

# 10 Tips for a Productive IEP Meeting

Presented by:

Riverside County SELPA

# Tip 1: Preparedness is a key element to a productive IEP meeting

Share with your elbow partner how you prepare for your child's IEP meeting.

# Communicate With Your Child to:

- ▶ check on current preferences, perceptions, needs, concerns, issues, desires;
- ▶ discuss your child's participation (if appropriate) in the IEP meeting and
- ▶ determine what, if anything, your child wants to share with the team, and how you can assist

## Communicate with School Staff to:

- ▶ establish current status of your child's performance/achievement
- ▶ schedule observations, if necessary;
- ▶ clarify information
- ▶ notify the Case Carrier of any individuals, professional or not, you are planning to invite to the meeting (Be sure to list on the IEP Notice of Meeting) and any agenda items you want addressed

# Gather and Compile:

- ▶ recent and all other relevant evaluations pertinent to this year's issues;
- ▶ the current and other relevant IEPs, to evaluate the extent of progress toward identified goals and objectives;
- ▶ the most recent and other relevant report cards;
- ▶ a list of your concerns, issues, questions, ideas;
- ▶ documentation to support your request for any new services;
- ▶ all relevant correspondence and electronic and phone communication notes with school personnel and outside professionals;
- ▶ statements from your child regarding his/her concerns, questions, issues, goals and
- ▶ possible solutions to challenges you have identified.

# Ways to Prepare for the IEP

- ▶ **Keeping Accurate Records**
  - ▶ Page 28 in Reference Guide for Parents
- ▶ **Checklist for Preparation of an IEP**
  - ▶ Page 25 in Reference Guide for Parents
- ▶ **Your Role in the IEP Process**
  - ▶ Page 26 in Reference Guide for Parents

# Keep Accurate Records

- Background Information
- Developmental History
- Medical History and Medical Records
- Family Health History
- Educational History
- Educational, Psychological, and Therapy Reports
- IEP, including Long-Term Goals (with or without short-term objectives)
- Samples of past and present work
- Records from outside agencies (*e.g., Regional Center, etc.*)
- Correspondence – Letters you have written and received
- A record of your contacts with school agencies (*e.g., personal visits, phone calls*)
- School Report Cards and IEP Progress Reports

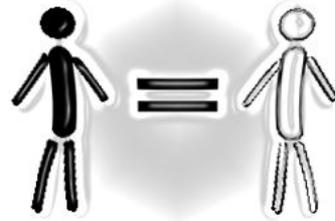
# Checklist For Preparation of an IEP

## **What can I do prior to prepare for my child's IEP meeting?**

- Be sure to respond to the IEP notification sent to you! You are invited and encouraged to attend as a member of the team to develop, review, and/or revise your child's IEP.
  - You may reschedule the meeting or ask to attend via phone conference.
  - If you need to reschedule, notify the school as soon as possible.
  - Have a couple of alternative dates ready when you call.
- Be clear on the purpose of the IEP meeting (example – initial, annual, triennial, or addendum) as this will help you prepare and enter with confidence.
- Sit down with your child and others involved in his/her education, brainstorm strengths, needs, and challenge areas.
  - List some of the areas you would like to share with the IEP team.
- Write down your questions and concerns. This will help the IEP meeting move smoothly as well as address your concerns.
- Review copies of your child's previous IEP prior to your meeting.
  - If you cannot find it, you may make a written request for a copy from the school. (Remember, it may take up to 5 business days to get a copy).
- If you have specific areas or goals in mind, contact the case carrier prior to the team meeting to discuss your ideas so they may be included in the meeting conversation.
- If one of the purposes of the meeting is to address a change in program or transition to a new school, you may want to find out more information prior to the IEP.
  - If you would like to visit that program, contact your child's special education teacher for help to set up a visitation date and time.
- If you wish to tape record the IEP team meeting, notify the IEP team at least 24 hours before the meeting. You may indicate this on the IEP conference notice if returned within the timeline above and/or via fax or email.

# Your Role During The IEP Process

- Be introduced to everyone at the meeting and, if their title is not determined, ask them in what capacity they serve your child
- Actively listen
- Share your child's needs, strengths, what motivates him/her
- Give input and feedback
- Ask questions, especially if the team is referring to terms with which you are not familiar
- Take notes
- Be an equal partner in the decision making process



## Tip 2: Maintain High Expectations for Your Child's Achievement

- ▶ Expect the same level of achievement as you would if he/she did not have a disability. Expect him/her to be able to take notes, do research, work in groups, participate in projects, clubs, field trips, etc.
- ▶ Evaluate progress:
  - ▶ Are you receiving periodic reports from school on progress or problems?
  - ▶ How is your child progressing?
  - ▶ How does your child feel he/she is doing?
  - ▶ Is your child happy at school?
  - ▶ Do you think the program is working?

