

ORGANIZING AND ADVOCATING FOR YOUR CHILD WITH AN IEP

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DISCLAIMER

- The opinions expressed in this presentation are based solely on the personal experience of Keri Spielmann and are not a guarantee of outcome.
- Each student and their needs are individualized.
- You are encouraged to do your own research, network with a special education advocate or attorney. Resources are provided in this presentation to find support in your area.

WHAT IS AN IEP?

Not just a document, it's a process!

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Documentation organizes the individualized program of children with disabilities for those who educate children and their caregivers.

Provides important information to implement the educational program that has been designed to meet the individualized needs of the child.

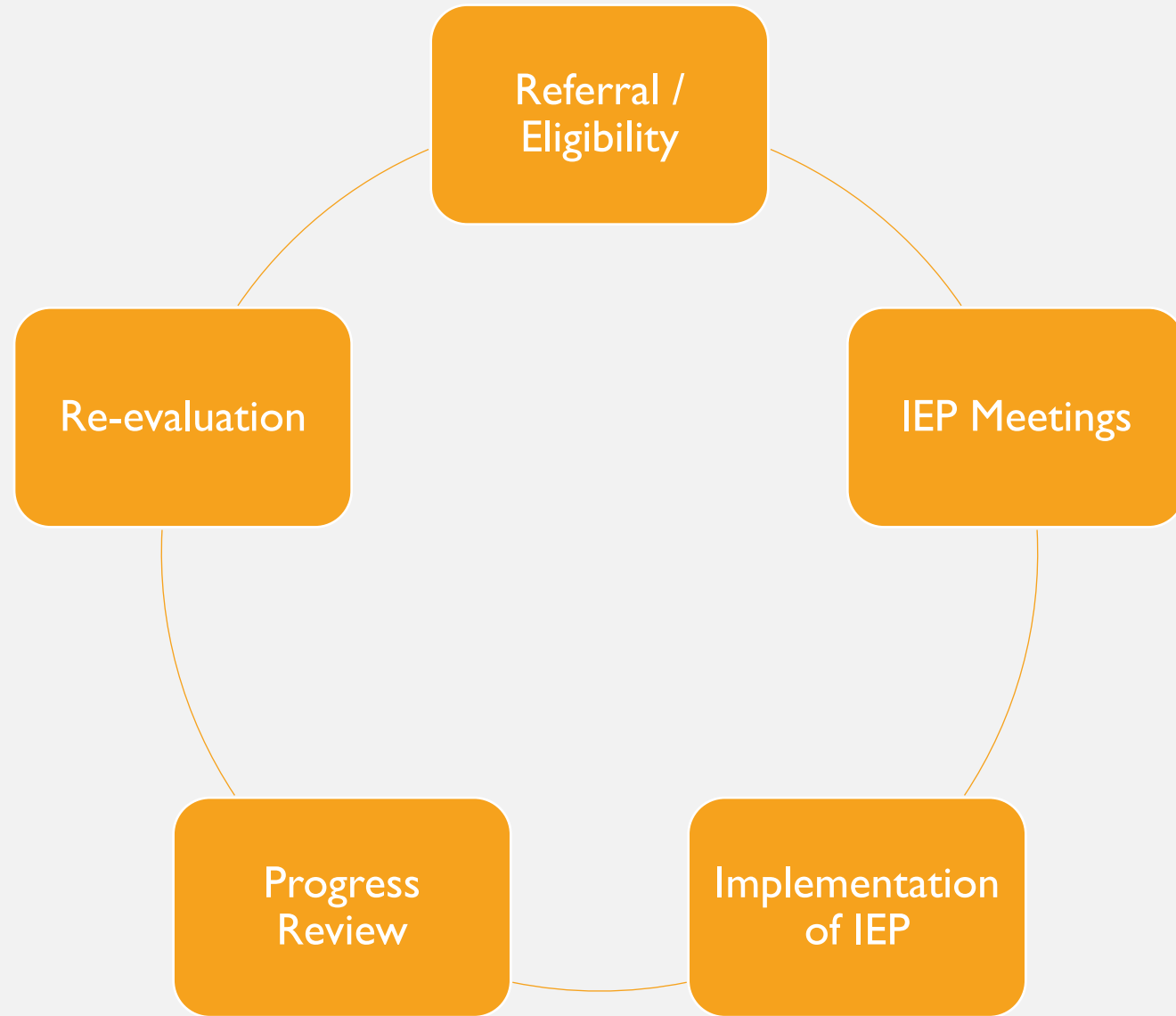
IDEA : 6 PRINCIPLES OF IDEA

- Free and Appropriate Public Education
- Appropriate Evaluation
- Individualized Education Plan
- Least Restrictive Environment
- Parent Participation
- Procedural Safeguards

FEDERAL VS STATE

Implementation varies by state, meeting minimum federal guidelines

1. Who is eligible?
2. Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
3. Procedural Safeguards
4. Early Intervention
5. Age of Eligibility
6. Age of Transition Services



TYPES OF IEP MEETINGS

- Types of meetings
 - Initial Eligibility
 - Eligibility
 - Transfer
 - Annual Review
 - Special Request
 - Transition Services

QUALIFYING CATEGORIES

IDEA covers 13 disability categories, one of which must “adversely affect” their educational performance.

