Educational Benefit Review
IEP TOOL KIT

For my child's IEP written on

_____
(date)

IEP Educational Benefit Tool Kit

An IEP is to be written for educational benefit, and you are a participant in developing the IEP. What can help you to be an effective special education advocate for your child?

- Having information and data
- Being organized in your thoughts and with your documents
- Communicating in a manner that helps you get the information you need and have others listen to your input

This IEP Educational Benefit Tool Kit provides you with some basic tools to help you better advocate for changes to an exisiting IEP if you don't think your child is receiving educational benefit from the IEP. What is educational benefit? The legal and education fields have debated this. It clearly varies from student to student. Two areas that are agreed upon are that an IEP:

- Is to be individualized and requires educational outcomes
- Results in student performance and achievement

This Tool Kit includes:

- Instructions on using the tool kit
- Tips on organizing your child's school related papers
- Worksheets to use as you organize and analyze information from your child's current and past IEPs
- A request and question tracking form to take to an IEP meeting or use in guiding communication
- Resources so you can learn more about effective advocacy skills, developing an IEP and the special education process

As you prepare, keep in mind the quote from Maya Angelou:

"I did then what I knew how to do. Now that I know better, I do better."
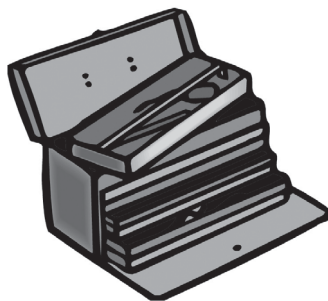
There is so much information available, it can seem overwhelming. Be gentle with yourself as you learn. Over time, you will feel more confident and knowledgeable.

STEP 1: **INFORMATION – what information do I have and how to organize it?**
Review all the information that you have that shows your child's needs. Why? Because the IEP should list areas of need and have goals to address each area of need. The " IEP Goals: Examples of Areas of Need & Sub-skills" in this packet gives some examples.

- Information includes formal written assessment reports, progress on IEP goals, behavior or attendance records, work samples, teacher emails etc.

- If over the years, you are concerned there is a lack of progress, use our multi-year tracking worksheets. Examples filled out are provided.
    › The "Goal Outcome Worksheet" is to list all goals, identify if each year had goals to address areas of need and whether or not the goals were met.

    › The "Present Levels and Goal Worksheet" can help you see if present levels for a specific skill have improved over time and the goals for that skill are appropriate. The "Examples of Skill Progression" sheet can be helpful.

    › The "Assessment" spreadsheet helps you track standardized test scores over time to see if scores show an increase in skill. Create your own spreadsheet to work for you.

- If there is an area of need without any documents to support that need, make note of this on the "Tracking Questions and Requests" form as you might want to request assessment to support that need.

STEP 2: **NEEDS & PRIORITY – what areas of needs are identified in the information? Are all priority needs identified?**
- After reviewing the information in Step 1, list your child's areas of need on the "Current IEP Analysis Worksheet" in the first column. In column 2 decide how much of a priority this need is for your child. In column 3, note the information that supports this need (include document, page # and data).

- Review what has been written on your child's current IEP on the page labeled "Present Levels of Achievement and Functional Performance". This is page 2 of the IEP and may also continue on page 3. Does the information written here reflect all areas of need? If a need is not written on the Present Levels of Performance page of the IEP, note this on the form, "Tracking Questions and Requests". As all needs are to be listed, you can request this.

STEP 3: **INTERVENTIONS – does the IEP address each area of need?**
Review the IEP and note on the "Current IEP Analysis Worksheet" where in the IEP each area of need is addressed. If an area of need is not addressed anywhere, note this on the worksheet. Each area of identified need should have a goal. Some needs also should have accommodations or modifications, a behavior plan, assistive technology, a transition plan (ages 16 and older). All goals must either have instructional or related services with enough time and frequency so it is reasonable that the goals could be met.

