



Parent Involvement and Empowerment in Special Education

Welcome!

- This presentation is designed to give parents, guardians and the people who support them an introductory overview parent's rights and responsibilities and the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process.

What is an IEP?

- An IEP is a written plan for education and related services for students who meet the eligibility criteria for Special Education.
- The plan should contain the same required elements and may look similar, but different, depending on where it was written.

What Happens Before The IEP Child Find

- All children with disabilities who are in need of special education and related services shall be identified, located and assessed.

IEP Process: A Free and Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- What is the process and who is involved?
- What do you mean by a “free and appropriate public education (FAPE) ?”
- What do you mean by the “least restrictive environment (LRE) ?”

The 3 R's for Parents: Rights, Roles, and Responsibilities

- The Rights, Roles, and Responsibilities are often inter-connected throughout the process.
- The use of the term “parent” is used to identify the parent (s), guardian (s), or surrogate parent for the child.
- Each part of the process has a legal basis and foundation.

Parent Participation in the Process

- The parent has the right and the responsibility to be involved in each step of the process. (20 U.S.C. Sec. 1415 (b) (1); 34 C.F.R. Sec. 300.345; 34 C.F.R. Part 300, Appendix (App.) A, Q. 5.)
- Information and understanding is the best way to support participation in the process.

An Overview of the IEP Process

- **Assessment**
 - **Referral:**
 - The parent has the right to refer directly for the child to be assessed.
 - In the request for assessment, the parent is to identify the areas of concern and the reason for the request.
 - Others, including the school staff, may also refer a child for assessment to determine eligibility for Special Education.

An Overview of the IEP Process, continued

Reasons for Referral

- Academic concerns
- Speech and/or language concerns
- Behavioral concerns that interfere with learning
- Social/emotional concerns
- Developmental delays
- Negative response to the RTI process

An Overview of the IEP Process, continued

- Assessment, continued
 - **Consent to Assessment:** The parent has the right to have an Individual Assessment Plan developed to address the concerns and to provide written consent prior to the assessment being initiated.
 - *Without prior written consent by the parent, NO assessments may be completed regarding eligibility for Special Education.*

An Overview of the IEP Process, continued

- **Who is involved in the Assessment process?**
 - The parent is involved throughout the process. Examples might include completing questionnaires, participating in interviews, and providing additional assessments that the parent may have and wish to include in the assessment.

An Overview of the IEP Process, continued

- Who is involved in the Assessment process, continued?
 - Based on the areas of concerns, one or more of the following may be involved in completing the assessment:
 - School Psychologist
 - Speech and Language Specialist
 - Special Education Teacher
 - Adapted Physical Education Specialist
 - Audiologist
 - School Nurse
 - General Education Teacher
 - Physical Therapist
 - Occupational Therapist
 - Vision Specialist
 - And others as appropriate

An Overview of the IEP Process, continued

- Assessment, continued
 - The parent has the right to the findings of the assessment. A copy of reports should be provided prior to the IEP meeting.

An Overview of the IEP Process, continued

- Assessment, continued
 - The assessments must be reviewed at a meeting within sixty (60) days of the date the school has received written consent to conduct the assessment.
 - When there is a break of more than five days in the school calendar, the 60 days is adjusted to accommodate the school break.

An Overview of the IEP Process, continued

- Meeting to Review Assessments
 - The purpose of this meeting is to review the assessment results and to determine eligibility of the child for Special Education services.
 - If the child has never been in Special Education before, and the assessment findings indicate the child is eligible for Special Education, an Initial IEP is developed.

An Overview of the IEP Process, continued

- Who should attend the meeting?
 - The parent, guardian or surrogate
 - The child when appropriate
 - The people conducting the assessment should be in attendance. The assessment must be reviewed by someone who is qualified if the person who conducted the assessment is not available.

