

A PEATC

Do You Know....



Factsheet for Virginia's Parents Preparing for the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting

The IEP Meeting

This is a very important meeting for you and your student since it is where you meet with educators and school administrators to **discuss and decide on your student's education plan for the school year and determine how and where services will be provided**. As you learn more about what services are available for students with disabilities, your student's rights, and how to develop an effective plan, you will become more confident and feel more as the equal partner that you are on the team. See also, Fact Sheet on *Tips for a Successful IEP Meeting*.

The **IEP meeting must take place within 30 calendar days** after your child is determined eligible for special education and related services, such as speech/language therapy, physical therapy, and occupational therapy. The same is true if an IEP meeting is requested by you or the school for another reason, including after reevaluation. The school must provide you with **advance notice** of the meeting and work with you to schedule it **at a mutually agreeable time and location**. **If you do not speak English**, the school must provide a **qualified translator or interpreter**. For information on who (besides you and your student) are **part of the IEP team**, see the Virginia Department of Education's *Parent's Guide to Special Education*.

Special education is a service, not a place. Where those services take place (type of classroom, location) are based on your student's unique goals and objectives. Your student should not be removed from the general education classroom unless their IEP cannot be implemented in that setting, even with supplementary aids and services. The student should be educated in the **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), as determined by the IEP team**.

How do I Prepare for the IEP Meeting?

- **Make sure you have all the needed paperwork**, such as previous IEPs, any notes, assessments or tests from professionals that may have to do with your student's educational needs. **Review the information before the meeting**. Organizing records by school year, can be very helpful.
- **Find out who is attending the meeting and let the school know if you will be bringing anyone** (family member, friend, advocate, therapist, etc.) as support to you and take notes so you can focus on the meeting.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) and IEP Team Definitions

"Individualized education program" or "IEP" means a written statement for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in a team meeting in accordance with this chapter.

The IEP specifies the individual educational needs of the child and what special education and related services are necessary to meet the child's educational needs. (34 CFR 300 .22)

"Individualized education program team" means a group of individuals described in 8VAC20-81-110 that is responsible for developing, reviewing, or revising an IEP for a child with a disability. (34 CFR 300 .23)

Contact Us:

8003 Forbes Place, Suite 310
Springfield, VA 22151
800-869-6782 / 703-923-0010
www.peatc.org
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- Think about your **student's strengths and areas of need** so that you can be prepared to speak to them at the meeting. You are your student's best advocate.
- **Ask the school to provide you**, at least 3 days in advance of the meeting, **copies of notes, reports, and draft IEP goals and objectives**. The school is not required to give you a draft IEP but it may help give **ideas to share with the school** in advance so the meeting will go smoother and take less time.
- Ask for a **meeting agenda** so that you know what to expect. If you run out of time to fully discuss your student or ask questions about the proposed plan **you can ask for a longer meeting or two meetings**.
- **Goals should be clearly written and measurable. Think about whether each proposed goal and objective can be achieved** in the time frame suggested and **how it can be measured**. Ask questions about goals and objectives that you don't feel meet these requirements.
- **Prepare for the meeting** with a list of concerns that you might have about your child so that it can be addressed in the meeting. Sometimes, compromising is part of the team process so think about other options so that you are prepared to discuss other possible solutions, prior to the meeting.
- Think about **the type of support your child's teachers** may need to implement the IEP and ask questions to ensure that **they will receive those supports and how you can help**.
- Remember, **you can ask for another IEP meeting** anytime you feel the team needs to meet, especially if you are concerned about the IEP or your student's progress toward meeting benchmarks. You can agree to try different approaches and then meet to review progress and make changes.
- **You do not have to sign the IEP** if you need additional time to review it or if you are not sure you agree with it. Ask to take a copy home so that you can think about it. If you decide not to sign, another meeting will be scheduled to address your concerns.

Resources on IEP Meetings

Virginia Department of Education

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/iep_instruct_svcs/iep/index.shtml

Parents Guide to Special Education

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/parents/parents_guide.pdf

U.S. Department of Education

A Guide to the IEP

<https://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html>

Understood.Com

Navigating IEP Meetings

<https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/ieps/navigating-iep-meetings>

Questions to Ask Before and During the IEP Meeting

<https://u.org/2wAQ4Hz>

PEATC's mission focuses on building positive futures for Virginia's children by working collaboratively with families, schools and communities to improve opportunities for excellence in education and success in school and community life.

For more information about us, please contact:

8003 Forbes Place, Suite 310 Springfield, VA 22151

800-869-6782 / 703-923-0010

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The contents of this factsheet were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, #H328M140013-18. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer. PEATC is not a legal services agency and cannot provide legal advice or legal representation. Any information contained in this factsheet is not intended as legal advice and should not be used as a substitution for legal advice.