STEP 4: ORGANIZE – what areas might be clarified by asking a question? What areas have enough information to support making a request for more assessment or to change the IEP? List your questions and requests along with the data and/or reason on the "Tracking Questions and Request" form.

STEP 5: ADVOCACY – what is the most appropriate way to make changes to the IEP? If there are a few simple items to address, an email listing your concerns and requests for changes might be enough. If there are substantial areas of need that are not in the IEP, make a written request for an IEP meeting. **Remember:** No matter how you choose to advocate to have questions or requests answered, be sure to include your reason using data that supports each question or request.

IMPORTANT: *An Individual Education Plan should provide a child with **educational benefit.** An IEP written for educational benefit should list present levels of performance that reflect what is known about the child from assessment and other information. Present levels of performance identify needs and are used to write baselines for IEP goals. IEP goals and baselines are to be specific and measurable and the baseline relates to the same skill area as the goal. IEP goals determine services. Supports, accommodations and modifications make it possible for your child to be educated in the **least restrictive environment (LRE)** so your child has a **free and appropriate public education (FAPE).***

The IEP Benefit Analysis checklist can help you check off each item in the IEP as you do your review.

IEP Benefit Analysis CHECKLIST

☐ Page 1 of the IEP, section, "Describe how the student's disability affects involvement and progress in general curriculum (or for preschoolers, participation in appropriate activities)" has a statement describing HOW the disability affects involvement and progress, NOT WHAT the district is providing .

☐ Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (page 2 and can continue on page 3) includes information that is clear, specific and concise about my child's skills at the time the IEP was written. Information can come from assessments, teacher observation, work samples etc.

☐ There are goals related to education addressing each prioritized area of need (related to the disability) to improve a skill area.

☐ Each goal and related baseline are written so they are specific, measurable and anyone reading them can form a picture in his/her mind of what my student would be doing or not doing.

☐ There are accommodations for prioritized areas of need which describe the specific conditions when these accommodations **must** be provided so my student can access grade level curriculum, instead of the words "as needed".

☐ There are modifications listed for subject areas if my student is below grade level enough that a different grade level curriculum in that subject area is needed.

☐ There are supports and services listed for staff on behalf of my student if these are needed for my student to have educational benefit.

☐ The frequency and duration of services is enough so that goals are reasonably calculated to be reached and provide educational benefit.

☐ The Special Factors page accurately represents if any of the factors such as a Behavior Intervention Plan, Assistive Technology, or English Learning Support are needed.

☐ A Transition Plan is in place before my student turns 16 and specifically addresses needs related to employment, post-secondary education and as appropriate, independent living.

☐ The location of services is determined so as to provide educational benefit and the continuum of options is reviewed and noted.

☐ Comparison of baselines/present levels over several years show progress and if grade level skills are not yet attained, goals are then written to further increase or expand the same skill.

☐ Goals are only dropped if grade level skills are reached or the IEP Team (including the parent) agree further work on a weak skill area is not a priority or beneficial.

☐ When data over time doesn't show progress, discussion is needed to determine what might be needed or changed:

- More service
- Different services
- Change in location of services
- Different instructional strategy
- More assessment to understand why there isn't progress

Organizing School-Related Papers

Getting organized will help you support your child and the school in meeting your child's unique needs. A binder containing your child's important papers will help you see trends and patterns and can improve your communication with the school. Creating a one-page summary of your child's strengths, interests, and needs to give teachers at the beginning of the year has proved helpful to many parents. Our "Getting Organized" Packet has more information.

Create a One-Page Profile
Keep the profile to one page to make it easier for busy teachers to get the highlights of your child's IEP as well as some more personal attributes. Categories might include:

- Basic information: age, siblings, pets, interests, summer activities
- Medical: medication and any impact at school (i.e. not hungry at lunch, often thirsty, lethargy) and/or any physical limitations (i.e. seizure resulted in left side weak)
- Education: tutoring, remediation, school changes, IEP date, classroom accommodations
- Strengths and challenges

Obtain and Organize Records
Check to see if you have the last two or three years of your child's records. If not, make a written request for your child's records, both the cumulative and Special Education files.