1. Specific Learning Disability
2. Other Health Impairment
3. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
4. Emotional Disturbance
5. Speech or Language Impairment
6. Visual Impairment, including blindness
7. Deafness
8. Hearing Impairment
9. Deaf-blindness
10. Orthopedic Impairment
11. Intellectual Disability
12. Traumatic Brain Injury
13. Multiple Disabilities

COMPONENTS OF AN IEP DOCUMENT

- Current Performance
- Annual Goals
- Special Education and Related Services
- Participation with nondisabled children
- Participation in state and district wide tests
- Dates and places
- Needed transition services
- Age of majority
- Measuring Progress

Additional components vary by state

WHO TO EXPECT

- Parents
- Parent support : friend, family, advocate
- Team members: general education teacher and special education teacher
- Team member that can interpret evaluation results
- Administration who can approve resources
- Additional persons with knowledge or special expertise about the child
- Representative from transition service agencies
- Student, as appropriate

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE MEETING...

You will be offered a copy of Procedural Safeguards

Review:

1. Discuss the purpose of the meeting
2. Review evaluations, if appropriate
3. Discuss performance , present levels of performance (PLOP), including parent input
4. Discuss goals / Progress
5. Determine services needed
6. Determine accommodations needed

PREPARING FOR THE MEETING...

Parents are meaningful and important participants in their children's special education services. You have the right to understand the evaluations, goals, measurement and impact of the goals on daily life.

- Prepare any questions you may have, all questions are meaningful!
- Request a blank IEP Document, so that you can fill it in yourself
- Request and review documentation from the team before hand (evaluations, draft goals, progress)
- If necessary, request a parent meeting before the IEP meeting, for clarification purposes.

PREPARING FOR THE MEETING, CONT...

- Determine before hand the intention of the IEP meeting (see above slide, Types of IEP meetings), school team agenda and or share parent agenda
- Prepare your own list of the following, print and provide a copy to be attached to the IEP
 - Goals for your child, questions, concerns, ideas or issues
 - Accommodations requested
 - Services requested
 - Parent Vision
 - Student Vision

PREPARING FOR THE MEETING, CONT...

- Private evaluations you may want to share
- Bring a computer or notepad to take notes
- Bring something to drink
- Email the IEP Meeting chair person if you plan to:
 - Record the IEP meeting
 - Bring additional persons (advocate or attorney)
- Parent Training and Information (PTI) centers: IDEA provides funding for each state to have their own PTI that offers support and free information.
<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/>

BEFORE THE END OF THE MEETING

- Review parent requests for goals, services, accommodations to ensure that all will be recorded on the IEP as accepted or denied
- If the parent or school team have follow up items, review these and set deadlines. Note in your personal calendar to follow up.
- Review school team recommendations including goals, services and accommodations.
 - Service frequency, duration and location

POST IEP MEETING

- You will receive the IEP in the mail (or email if the school team agrees) at no cost to parents
- Review the IEP, compare to your “before the end of the meeting notes”
- Ensure that you are in agreement with IEP documentation
- Follow up on any necessary points

IF YOU DO NOT AGREE WITH THE IEP

- Try to reach an agreement. Ensure your request is documented, as well as the school teams reason for denying the request.
- Contact your local Parent Training Center (PTI)
- Ask for mediation
- Ask for due process
- File a complaint with the state education agency

B. WHAT IS PRIOR WRITTEN NOTICE? (34 CFR §300.503)

THIS SECTION EXPLAINS WHAT, HOW, AND WHEN AN LEA MUST TELL YOU ABOUT ACTIONS IT PROPOSES OR REFUSES TO TAKE.

1. When Notice Is Required

Your local education agency (LEA) – the entity responsible for providing a free appropriate public education to your child – must notify you in writing whenever it:

- a. Proposes to initiate or to change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of your child, or the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to your child; or
- b. Refuses to initiate or to change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of your child, or the provision of FAPE to your child.
- c. Change of placement for disciplinary reasons.
- d. Due process hearing, or an expedited due process hearing, initiated by LEA.
- e. Refusal of LEA to agree to an independent educational evaluation (IEE) at public expense.
- f. Parents' revocation of consent for special education and related services.

In Pennsylvania, prior written notice is provided by means of a LEA Prior Written Notice Form/Notice of Recommended Educational Placement. You should be given reasonable notice of this proposal or refusal so that if you do not agree with the LEA you may take appropriate action. Reasonable Notice means ten days.

ORGANIZATION IS KEY!

- Electronic or paper?
- Keep a calendar, follow up
- Progress reports with each IEP
- Track the goals. Understand measurement and impact.
- Parent vision statement
- Student vision statement

RESOURCES

- <https://www.wrightslaw.com/>
- <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/>
- <https://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html>
- https://www.wrightslaw.com/idea/comment/all.46540-46845.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0yoNOHL5kJDOX5PNI_gVI5AMoq_YpQRjF85DW8z0dspmNNa5MgC8rzeRE
- <https://www.understood.org/en>