



# IEP Welcome Kit **Instructions**

Includes information and resources tailored to meet the needs of new families navigating special education.

**Welcome to the Table - Where Every Voice Counts**

*"Stronger Together: We're Excited to Work with You!"*



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The IEP Welcome Kit is a customizable resource to help schools warmly welcome new families to special education and the IEP team.

Schools can easily tailor the kit to fit their specific needs. Schools are encouraged to:

- Add your school's logo to the bottom left corner of the Welcome Kit for branding
- Personalize the content by entering student names and other details (the kit is fillable for convenience)
- Update the "Helpful Resources" section with your school's tools, supports, and commonly used materials
- Include contact information for key staff such as your School Principal, the Director/Coordinator of Special Education, parent liaison staff, or other team members

On the next page, you will see instructions on how your team can customize the IEP Welcome Kit. The goal is to help families feel informed, supported, and welcomed from the very beginning.

# Instructions for Customizing the IEP Welcome Kit

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To make this kit reflect your school's unique identity and resources, follow these simple steps:

## **Add School Branding**

- Include your school's name, logo, and colors on the front cover and throughout the document.
- Consider adding a short welcome letter from the Principal or Special Education Director to greet families personally.

## **Personalize for the Student**

- Use the fillable sections to add the student's name and other details that help families feel seen and supported.
- Include space to introduce the IEP team—list their names and roles so families know who's who.

## **Update the Helpful Resource Section**

- Replace or add tools, supports, and materials that your school or district already uses.
- Add QR codes or web links for easy access to online resources, within and outside of the school division.

## **Include Local Contact Information**

Add the names, phone numbers, and email addresses of key staff, such as:

- Your school's Special Education Coordinator
- The Director of Special Education
- Parent liaisons or, if applicable, your Parent Resource Center

## **Explain the IEP Process Clearly**

- Consider adding a timeline to show families what to expect during the IEP process.
- Break down what happens before, during, and after the IEP meeting.

## **Emphasize Family Partnership**

- Include messages that show your school values collaboration with families.
- Suggest ways families can participate, such as asking questions or inviting a support person to meetings.

By following these steps, your school can create a welcoming, personalized IEP Welcome Kit that builds trust, helps families feel supported, and strengthens your partnership from day one.

# Sample Welcome Letter from IEP Team

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Dear **[Caregiver names]**,

Welcome to the team that's here to support your child's learning and development. You're not alone, we're looking forward to working with you to support **[Child's Name]** and ensure they have what they need to learn and thrive at school.

This is a reminder that your child's **[Child's Name]**'s Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting, is scheduled for:

- Date/Time: **[Insert Date and Time]**
- Location/Format: **[Insert Location or indicate if it will be virtual]**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Virginia regulations mandate that IEP meetings must be scheduled at a time and place mutually agreed upon by the parent and the school. If this date or time doesn't work for you, please let us know right away. Your presence at the meeting is very important, you are a key part of the IEP team, and your voice matters. If you do not receive the formal Notice of IEP Meetings, please let us know as soon as possible.

The IEP meeting is a time for us to work together as a team to talk about **[Child's Name]'s** strengths and learning needs, set annual goals, and decide on the services that can help them succeed. The IEP is based on evaluations and your child's present level of performance. We may develop a draft of the IEP before the meeting. If we do, we know that the draft is just a starting point—we'll discuss it and make changes based on our conversations, including your input and a review of data.

Here are a few important things to know as you prepare:

- **Language Support:** If you need a language or ASL interpreter, now or at any time, please let us know. Even if you've attended meetings without one before, we're happy to provide one so that you can fully understand and participate in all meetings.
- **Receiving Reports in Advance:** If we create a draft IEP or have evaluation reports, we'll share them with you at least two days before the meeting so you have time to review them.
- **Sharing Outside Information:** If there are any new or important reports from providers outside of school, such as therapists, tutors, or doctors, that weren't shared at the eligibility meeting, please feel free to send them our way. If possible, we would like to receive these before the IEP meeting so that our team has time to review them.

- **Bringing Support:** You can bring people to the meeting who know your child and can support you. We would like to know that in advance so we can be sure we have a large enough space.”
- **Come With Questions:** Special education can feel overwhelming at first. We encourage you to bring any questions or concerns you may have—big or small. We’re here to support you and want to make sure you feel seen and heard in the process.

This meeting is about building an appropriate IEP plan for **[Child’s Name]**. You are an equal part of the IEP team, and your input is crucial. You know your child best, and your ideas and goals are an important part of this process.

Again, we are excited to collaborate with you and look forward to creating a plan that helps **[Child’s Name]** thrive.

If you have questions before the meeting, please contact **[Name], [Title/Position], [Email],** and **[Phone]**.

Warm Regards,

**[Name]**  
**[Title/Position]**  
**[Email]**  
**[Phone]**