Once you have all the necessary papers related to the IEP, you are ready to sort and organize:

- Use a large 3-ring binder. Make sure you have a paper hole-punch too!

- File chronologically with the most recent on the top.

- Put something that reminds you of your child on the front cover such as a picture

- Put a school calendar and your Special Education Rights in the pockets.

- Use tabs to divide your papers into categories that best suit your needs *(suggestions)*:
    › **Contact information** for teachers, therapists, administrators, etc.
    › **IEP documents:** Meeting notice, eligibility determination, goals and objectives, services, placement, behavior plans, comments, etc. Keep all related IEP documents and notes.
    › **Assessments:** School and independent and any other reports on your child
    › **Child's work:** Report cards, progress reports, test results, and work samples
    › **Copies/logs of all communication:** Letters, notes, emails, and phone calls to and from the school and others serving your child
    › **State wide test results**
    › **Medical summary:** A list of medications and dosages your child takes at home or at school (note any changes in the behavior, reaction, and dosage), and appointments
    › **Your observations:** Include notes or observations of your child pertinent to school

IEP Goals: Examples of Areas of Need & Sub-Skills

The following are a few examples of sub-skills in various areas that can be addressed as part of a student's education and IEP. **This is not a complete list, as sub-skills are numerous.** *See also the California Common Core Standards document at* http://www.cde.ca.gov.

Reading
- Fiction
- Non-fiction
- Fluency (how quickly and accurately text is read)
- Phonemic Awareness (manipulating sounds)
- Phonics (connecting letters to sounds)
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension
    › Right-in-the-text answers (answer to the question is right in the text)
    › Think-about-it answers (answer requires thinking and requires pulling together ideas in the text)

Writing
- Mechanics/Editing: spelling, punctuation, capitalization
- Content: connection of ideas in paragraphs and in entire composition; complexity of sentences and paragraphs
- Planning before writing

Math
- Calculation (adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, decimals, fractions, formulas)
- Concepts (number sense, estimation, part to whole, etc.)
- Practical (telling time, making change, etc.)
- Word problems

Study Skills/Executive Functions
- Memorizing and studying for tests
- Planning long-term projects
- Time estimation for work completion
- Test preparation methods
- Organizing materials
- Self-monitoring
- Turning in completed work

Communication
- Articulation (speech)
- Understanding what is heard via spoken words
- Expressing thoughts via words
- Pragmatics or understanding non-verbal language (body language, turn-taking, topic maintenance)

Gross/Fine Motor
- Handwriting
- Cutting
- Body posture for desk work
- Strength to navigate
- Buttoning, zipping

Social Emotional Behavior
- On task
- Avoiding work
- Blurting out
- Physical altercations
- Misuse of school equipment
- Seeking peer attention in negative way
- Emotional regulation
- Respect for authority

Vocational/Transition to Adulthood
- Career skills
- Career awareness and exploration
- Employability skills and work habits
- Work experience

Adaptive/Daily Living
- Hygiene
- Time management
- Safety
- Managing personal finances (making change, bank accounts…)
- Dressing for P.E. or outdoors

Examples of Skill Progression

- Little or no independent skill
- Skill with adult prompts (how many) or coaching (what type)
- Yes can do skill independently

- Little or no skill in natural setting
- Skill when in therapy or controlled setting
- Skill in natural setting (i.e. recess, classroom)

- Single digit addition
- Double digit addition
- Double digit with carrying

- Little or no ability to identify the problem, lack of self-awareness
- Identify and acceptance of problem
- Little or no ability to find a solution, recognize solutions, use solutions
- Identify & accept the problem, pick a solution and use solution

- Write a simple sentence (subject/predicate)
- Write a compound sentence

- Write a topic sentence
- Write a topic sentence in a paragraph
- Write 3 paragraphs: introductory paragraph with topic sentence, middle paragraph with supporting details and summary paragraph that is cohesive in ideas/content

- Decode CVC words
- Decode CCVC or blends

- Fluency chart: increasing wpm (or % fluency) for time of year, grade level book or instructional level

See also Depth of Knowledge chart and Bloom's Taxonomy which can be found on the internet.

