



My child just got an IEP. What should I know?

There are many things to know about Special Education. Here are a few key points:

- Sometimes parents don't think that having an Individual Education Plan (IEP) means their child is in Special Education. A child can only have an IEP through Special Education. An IEP is the written document of your child's Special Education services. IEP meetings are the process used to write or change the IEP.
- There is an order that should be followed when writing an IEP:
Assessment → Present Levels → Needs → Goals & Services → Placement
- For any IEP meeting in which reports are presented, ask for the reports ahead of time. The districts are not required to do this, but this is best practice.
- Before an IEP meeting, organize your paperwork and thoughts. The Matrix IEP Toolkit can help.
- Mark your calendar with the dates that your IEP states you will get written progress reports. When the reports come, ask questions if there is something you don't understand or if you have concerns. If you don't get the reports, let the school know this in writing.
- When you read your child's goals, you should be able to form a picture in your mind of what your child will be doing by the next annual IEP meeting. This helps when you receive the progress reports on the goals.
- If your child's IEP isn't going well or you have concerns or think something should be changed, put in writing your request for an IEP meeting. The school district has up to 30 days after your request (not counting long school vacations) to have the meeting. Examples of items that could be added to an IEP if needed:
 - Behavior Support Plans
 - Related Services
- Special Education is to provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education or FAPE. An appropriate education is one that results in some progress and helps your child access the curriculum. Special Education is not required to make sure your child reaches his or her potential or to get top grades.
- Your written consent is needed for the district to implement the IEP. If the district proposes a change to an existing IEP, it will not take effect until you provide your written consent.
- If you ever think you no longer want Special Education or a service, call us. Taking away your consent can have results you may not know about.
- Keep learning about the various parts of an IEP and what the rights you and your child have under Special Education law. Call us at Matrix or go to our website. The more you know, the more you will feel confident when speaking up in IEP meetings. You are a key member of the IEP team, and your views are important.



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