

How can an I.E.P. help my child?

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) builds on the curriculum that a student with a handicap, social maladjustment or learning difficulty is following. It is designed to set out the strategies being used to meet the student's specific identified needs.

This plan is created with short and long term goals to help measure the effectiveness of the interventions used to help your child in his/her school life, and beyond.

The I.E.P. is:

- A flexible, **working document**, helping the school and parent/guardian plan for, monitor, evaluate and communicate the student's growth.
- An opportunity for schools, students, parents and external agencies to work together to create a workable record of your child's developmental journey, both academic and social.
- A process embracing the philosophy that success has different meanings depending on the different abilities and needs of the student.
- An identifier of the entire child's needs, how the school will meet these needs and how the school will measure the child's progress.

Why should parents participate in the I.E.P. meeting?

YOU know your child better than anyone else and can provide critical information to the school team.

YOU have the best understanding of your child's social, developmental, physical and academic history.

YOU chart your child's future with every step that they take and are ultimately responsible for your child's development and overall success. ***As a parent, you are your child's best advocate. Your child will have a greater chance for success when the school and the family work together!***

Who is involved in the I.E.P.?

The development of the IEP is a **team process**, which involves the **principal**, the **parents**, the **student** (where appropriate) and the **staff** working with the student. Although the principal is responsible for the the implementation and periodic evaluation of the IEP, it may be coordinated by a key **professional** involved with the child (e.g. classroom teacher, resource teacher), and may be facilitated by an **aide or technician**.

Adaptations vs. Modifications:

I.E.P interventions can be expressed as "adaptations" or "modifications":

- ***Modified Program, Competency or Subject:*** End of cycle objectives will be modified to reflect the student's particular level of functioning (i.e. student will learn to count to ten).
- ***Adapted Curriculum:*** Students will be able to meet standard end of cycle outcomes with specific adaptations in place (i.e., preferential seating, adapted materials, etc.).



Providing your school with all relevant and updated supporting documentation prior to the I.E.P. meeting may help them better prepare and result in a more productive meeting.

The I.E.P. Meeting

Who can be invited to an I.E.P. meeting?

- You or you and your child (depending on his/her capabilities)
- You may bring another person (for support), after advising the Resource Team
- The Principal
- Your child's teacher(s)
- Paraprofessionals who work with your child (e.g., aides, technicians)
- Resource/ supporting teacher(s)
- Professionals from Student Services (e.g. Psychologist, Consultant for Special Needs, Speech and Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapist)
- External professionals from organizations such as health and social services organizations and rehabilitation centres (e.g., CROM, CSSS, SRSOR)

Private therapists can be another source of help when planning the I.E.P. If you want to invite any other professional who is not a part of your child's school or school board, it is advisable to discuss this ahead of time with the school administrator overseeing the I.E.P.

What do you talk about at the I.E.P. meeting?

Establishing an I.E.P. is a team process and your input is important. Be prepared to:

- Introduce yourself to the team members
- Discuss your child's unique situation and needs (strengths, challenges, history, etc.)
- Discuss, negotiate and ideally come to a consensus for prioritizing your child's needs and establishing objectives.
- Determine the means for supporting your child: strategies, resources, time frame...
- Discuss specific tasks assigned to different team members responsible for the implementation of the IEP (i.e., teacher, parents, attendants, technicians, etc...)
- Select a frequency and dates for follow up meetings to review your child's progress (a minimum of 10 IEP contacts per year, and 1 progress report per term).



***Be sure to take notes during the meeting. Afterwards, prepare a summary of the discussion, and send it to all Resource team members for future reference.
Remember, parents are part of this **TEAM, working together to help the student!*****

Keep Calm

Many parents feel anxious and insecure at I.E.P. meetings. Some parents believe that if they are not an education professional, that they have nothing of value to offer in planning their child's educational program. Other parents realize that their child's I.E.P. is inappropriate but fail to know how to resolve the problem. Ensuring that you are **well rested and adequately prepared** may help to relieve the anxiety that many parents feel when attending your child's I.E.P. meeting. If you have concerns, it is OK to express them, but it is always best to **keep calm!**

Preparing for the I.E.P. meeting...

