



IEP TEAM MEMBERS

Who should attend an IEP meeting?

An IEP is an Individualized Education Program. An IEP is the legal document that describes the educational goals and services necessary to help a student with a disability make meaningful educational progress over the next year. The IEP is developed and discussed during IEP meetings. Certain individuals must attend an IEP meeting:

The Parent(s) or Guardian(s):

The parent or guardian is an important part of the IEP team as he/she is the educational decision maker for the child until the child turns 18. The parent/guardian knows the child best and can provide essential information about the child's strengths and areas of need to the school.

Because the parent's participation is so important, the school should make every effort possible to ensure that a parent is present at the meeting, including scheduling a meeting at a mutually convenient time. If neither parent can attend, the school must use other efforts to include the parent in the meeting, including a phone or video call. If the school can't convince a parent to attend, they may have the meeting, but they must have records of their attempts to include parents. When the school notifies a parent of an upcoming meeting, the parent should let them know if they can attend. If they cannot attend at the proposed time, the parent should provide other times and dates to the school in writing. If it is the student's first IEP meeting, the school cannot give the child services without the parent's written permission.

A General Education Teacher:

A general education teacher must be present to provide input about the student's involvement and progress in the general education setting, unless they are in a school setting where they do not receive general education services (such as a Special Day School). He or she will also discuss what interventions, supports, and accommodations will be used in general education and/or inclusion classes.

An Exceptional Education Teacher:

An exceptional education teacher must attend the IEP meeting to discuss how to modify the general curriculum to help the child make progress. The teacher will propose interventions and services, and collaborate with the team about how he/she will individualize instruction to meet the child's unique needs. The exceptional education teacher is responsible for implementing the IEP and collecting data on the student's progress.

A Representative of the School District:

Sometimes called the "Local Education Agency" or "LEA", this individual must be knowledgeable about both the general education and special education curriculum. He or she must be able to commit school resources to the student and ensure that the IEP will be implemented. Most often, this is a principal or an assistant principal, but it can also be another person the principal designates to act in their place, such as a Dean of Students.

An Interpreter of Evaluation Results:

Whenever any evaluation results are being discussed, an individual who can interpret the results must attend the meeting. This individual can explain the results of the evaluation and help the team plan appropriate instruction based on those results. Interpreters can include:

- School Psychologist for psychological evaluations and Manifestation Determination Reviews
- Speech Language Pathologist for speech and language evaluations
- Occupational Therapist for occupational therapy and sensory evaluations
- Physical Therapist for physical therapy evaluations
- Board Certified Behavioral Analyst for Functional Behavior Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans
- Others with educational expertise

Other Individuals with Special Expertise:

Parents or school personnel can invite additional people with knowledge about the child or special expertise to join the IEP team. This can include speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, behavioral specialists, school social workers, school-based therapists, paraprofessionals, interpreters, special education coaches from the district, and others with important knowledge about the child or the school system.

The parent also has the right to invite family members, friends, case managers, mental health providers, advocates, lawyers, and others who know the child well. If the parent decides to bring an attorney to the meeting, make sure to notify the school in advance so that they can have their attorney present.

The Child, When Appropriate:

The student may attend the IEP meeting. Having the student attend helps the student know what is expected of both the student and the school staff. This can also provide the student with a good opportunity to practice self-advocacy skills and to allow their interests to be taken into account. The student must be invited if postsecondary goals and related transition services are going to be discussed.

However, if sensitive information is going to be discussed in the meeting, it may be helpful to have the student be excused or ask for the student to come during a later part of the IEP. Talk to your child in advance about the issues that will come up in the IEP meeting. You can let the IEP team know if you need a break to excuse your child.

Each of these listed individuals should be present for the entire IEP meeting, unless the parent excuses someone from the meeting in writing.

Before the parent excuses one of these individuals, make sure that individual has discussed his or her portion of the IEP (present levels, goals, accommodations, and service hours). The IEP meeting can also be rescheduled to ensure all required members are present for the entire meeting.

Tip:

At the beginning of the meeting, everyone should introduce themselves in order to determine if everyone is present. Write down everyone's name and his or her role. If all required individuals are not present, the parent/guardian has the right to stop the meeting until all the necessary people are in attendance or ask for the meeting to be rescheduled.