Current IEP Analysis Worksheet:

Child's Name_____Date of Current IEP_____*4/2015*_____Grade__*6*____

AREA OF NEED & SUB SKILL	PRIORITY	DATA THAT SHOWS THIS	IEP ITEM TO ADDRESS THIS Indicate item type–see code
Reading			
fluency	*high*	*RSP report p. 6, WJ 10%*	*G: fluency, A: audiobooks*
decoding	*high*	*RSP report p. 6, WJ 9%*	*not addressed*
Writing			
spelling	*low*	*RSP report p. 6, 11% Weekly tests*	*not addressed*
sentences	*medium*	*RSP report p. 7, TOWL 12%*	*G: compound sentences*
Math			
Functional Academics/Executive Function			
study for tests	*high*	*Chapter tests flunked*	*not addressed*
turning in work	*high*	*teacher log missing work*	*not addressed*
Adaptive Daily Living			

ITEM TYPE: G = Goal, A = Accommodation, M = Modification, AT = Assistive Tech, BIP = Behavior Plan

Multi-Year IEP Goal Outcome Analysis Worksheet:

Child's Name_____

List each skill which had a goal under the appropriate area of need (use "Examples of Areas of Need & Sub-skills" sheet for reference). Indicate if goal was met, yes or no.

AREA OF NEED & SUB SKILL	IEP DATE/GRADE	Goal MET Y/N	IEP DATE/GRADE	Goal MET Y/N	IEP DATE/GRADE	Goal MET Y/N
	3/2013 2nd		*4/2014 3rd*			
Reading						
Decode	*CVC 60 %*	*Y*	*CCVC 80%*	*N*		
Sight words	*1st grade 50 words*	*N*	*1st grade 100 words*	*N*		
Writing						
Composition	*Simple Sentence*	*N*	*Compound*	*N*		
Edit	*Punctuate 60%*	*Y*	*Punctuate 80%*	*N*		
	Capitalize 60%	*Y*	*Capitalize 80%*	*Y*		
Math						
Functional Academics/Executive Function						
Adaptive Daily Living						

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Multi-Year Present Levels and Goals Worksheet:

Student:

Subskill: mix of comprehension fluency, decoding

Area of Need: reading

	Present Level	Goal
Date written: Nov. 2008 / Grade when written: 5th	Sam reads at a beginning 4th gr using alternative instructional materials in a small group setting. 80% on all comprehension tasks	
Date written: Nov. 2009 / Grade when written: 6th	Sam's instructional reading is at 4th grade. He continues to make decoding errors with high frequency words. Fluency continues to be weak. He has made improvements in reading comprehension of identifying main points of grade level passages	**Goal due date: Nov. 2009 / Grade when due: 6th** — After reading a brief literature passage at beginning 5th grade instructional level, identify main events in plot using prior knowledge to make & confirm inferences & conclusions & support them with textual evidence 80% in 4/5 observations
Date written: Nov. 2010 / Grade when written: 7th	Sam's instructional reading at 4th grade. He continues to make decoding errors with high frequency words. Fluency continues to be weak…he has made improvements in reading comprehension of identifying main points of grade level passages	**Goal due date: Nov. 2010 / Grade when due: 7th** — After reading a brief literature passage at beginning 5th grade instructional level, identify main events in plot using prior knowledge to make & confirm inferences & conclusions & support them with textual evidence 80% in 4/5 observations
Date written: / Grade when written:		**Goal due date: Nov. 2011 / Grade when due: 8th** — After reading a brief literature passage at a beginning 6th gr. instructional level, identify main events in the plot & use prior knowledge to make & confirm inferences & concludsions & support with textual evidence 80% in 4/5 observations

Present level & associated goal in same colored boxes. Oldest present level in far left column with subsequent years to the right.