## Tip 3: Be a Participating Team Member

- ▶ You are an expert with invaluable knowledge about your child's abilities and needs
- ▶ If needed, bring support to the IEP meeting
  - ▶ Federal law allows you to invite anyone who has knowledge or expertise about your child.
  - ▶ Ensure you notify the district, on the Notice of Meeting, if you plan on bringing anyone to the IEP

## Tip 4: Take Notes During the Meeting

- ▶ If at all possible, try to jot down specific ideas from the meeting
- ▶ If you choose to audiotape the IEP, you must give the district 24 hours advanced notice
  - ▶ Be sure they receive the notice, do not assume an email or text was received by the staff member to allow for the 24 hours notice. (Page 1 of Procedural Safeguards)
  - ▶ If not received 24 hours in advance, the request could be denied

Additionally, you have the right to electronically record the meeting on an audio tape recorder. The law requires that you notify the district 24 hours prior to meeting if you intend to record the proceedings. If the parent or guardian does not consent to the LEA audiotape recording an IEP meeting, the meeting shall not be recorded on an audiotape recorder. [EC 56301, 56321, 56341.1(g)(1)

- ▶ Ask for clarification [and 56506(d)]
  - ▶ A lot of information is shared during the meeting and asking to stop to re-explain or for members to slow down for understanding is a good thing to do

## Tip 5: Remember the IEP Meeting is a Process

- ▶ Typically, the IEP meeting is going to follow an agenda that is outlined by the order of each IEP form that is discussed
  - ▶ Assessment drives present levels of performance
  - ▶ present levels share the success and needs of the students,
  - ▶ the needs drive IEP goals,
  - ▶ the goals drive what services and accommodations are necessary to meet the goals,
  - ▶ and the services determine the placement of the student
- ▶ Each builds on each other so jumping from one area to another will not give you the full picture of the student. The process must be followed!

# Example of an IEP Agenda

- Introductions
- Review Procedural Safeguards
- Explain Purpose of Meeting
- Discuss Assessment Results (if applicable)
- Determine Eligibility (if applicable)
- Discuss Present Levels, including student strengths and parent concerns
- Discuss Transition Plan (if 15 years or older)
- Discuss Goals and Any Required Objectives
- Discuss Special Factors
- Discuss Services: Options considered, supplementary aids and services, special education and related services, ESY
- Clarify offer of FAPE
- Read IEP Team Meeting Comments/Continuation Page (with PWN when appropriate)
- Obtain Signatures and Parent Consent

# Tip 6: Communicating Effectively in an IEP

- ▶ Have a positive attitude
- ▶ Give and expect treatment with respect;
- ▶ Acknowledge that everyone on the team has feelings
- ▶ Keep your child as the focus of the IEP process
- ▶ Involve your child whenever possible
- ▶ If you have goals in mind and let the team know what they are, in advance if possible
- ▶ Remember that the team is there to make your child successful
- ▶ Remember, you share a common goal
- ▶ Keep the lines of communication open

# Tip 7: Ask Questions

- ▶ During the meeting, you can ask the case carrier to change things on the draft IEP that may be incorrect
- ▶ You can also ask to add any additional information that was left off
- ▶ If you are confused about anything in the evaluations or draft IEP, ask the team member to explain it in terms that may be more understandable
  - ▶ There is definitely “IEP jargon” filled with many acronyms
    - ▶ Please see pages 67-68 in the RC SELPA Guide for Parents and Guardians

## Special Education Acronyms

<b>504</b> Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act	<b>CAASPP</b> California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress	<b>EL</b> English Learner
<b>AAC</b> Augmentative & Alternative Communication	<b>CBI</b> Community-Based Instruction	<b>ELA</b> English-Language Arts
<b>AB</b> Assembly Bill (State Legislation); Adaptive Behavior	<b>CBM</b> Curriculum-Based Measurement	<b>ELD</b> English-Language Development
<b>ABA</b> Applied Behavior Analysis	<b>CBS</b> Community-Based Services	<b>ELM</b> English-Language Mainstream
<b>ADA</b> American Disability Act; Average Daily Attendance	<b>CCR</b> California Code of Regulations	<b>EMT</b> Educational Monitoring Team
<b>ADD</b> Attention Deficit Disorder	<b>CCS</b> California Children's Service	<b>ESY</b> Extended School Year
<b>ADHD</b> Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	<b>CCSS</b> Common Core State Standards	<b>FAPE</b> Free Appropriate Public Education
	<b>CCTC</b> California Commission on Teacher	<b>FBA</b> Functional Behavior Analysis
		<b>FEP</b>

