IEP Meeting Checklist for Parents

This checklist is a tool to help you, as a parent of a child with special needs, to prepare for and participate in your child’s IEP meeting.

What is an IEP
An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written plan that describes the special education and related services that are designed to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability eligible for services under the Individual with Disabilities Act (IDEA). A team composed of professionals, the student’s parent(s), the student and others (when appropriate) meet to develop or revise the IEP.

Before the IEP Meeting

— The school has **notified you at least 10 days in advance** with written notice of the meeting.
— The school has set up the meeting at a **time and place so that you can attend** as well as the school staff.
— Review the student’s current IEP and progress reports.
— Talk to the student about progress and concerns.
— Decide whom to bring to the meeting. This may include the student, therapist, advocate or anyone else with information regarding the student. Parents have the right to request additional attendees to the meeting who are not already part of the IEP team.
— Decide what you want to accomplish at the meeting and write down your ideas for what will help the student.
— Help the student prepare for attending the meeting. Student must be invited to meeting if 14 years or older. The student may write down what he/she wants to say as well as ideas on what he/she needs to be successful.

During the IEP Meeting

— Attendance of the **complete IEP team** includes the student’s general education teacher, case manager, a special education provider or supervisor, someone who can interpret the evaluation results, and a district representative who has the authority to make commitments for services. If a member of the team is absent, you must have been given, in advance of the meeting, informed written consent for their absence and any information they would have provided at the meeting.
— You are an equal member of the IEP team. Be prepared to share your ideas and listen to the views of others. Ask for clarification on terms or acronyms that are unfamiliar to you.
— You and the student **have asked your questions and they have been answered**.
— The student’s **ideas and yours are given and considered**.
— At the IEP meeting, the following issues are discussed:
  - Student’s present levels of academic and functional performance (**how the student is doing in school** and home, the results of the most recent evaluations and testing, any information that parents provided, etc.).
  - **Measurable** annual **goals & objectives** (statements of desired change and progress for the year)
  - **Special education & related services that the student needs** either directly for the student, or for the teacher, or for other students in the class
  - Any special skills, knowledge, or professional development **needed by the student’s teacher**, aide/paraprofessional, related services provider, etc.
  - Any assistance and **parent training** the parent needs such as:
Effective methods and positive behavior intervention strategies to use in the home so that you can provide cohesive instruction, address difficult behaviors, and/or address generalization of all acquired skills.

- Hands-on instruction and communication tools, signs, topic boards, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), picture schedules) to learn effective strategies;
  - What related services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, psychiatric or psychological services, transportation or other related services may be needed?
  - Whether or not the student, who has noted social deficits associated with his/her diagnosis, needs social skills training.
  - Whether or not the student needs extended school year (ESY) services to make sure that he/she doesn’t lose knowledge or skills he/she has already learned.
  - Whether the student needs a functional behavior assessment (FBA) and a positive behavior support plan (BP) to help address his/her challenging behaviors.
  - Whether the student needs to learn communication skills and strategies.
  - Whether the student needs assistive technology. Consider what kind of technology is appropriate and how he/she will learn to access and use it.
  - If the student is 14 ½ or older, what transition to adult life services the student might need to prepare for post-secondary education, training, or employment.
  - How can the student access extra-curricular activities?
  - Where will the student go to school? Consider the “least restrictive” setting in which the student IEP can be implemented.
  - The person(s) directly responsible for implementation of each service and program in the student’s IEP.
  - The person(s) directly responsible to monitor the student’s progress.
  - How you will be informed of the student’s progress toward achieving the annual goals, and how often (at least as often as general education parents receive report cards on their children’s performance).

- How the student will participate in the statewide tests or district-wide tests.
- At the end of the IEP meeting you should receive a copy of parent’s rights
- You should receive a signed copy of the IEP.
- It has been established how you and the student’s teachers will communicate on an ongoing basis.

After the IEP Meeting

- Discuss the meeting with others who attended and make sure everyone has a common understanding of what was decided. If not, ask for clarification.
- Share your copy of the IEP with the other appropriate people in your child’s life such as the child’s DCFS caseworker and doctor.
- Follow-up on what you have agreed to do.
- Review the IEP with the student
- Monitor the student’s progress.