

A PEATC

Do You Know...



Understanding the Parts of the Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Factsheet for Virginia's Parents

An **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** is a legal document, required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), that outlines the special education services and supports a student with a disability will receive in school. The IEP is developed by a team that includes the parents and is reviewed at least once a year. Its purpose is to ensure the student receives a **free appropriate public education (FAPE)**.

Key Sections of the IEP

- ✓ **Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP):** Describes your child's abilities, strengths, and challenges in school and everyday life. It includes test results, observations, parent input, and more. The PLAAFP forms the foundation for IEP goals.
- ✓ **Measurable Annual Goals:** Goals are written based on your child's unique needs and should be specific, measurable, relevant, and achievable within the agreed upon time frame.
- ✓ **Progress Reporting:** Describes how and when you'll be informed about your child's progress toward their IEP goals. (Must be as often as progress and report cards are provided to all students.)
- ✓ **Special Education and Related Services:** Lists all the services your child will receive—such as special education instruction, speech therapy, occupational therapy, transportation, and more.
- ✓ **Accommodations and Modifications:** Lists supports provided in the general education setting (or other settings) to help your child be educated with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. Includes things such as assistive technology, visual schedules, preferential seating, paraprofessionals, and more. (See [Accommodations](#) | [Modifications](#))

Special Considerations - The IEP team must discuss whether your child has needs in any of the following areas:

- **Behavior:** If your child's behavior affects learning, the team may consider using positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports like a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).
- **Limited English Proficiency:** Supports are provided if your child's first language is not English.
- **Blindness or Visual Impairment:** Includes Braille instruction, orientation and mobility, and accessible formats.
- **Deafness or Hearing Impairment:** May include interpreters, captioning, or amplification devices.
- **Assistive Technology (AT):** Tools, devices, and services that support student access and independence, including accessible instructional materials (e.g., speech-to-text, communication boards, reading pens, online calculators, reminder apps, visual schedules, movement breaks, graphic organizers, etc.).
- **SHaRE (Self, Health, and Relationship Education):** The team must consider whether your child needs access to developmentally appropriate instruction on family life topics, as outlined in Virginia's Family Life Education standards.

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- ✓ **Program Modifications or Supports for School Personnel:** Includes training or resources for teachers or staff to help them support your child.
- ✓ **Participation in State and Divisionwide Assessments:** Describes whether your child will take the Standards of Learning (SOL) Assessments or the Virginia Alternate Assessment and any divisionwide assessments like the Virginia Language & Literacy Screening System (VALLSS), growth assessments, etc., and what accommodations will be used (e.g., extended time, read-aloud).
- ✓ **Placement / Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):** Explains how much time your child will spend in general education settings and if removed or served in another setting, the reason for this.
- ✓ **Transition Services (age 14 and older in Virginia):** Includes a coordinated plan for life after high school: education, employment, and independent living. A transition plan must include measurable post-secondary goals, services to reach those goals, and a course of study aligned with achieving the goals.

Tips for Parents

- ✓ **Request evaluation reports and a draft IEP** (if developed) before the meeting to review and prepare. You are entitled to get evaluation reports at least **2 business days before** the IEP meeting. If a draft IEP is developed it is required that you receive that you also receive that at least **2 business days before** the IEP meeting. Keep your documents **organized**.
- ✓ Don't hesitate to **ask questions**. You are an **equal member of the IEP team**—your input matters.
- ✓ **Refer to data**—use classroom work, testing results, and other objective data to support your points.
- ✓ **You can but you do not have to sign** the IEP at the meeting. You can take it home and review it, refuse consent, or provide partial consent. (See [Parental Consent in Virginia](#).)
- ✓ Request the [Prior Written Notice](#) after the IEP meeting.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/RESOURCES

[The Virginia Family's Guide to Special Education \(VDOE\)](#)

[IEP Checklist \(PEATC\)](#)

[IEP Tip Sheet Series \(Progress Center\)](#)

[Roles Around the IEP \(PEATC\)](#)

[Virginia Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia](#)

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:

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