## Tip 8: Take Your Time

- ▶ IEPs should not be rushed
- ▶ Ask the team to reconvene, if necessary, to allow more time for you to review evaluation results, draft IEP and proposed goals
- ▶ The final IEP document does not have to be signed at the IEP meeting
  - ▶ However, if you do agree to certain things and not others, it is best to agree at that time with exception of the others, as nothing can be started on the new IEP until there is agreement
  - ▶ If you disagree with the whole IEP, then indicate such and the team will need to reconvene
  - ▶ If you disagree with only 1 goal and agree with the rest, the option of listing the exception is best so the IEP can be implemented and the team can come back together to discuss the one goal

# Signature Page

RIVERSIDE COUNTY SPECIAL EDUCATION LOCAL PLAN AREA (SELPA) Page \_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_

## SIGNATURE AND PARENT CONSENT

The use and distribution of this form is limited to employees of public school agencies within the Riverside County Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA)



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ IEP Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

### IEP MEETING PARTICIPANTS

_____ Parent	____ / ____ / ____ Date	_____ Parent	____ / ____ / ____ Date
_____ LEA Representative/Admin. Designee	____ / ____ / ____ Date	_____ General Education Teacher	____ / ____ / ____ Date
_____ Student	____ / ____ / ____ Date	_____ Special Education Specialist	____ / ____ / ____ Date
_____ Additional Participant/Title	____ / ____ / ____ Date	_____ Additional Participant/Title	____ / ____ / ____ Date
_____ Additional Participant/Title	____ / ____ / ____ Date	_____ Additional Participant/Title	____ / ____ / ____ Date
_____ Additional Participant/Title	____ / ____ / ____ Date	_____ Additional Participant/Title	____ / ____ / ____ Date

### CONSENT

#### Agreement

1a \_\_\_\_\_ I agree to all parts of the IEP.

1b \_\_\_\_\_ I agree with the IEP, with the exception of: \_\_\_\_\_

1c \_\_\_\_\_ I do not agree with this IEP.

#### Eligibility

# Tip 9: Know Your Rights

- ▶ Parents are an equal member of your child's IEP team. You know your child better than anyone and the IEP team must take your concerns and opinions into consideration when writing the IEP.



## RIVERSIDE COUNTY SPECIAL EDUCATION LOCAL PLAN AREA

2935 Indian Ave., Perris, CA 92571  
Telephone (951) 490-0375 FAX (951) 490-0376

### NOTICE OF PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS AND PARENTS' RIGHTS

*Special Education Rights of Parents and Children  
Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B  
2004 Reauthorization (H.R. 1350)*

#### INTRODUCTION

This information provides you as parents, legal guardians, and surrogate parents of children with disabilities from 3 years of age through age 21 with an overview of your educational rights, sometimes called procedural safeguards. This notice is also provided for students who are entitled to these rights at age 18. [20 USC 1415, EC 56041.5 and 56301] A copy of these safeguards will be given to you once a year. Additional copies may be given; upon an initial referral or parent request for evaluation, upon the first occurrence of the filing of a complaint, when a decision is made to make a removal that constitutes a change of placement and at your request. If your district has a website, a copy of these procedural safeguards may be made available to you through that website. [20 USC 1415(d), 34 CFR 300.504, EC 56301(d)(2), 56321 and 56341 1(d)(1)] You may elect to receive this notice and other notices required under this section by an electronic mail (e-mail) communication, if your district makes such an option available.

#### **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

IDEA is a federal law that requires school districts to provide a "free appropriate public education" (FAPE) to eligible children with disabilities. A free appropriate public education means that special education and related services are to be provided as described in an individualized education program (IEP) and under public supervision to your child at no cost to you.

#### **Participation in Making Decisions About Your Child's Education**

You have the right to refer your child for special education services. You must be given opportunities to participate in any decision-making meeting regarding your child's special education program. You have the right to participate in an IEP meeting either in person, by teleconference, written communication and/or by sending a representative to discuss the identification (eligibility), assessment, educational placement of your child and other matters relating to your child's free appropriate public education. [20 USC 1414(d)(1)(B)-(d)(1)(D), 20 USC 1415(d), 34 CFR 300.321 and 300.504, EC 56301(d)(2) and EC 56321]

You also have the right to participate in the development of the IEP and to be informed of the availability of free appropriate public education, including all appropriate program options, and of all available alternative programs, both public and nonpublic.

# Tip 10: Follow Up

- ▶ If there are any questions regarding the IEP meeting or document, please contact the case carrier to discuss
- ▶ If something needs to change on the IEP, the team may need to reconvene, as it is a team determination to change anything on an IEP
- ▶ As a Parent, you could:
  - ▶ Review the results of the meeting with your child, if appropriate
  - ▶ Check that new services or resources were put in place
  - ▶ Verify the related service providers have seen the current IEP (if appropriate)
  - ▶ Periodically check the IEP against school work for consistency
  - ▶ Monitor homework and support your child as needed for completion

# Thank You!

- ▶ Preparing for an IEP meeting can sometimes feel like going through a maze. However, keeping the child at the center of the conversations and making decisions on his or her behalf makes it easier!