MATRix parent network + resource center

Multi-Year Assessment:

EXAMPLE Charting Testing Over Time								
	private eval	district eval	district eval					
	Grade 2	Grade 4	Grade 7					
	2005 Sept	**2007 Nov**	**2010**					
Woodcock Johnson III								
READING								
Letter Word ID	8%	9%	4%					
Fluency		6%	6%					
Comprehension	2%	15%	5%					
Word Attack	10%							
Reading Vocab	6%							
MATH								
Calculation	42%	11%	41%					
Fluency	11%	14%	8%					
Applied Problems	23%	51%	43%					
WRITTEN EXPRESSION								
Spelling	10%	10%	2%					
Fluency	19%	9%	21%					
Samples	23%	40%	33%					
Broad Reading		6%	3%					
Broad Math		28%	31%					
Broad Writing		11%	8%					
TOWL - wrritten lang								
Vocabulary		16%	5%					
Spelling		9%	25%					
Style		16%						
Logical Sentences		9%	16%					
Sentence Combining		25%	37%					
Contextual Convention		9%	3%					
Contextual Language		9%						
Story Construction		2%	16%					
TOWL Composites								
Contrived		<1%	16%					
Spontaneous		<1%	3%					
Overall		3%	9%					
GRAY ORAL READING		**2007**	**2010**					
Rate		5%	2%					
Comprehension		37%	9%					
Total		12%	7%					
	GRAY ORAL			**WOODCOCK JOHNSON**				

GRAY ORAL chart — 2010 and 2007, Comprehension and Rate

WOODCOCK JOHNSON chart — Comprehension, Fluency, Letter Word ID for 2010, 2007, 2005

September 2011

Current IEP Analysis Worksheet:

Child's Name_____Date of Current IEP_____Grade_____

AREA OF NEED & SUB SKILL	PRIORITY	DATA THAT SHOWS THIS	IEP ITEM TO ADDRESS THIS Indicate item type–see code
Reading			
Writing			
Math			
Functional Academics/Executive Function			
Adaptive Daily Living			

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Current IEP Analysis Worksheet: (continued)

AREA OF NEED & SUB SKILL	PRIORITY	DATA THAT SHOWS THIS	IEP ITEM TO ADDRESS THIS Indicate item type – see code on back of page
Social/Emotional/Behavioral			
Communication			
Gross/Fine Motor			
Vocational			

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Other Materials that can assist in completing this analysis are available on our website, www.matrixparents.org:

- IEP Goals: Examples of Areas of Need and Sub-Skills sheet
- HELPsheet: IEP Goals, When to say, "Yes, I agree."
- IEP Packet
- Getting Organized Packet
- Advocacy Packet

Multi-Year IEP Goal Outcome Analysis Worksheet:

Child's Name_____

List each skill which had a goal under the appropriate area of need (use "Examples of Areas of Need & Sub-skills" sheet for reference). Indicate if goal was met, yes or no.

AREA OF NEED & SUB SKILL	IEP DATE/GRADE	Goal MET Y/N	IEP DATE/GRADE	Goal MET Y/N	IEP DATE/GRADE	Goal MET Y/N
Reading						
Writing						
Math						
Functional Academics/Executive Function						
Adaptive Daily Living						

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Multi-Year IEP Goal Outcome Analysis Worksheet: (continued)

Child's Name_____

List each skill which had a goal under the appropriate area of need (use "Examples of Areas of Need & Sub-skills" sheet for reference). Indicate if goal was met, yes or no.