Things to think about

Your child's educational experience is a journey. Take the time to review where they have been, what challenges they have faced and how they have been successful. Make notes:

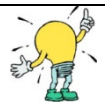
- What is your child's present level of academic performance and achievements?
- Look at past report cards, I.E.P.'S, medical reports, etc.
- Consider your child's current level and desired level of the basic skills such as reading, communicating, social skills and his/her ability to interact with others
- Consider what it is about your child's disability or difficulty that is interfering with their success, both academic and social
- Consider what your child will need to learn, or what skills they will need to acquire to become independent and self-sufficient; both now and in their future
- Consider what support your child will need to make a successful *transition* to high school, post-secondary education, work and community living. Early planning is key in ensuring that your child will have the necessary skills, credits, and resources they will need when they are finished school.

Setting goals....getting specific!

- Write down several statements about what you want your child to know or be able to do. Focus on behaviour that you can count or observe.
- Break down each goal into a few measurable, short term steps.
- How will you know if your child has achieved these goals? What will you see your child doing when s/he reaches this goal?

Goals are SMART! ♦Sspecific ♦Mmeasurable ♦AAttainable ♦RRelevant ♦TTime-limited

IEP goals should not be general statements about what a child will accomplish in a year, but should address the child's academic achievement, social integration and functional performance. Good goals are **realistic, achievable** and **SMART**.



Avoid I.E.P. goals that are statements about your child's attitude; "Johnny will improve his behavior and try harder". Instead, focus on the "What", "Where" "When" "Why" "Who" and "How" to help understand undesirable behaviors and issues. Goals should focus on what your child should do or achieve, rather than what they should not do.

Consider this Example: Behaviour/Concentration Challenge:

Target Goal: Jonathan will be able to sit quietly at his table working for 5 minutes. **Method:** A pictogram reminder (placed in front of him) and reward chart (token system) will be used. Jonathan will work with a timer and receive rewards (specify type), beginning at 1 minute. **Measurement:** Once Jonathan is successful 80% of the time over 5 days, another minute will be added until the target of 5 minutes is achieved. **Responsibility:** The integration aide is responsible for implementing this goal and the teacher will be updated for report card purposes. **Generalization** must be worked into the plan by having Jonathan vary the time of day, the room, the context in which the goal is practiced and measured (ex: in classroom, in an assembly, at the library etc.)

Options that will help your child SUCCEED

Discuss these options prior to, or during the IEP meeting:

Placement/Seating:

- Preferential seating
- Small group
- Buddy system

Instruction:

- Simplify instructions
- Dictated information
- Taped lectures/reading materials
- Reduced use of verbal language
- Peer tutoring
- Pre-teach/preview material to be covered

Materials:

- Audio books/texts
- Highlighted text/material
- Manipulatives
- Braille
- ESL materials
- Calculator
- Keyboard modification
- Access to keyboard/computer

Behaviour:

- Positive reinforcement
- Clear set of limits/expectations
- Movement/sensory breaks
- Quiet time/sensory corner

Strategies that have been used successfully in the past:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Other:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Test/Exam Accommodations:

- Readers and/or Scribes
- Assistive Technology & Software
- Small groups
- Extra time
- Sensory friendly environment

Support Personnel:

- Resource assistance
- Integration Aide
- Special Ed or Social Aid Technician
- Speech Language Pathologist
- Reader and/or Scribe
- Occupational Therapist
- Psychologist
- Guidance Counsellor
- Social Worker

Assignments:

- Reduced level of difficulty
- Shorten assignment
- Reduce paper/pencil tasks
- Deadline extensions
- Opportunity to respond orally
- Assignment notebook
- Homework organization system
- Use of cue cards for oral presentations



Please refer to additional documents entitled:

***“Parent Concerns/Visions: Helping your school better understand your child” and
“All about Me: A student’s perspective.....being part of the I.E.P. development”***



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