

Who attends the IEP meeting?

Under IDEA, certain people *must* be part of the IEP team. It is important to note that there doesn't have to be a different person for every role. Often, one person carries more than one responsibility on the team.

- **You, as Parent(s)**
- **School Administrator**—a member of the school district who knows about curriculum taught to children who do not have disabilities and the resources available to the school. This person must also be qualified to provide or supervise special education services.
- **General Education Teacher**—at least one general education teacher, if your child is (or may be) participating in the general education class.
- **Special Education Teacher**—at least one of your child's special education teachers or, if appropriate, at least one special education provider who works with your child.
- **Evaluation Personnel**—someone who knows about your child's evaluation, what the evaluation results were, and what the results mean in terms of instruction. This could be a school psychologist, an administrator, or one of your child's teachers.
- **Your Child**—Students are encouraged to take part in developing their own IEPs. Some students in elementary school come to the meeting just to learn a little about the process or to share information about themselves. As students get older, they take a more active role.

Other members of the team in addition to the people listed above, you and the school can invite other people to the IEP meeting. This can include:

- **Translators or interpreters**—If English is not your first language, or if you communicate by using sign language or in another mode, the law says the school must provide an interpreter, if you ask for one.
- **Transition personnel**—If the IEP meeting will include planning for your child's life after high school, staff from outside agencies may be invited to attend *with your consent*. An example of such an agency might be the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation.
- **Others with knowledge or special expertise about your child**—Many parents find it helpful to have a support person at the IEP meeting. This may be another parent, a friend, an advocate, or a consultant. Others could include student friends, specialists, tutors, educational consultants, or school staff.

For more information contact:

UPLIFT, Family Support Specialists

Phone: (888) 875-4383

Website: upliftwy.org

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities

Phone: (800) 695-0285

Website: www.nichcy.org

Wyoming Department of Education: Special Education Unit

Phone: (307) 777-2555

Website: <http://www.k12.wy.us/se.asp>

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The Individual Education Program

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The IEP Process

What's involved in developing my child's IEP?

Developing your child's IEP involves:

- (1) the IEP **meeting(s)**, where you, your child (at times), and school staff members together decide on an educational program for your son or daughter; and
- (2) the IEP **document**, which puts the decisions from that meeting in writing. Among other things, this document lists the services and supports your child will receive.

The entire IEP process is a way for you and the school to talk about your child's needs and to create a plan to meet those needs.

The IEP meeting is somewhat formal. By law, certain people must attend. People sign in to show who is there. Lots of papers are looked at and passed around. People will talk about your child, his or her needs and strengths, and what type of educational program would be appropriate. You should feel free to ask questions and offer suggestions. You will also want to feel comfortable that the team has spent enough time talking and planning before filling out the various sections of the IEP.

Where and when do IEP meetings take place?

You and the school agree on where and when to have the IEP meeting. Usually, meetings are held at school during regular staff time. By law, the school must tell you in writing:

- the purpose of the meeting; the time and place for the meeting;
- who will be there and that you may invite other people who have knowledge or

special expertise about your child to the meeting. **Also—**

- The school must hold the meeting to develop your child's IEP within 30 calendar days of when your child is found eligible for special education services.
- You must agree to the program, in writing, before the school may carry out your child's *first* IEP.
- The IEP must be reviewed at least once every 12 months and revised as necessary.

It may take more than one meeting to write a complete IEP. You may ask for an IEP meeting at any time, if you feel that changes need to be made to your child's educational program.

Does the IEP meeting have to be in person?

No. When holding an IEP meeting, you and the school may agree to use other means of participation. For example, some members may participate by video conference or conference calls.

What is in the IEP?

Under IDEA, the items below *must* be in every IEP.

- Your child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance;
- Annual goals for your child;
- How your child's progress will be measured;
- The special education, related services, and supplementary aids and services that will be provided to (or on behalf of) your child, including program modifications or supports for school staff;
- An explanation of the extent (if any) to which your child will *not* participate with

children without disabilities in the regular class and in school activities;

- Any modifications your child will need when taking state or district-wide assessments;
- The dates when services will begin and end, the amount of services, as well as how often and where they will take place;
- How and when you will be informed of your child's progress;
- transfer rights upon reaching adulthood. Refer to your state's special education regulations to find out how this issue is handled.

What happens at the IEP meeting?

At the IEP meeting the team will develop, review, and/or revise the IEP document. You and the other team members will work to create an IEP that is educationally appropriate and that the team can agree on. Before the meeting, school staff usually write down their ideas of what needs to be in your child's IEP. It's a good idea for you to jot down what is most important to you. You can share these ideas with each other before the meeting or also ask the school to send you draft ideas, so you can look them over before meeting. Team members can also get copies of your child's recent tests or evaluations. During the meeting, each person takes a turn in the discussion. The discussion will include talking about:

- your child's strengths;
- your concerns for enhancing your child's education;
- the results of the most recent evaluation of your child; and
- your child's academic, developmental, and functional needs.