An Overview of the IEP Process, continued

- Who should attend the meeting? (cont.)
 - Special Education Administrator or Designee
 - Special Education Teacher
 - General Education Teacher
 - Outside supportive agencies
 - Any one with special knowledge of the child

Results of Assessment

- The results of assessment will be used by the IEP Team to determine eligibility for Special Education.
- To qualify for Special Education under IDEA, you must qualify for one or more of the 13 disability categories.
 - Autism
 - Intellectual Disability
 - Hard of Hearing
 - Visually Impaired
 - Deaf/Blind
 - Deaf
 - Speech and Language
 - Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
 - Other Health Impaired
 - Specific Learning Disability
 - Emotional Disturbance
 - Multiple Disabilities
 - Orthopedic Impairment

Eligibility

- Now that the assessment results have been reviewed, the IEP Team must now determine whether the student meets the eligibility criteria to qualify for Special Education services. That means that the student must:
 - Have an identified disability (from the previous list)

AND because of the disability

- Requires Special Education and Related Services

Areas of need including strengths

- The IEP team must, when the student is found to be eligible for Special Education and Related Services, identify the needs of the student relative to the educational program based on the results of the assessment.
- In addition, the strengths – or relative strengths of the student, must be considered.

Parent Concerns Regarding Special Needs of the Student

- The IEP Team is to consider the concerns of the parent regarding the student's special needs.
- Concerns expressed by the parent should be documented in the IEP.
- As the IEP is developed, there should be evidence within the document that the Team has considered and addressed the parent's concerns.

Goals

- The IEP must include a statement of measurable annual goals, including benchmarks or short-term objectives, related to:
 - Meeting the child's needs that result from the child's disability to enable the child to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum (i.e., the same curriculum as for nondisabled children), or for preschool children, as appropriate, to participate in appropriate activities; and
 - Meeting each of the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disability.

SMART Goals: Wrightslaw



Adaptations

- Changes made to the environment, curriculum, instruction, or assessment practice can be either:
 - Accommodations, or
 - Modifications

Accommodations

- **Do not** fundamentally alter or lower expectations or standards in instructional level, content or performance criteria.
- Changes are made in order to provide equal access to learning and equal opportunity to demonstrate what is known.
- Student achievement scores will remain the same.

Modifications

- **Do** fundamentally alter or lower expectations or standards in instructional level, content or performance criteria.
- Changes are made to provide student meaningful & productive experiences based on individual needs & abilities.
- Modifications will result in a significant reduction in the student's achievement score.

CDE Matrix for Accommodations and Modifications

- <http://www.cde.ca.gov>

Services to be Provided

- The IEP should include a statement of the special education and related services to be provided to the child. Also a description of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the child:
 - To advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals;
 - To be involved and progress in the general curriculum and to participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities; and,
 - To be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and nondisabled children in the activities described in this section.

Location and Frequency of Services

- The IEP Team must include in the plan the location and the frequency of the services recommended.

- Examples of this include:

RSP Four 20-minute sessions per
week in the classroom

SDC Five 300-minute sessions per
week in the SDC

Speech One 20-minute session per
week in the Speech Room

Initiation and Duration of Services

- Once the IEP Team has determined services, the team must identify when the services will be initiated. These services must be initiated within a reasonable time.
- Dates for services to begin may be different throughout the student's IEP.
- The duration of services may be for one year or may be less as individually appropriate.
- The IEP must be reviewed annually and the student must be reassessed every three years.

Placement

- Placement should only be discussed after all other items have been discussed: Needs, strengths, concerns, current levels, goals, services.
- Placement is based on all other information.

Written Consent to the IEP

Parental written consent is required for the initial placement and provision of special education services.

If the identification for services is for the initial placement into special education, the parent may elect not to give written consent and the student does not receive any special education services.

Other Things to Consider...


- Assistive technology
- Independent educational evaluations
- Discipline
- Behavior plans
- Functional behavior assessments
- Due process

Local Resources

- H.E.A.R.T.S. Connection FRC/FEC
 - 661-328-9055/800-210-7633
- Bakersfield City Schools SELPA
 - 661-631-5863
- KCSOS (Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office) SELPA
 - 661-636-4817

Local Resources, continued

- Kern High School District SELPA
 - 661-827-3105
- Kern County Mental Health
 - 661-858-6453
- California Children's Services (CCS)
 - 661-635-2800
- Kern Regional Center
 - 661-327-8531

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- “Failing to prepare is preparing to fail”
 - John Wooden, UCLA basketball coach

Questions

- Do you have any questions?
- Thank You for joining us today.