designed to meet a child's individual needs. Every child who receives special education services must have an IEP. That's why the process of developing this vital document is of great interest and importance to educators, administrators, and families alike.

The IEP has two general purposes: to set reasonable learning goals for a child, and to state the services that the school district will provide for the child. The IEP is developed jointly by the school system, the parents of the child, and the student (when appropriate).

Who develops the IEP?

The IEP is developed by a team of individuals that includes key school staff and the child's parents. The team meets, reviews the assessment information available about the child, and designs an educational program to address the child's educational needs that result from his or her disability. Learn more about who is on the "IEP Team".

What is in an IEP?

Each child's IEP must contain specific information, as listed within IDEA, our nation's special education law. This includes (but is not limited to):

- the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, describing how the child is currently doing in school and how the child's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general curriculum
- annual goals for the child, meaning what parents and the school team think he or

she can reasonably accomplish in a year
- the special education and related services to be provided to the child, including supplementary aids and services (such as a communication device) and changes to the program or supports for school personnel
- how much of the school day the child will be educated separately from nondisabled children or not participate in extracurricular or other nonacademic activities such as lunch or clubs
- how (and if) the child is to participate in state and district-wide assessments, including what modifications to tests the child needs
- when services and modifications will begin, how often they will be provided, where they will be provided, and how long they will last
- how school personnel will measure the child's progress toward the annual goals.

More Information

For more information on IEPs, please visit the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities at http://nichcy.org/schoolage/iep