

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

TIPS FOR PARENTS

EVALUATION

Making a Referral and Request for Initial Evaluation:

- ✓ Ask in writing for evaluation; keep a copy of your request.
- ✓ Explain the child's problem(s) and why the evaluation is needed.
- ✓ Parental consent is required for evaluation.
- ✓ Parents have the right to an Independent Educational Evaluation of the student if they disagree with the school's evaluation.

Evaluation Questions to Ask:

- ✓ What is the test measuring?
- ✓ What is the average or normal on this test?
- ✓ Where is my child in comparison to the normal?
- ✓ What does this mean in terms of teaching my child?

ELIGIBILITY

- ✓ Based off of assessments and IEP team input.
- ✓ Student must meet one of the 13 classifications and require specialized instruction. (See IEP Handbook for more information.)

PREPARATION FOR THE IEP MEETING

IEP Meeting Preparation:

- ✓ Gather information to share: medical, psychological, other assessments.
 - Keep a file of all important information related to your child's educational record.
 - Review your child's school records and current IEP if there is one.
- ✓ List what you see as your child's strengths and needs.
- ✓ Write down your priorities and long range goals for your child.
- ✓ List services that you believe your child needs to attain the goals you have identified.
- ✓ Write down your questions.
- ✓ Communicate with your team prior to the meeting:
 - Ask for and review evaluation data.
 - Share your ideas for IEP goals with the team.
 - Ask for a copy of the draft IEP goals prior to the team meeting.

Inviting Individuals to the IEP Meeting:

- ✓ Parents may invite anyone who will be helpful to the IEP meeting.
- ✓ Inform the school who you invite to the IEP meeting prior to the meeting.
- ✓ Students are encouraged to participate in the IEP meeting where appropriate.
- ✓ Key members of the IEP Team: Parent(s), LEA (Local Education Agency), Special Education Teacher, General Education Teacher.

PARTICIPATION IN THE IEP MEETING

- ✓ Use good communication skills throughout the meeting.
- ✓ LEA representative should conduct the meeting.
- ✓ Have IEP team members introduce themselves and their roles.
- ✓ Parents must be given a copy of Utah's **Procedural Safeguards Notice** outlining specific parent rights under IDEA.
- ✓ Make sure the concerns about your child as well as the child's strengths are listed on the IEP.
- ✓ Communicate your priorities and suggestions for goals. Consider how they fit with the goals proposed by the rest of the team.
- ✓ Be prepared to negotiate. See if there are alternative ways to meet goals.
- ✓ Ask for clarification of any information or statements that are unclear to you.

What Your Signature Means:

- ✓ All participants should sign the IEP.
 - All signatures on the IEP show participation and attendance.
 - Parents may note on the IEP that they "disagree" or have concerns.

FOLLOW-UP ON THE IEP MEETING

- ✓ Express appreciation for the efforts of school personnel.
- ✓ Monitor your child's progress.
 - Know how often progress reports will be sent home and know how best to communicate with the IEP team.
- ✓ IEP can be changed as needed.
 - Parents may request an IEP meeting if there are concerns or problems with the IEP or if the child is not making satisfactory progress.
- ✓ IEP teams are to meet annually.

PROBLEM SOLVING IN THE IEP PROCESS

Proceed thoughtfully! Seek to resolve difficulties at the lowest possible level.

When It Just Doesn't Work:

- ✓ Communicate with your school team.
- ✓ Follow the chain of command which is typically:
 1. Teacher
 2. Principal
 3. School District Special Education Director/Supervisor
 4. Utah State Office of Education, Special Education.

All provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) also apply to Charter Schools.

For more detailed information see the Utah Parent Center's "Parents as Partners in the IEP Process" handbook at www.utahparentcenter.org/publications/handbooks