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Gross/Fine Motor						
Social/Emotional/Behavior						
Vocational						

ITEM TYPE: G = Goal, A = Accommodation, M = Modification, AT = Assistive Tech, BIP = Behavior Plan

Tracking Present Levels and Goals Over Time Worksheet:

Student:

SubSkill:

Area of Need:

	Date written: Grade when written:	Date written: Grade when written:	Date written: Grade when written:	Date written: Grade when written:
Present Level				
	Goal due date: Grade when due:	Goal due date: Grade when due:	Goal due date: Grade when due:	
Goal				

Present level & associated goal in same colored boxes. Oldest present level in far left column with subsequent years to the right.

Tracking Present Levels and Goals Over Time Worksheet:

Student:

SubSkill:

Area of Need:

Present level & associated goal in same colored boxes. Oldest present level in far left column with subsequent years to the right.

	Date written: Grade when written:	Date written: Grade when written:	Date written: Grade when written:	Date written: Grade when written:
Present Level				
	Goal due date: Grade when due:	Goal due date: Grade when due:	Goal due date: Grade when due:	Goal due date: Grade when due:
Goal				

IEP Meeting: Tracking Questions & Requests

Step 4 – Transfer the information from the IEP Planning Worksheet and take this sheet to the IEP meeting with you or use it as you create an email or a letter.

My concerns relevant to educational progress:

STEP 4

Priority	Questions to ask and requests to make	Based on data from...	Covered in meeting?	Result/Decision Follow-up?

Reminder: *Your parent concern statement should be noted on page 2 of your child's IEP.*

IEP Meeting: Tracking Questions & Requests

Step 4 – Transfer the information from the IEP Planning Worksheet and take this sheet to the IEP meeting with you or use it as you create an email or a letter.

My concerns relevant to educational progress:

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Priority	Questions to ask and requests to make	Based on data from…	Covered in meeting?	Result/Decision Follow-up?

Reminder: *Your parent concern statement should be noted on page 2 of your child's IEP.*

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Selected Materials

- *All About Tests and Assessments: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions* (2014) – **Peter Wright, Esq. & Pamela Wright**

- *All About IEPs: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about IEPs* (2010) – **Peter Wright, Esq. & Pamela Wright**

- *From Emotions to Advocacy: The Special Education Survival Guide* (2006) – **Peter Wright, Esq. & Pamela Wright**

- *Special Needs Advocacy Resource Book* (2008) – **Rich Weinfeld & Michelle Davis**

- *Working Together: A Parent's Guide to Parent and Professional Partnership and Communication Within Special Education* (2006) – **Technical Assistance ALLIANCE for Parent Centers – access resource here: http://www.matrixparents.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Working-Together-A-Parents-Guide.pdf**

- *Steps to Success* – **access resource here: http://matrixparents.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Steps-to-Success.pdf**

- *Special Education Rights and Responsibilities* (2011) – **CASE and Disability Rights California: http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/pubs/504001Ch01.pdf**

- *The Complete Guide to Special Education: Expert Advice on Evaluations, IEPs and Helping Your Child Succeed* (2010) – **Linda Wilmshurst, Ph.D & Alan Brue, Ph.D**

- *Nolo's IEP Guide: Learning Disabilities* (2011) – **Lawrence Siegel, JD**

- *The Complete IEP Guide: How to Advocate for Your Special Ed Child* (2011) – **Lawrence Siegel**

Selected Websites (in addition to http://www.matrixparents.org)

Center for Parent Information & Resources, http://www.parentcenterhub.org

California Department of Education

- **Main website, http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/**
- **Positive Environment, Networks of Trainers (behavior), http://www.pent.ca.gov**
- **California Services for Technical Assistance & Training (CalSTAT), http://www.calstat.org**
- **Diagnostic Center North, http://www.dcn-cde.ca.gov**

Wrightslaw, http://www.wrightslaw.com
Disability Rights California, http://disabilityrightsca.org

Tips for the IEP meeting can be found in our Advocacy packet and our
Help! sheet, *How can I communicate better with my child's IEP team?*