

## Knowledge Is Power: A Parent's Guide to the IEP

Title I SPAC  
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Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network

## PaTTAN's Mission

The mission of the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) is to support the efforts and initiatives of the Bureau of Special Education, and to build the capacity of local educational agencies to serve students who receive special education services.

## PDE's Commitment to Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Our goal for each child is to ensure Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams begin with the general education setting with the use of Supplementary Aids and Services before considering a more restrictive environment.

## Purpose



This presentation is designed to introduce parents to the purpose of the IEP meeting within the special education process and to help empower parents about how they can prepare to participate in the IEP process.

## Learning Outcomes

- Explain the purpose and function of an IEP
- Discuss the logistics of IEP meetings
- Determine how parents can contribute throughout the IEP process
- Identify available apps for IEP-related information

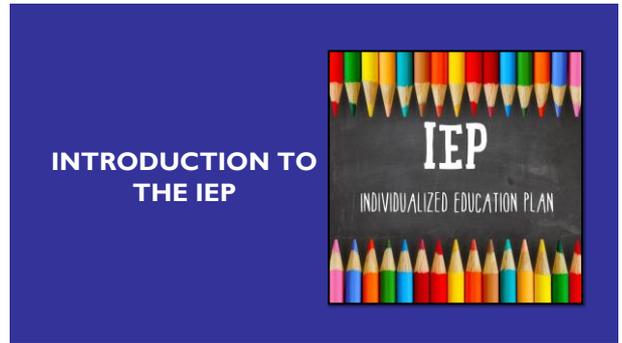


**GETTING TO  
KNOW YOU**

### Who's in the Room?

Please take two minutes to introduce yourself to your neighbors by finishing the following stems...

- "My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a \_\_\_\_\_ (parent, teacher, district rep, etc.)"
- "I am interested in learning more about special education because..."
- "I hope to learn \_\_\_\_\_ from this workshop."

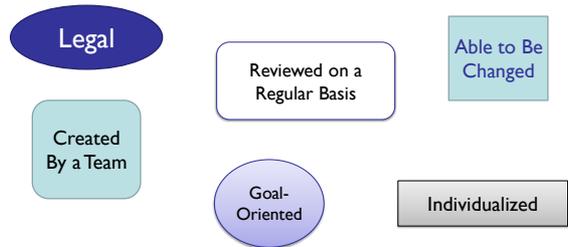


### What is an IEP?



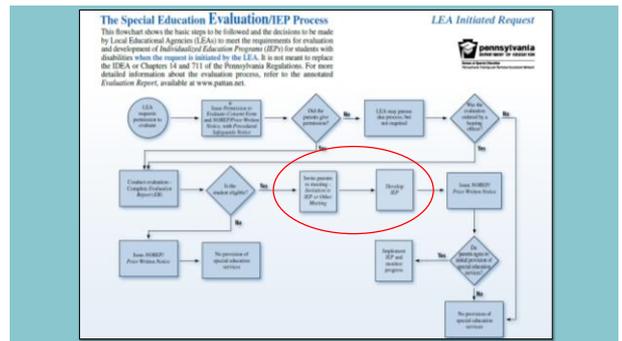
"An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written statement of the educational program designed to meet a child's individual needs. Every child who receives special education services must have an IEP." –Wrights Law

### An IEP Is...



### IEPs and the Law

- Requirement under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- IDEA ensures a free and appropriate education for all students with disabilities



## Required Members of the IEP Team

The parents of the child with a disability	At least one regular education teacher (if child is in regular education)	At least one special education teacher	A Local Educational Agency (LEA) representative
An individual who can interpret evaluation results	Representatives of agencies responsible for transition	Other individuals with special knowledge of expertise	The child with a disability, as appropriate

## Holding the IEP Meeting

- Meetings can occur in person OR over the phone OR over a video connection, such as Skype (depending on district rules)
- Meetings should be held at times that work for the parents – if the time doesn't work for you, try talking to school to determine another time
- IEP meetings don't have to be held in the school – would your school do a home visit or hold a meeting in the community?
- If there are barriers to you attending the meeting, express them to the school (babysitting, transportation, etc.)

## PA IEP = Eight Sections + Demographics

Section I	Special Considerations the IEP Team Must Consider Before IEP Development
Section II	Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance
Section III	Transition Services
Section IV	Participation in State and Local Assessments
Section V	Goals and Objectives
Section VI	Special Education/Related Services/Supplemental Aids & Services/Program Modifications
Section VII	Educational Placement
Section VIII	PennData Reporting (Least Restrictive Environment)

## Think About It

- Consider what you've learned about the IEP process so far
- Talk with a neighbor about any questions you have regarding this process
- Highlight any sections of the IEP that you may not understand



**PREPARING  
TO  
PARTICIPATE  
IN YOUR  
CHILD'S IEP**

## Tips for Preparing for the Meeting

- Find out who will be attending
- Ask about what the meeting will cover
- Make sure that enough time is allotted
- Get copies or reports or evaluations prior to the meeting
- Organize your paperwork
- Prepare a vision statement for your child's future
- Determine your priorities



## Consider the Big Picture

Identify the two or three most important things you want to accomplish

Prepare questions in advance to help stay on track

Think about how the IEP impacts your child in the long run

Be prepared to discuss strategies that are or are not working at home

## Learn the Language



- Familiarize yourself with the special education process
- Learn the acronyms – but don't be afraid to ask questions!
- Speak the language of “data”
- Put your thoughts on paper ahead of time so you remember what you want to say

## Documents to Review BEFORE the Meeting

- Your child's current IEP (if applicable)
- Your child's evaluation or reevaluation report
- Progress reports regarding IEP goals
- Progress reports/report cards from class
- Work samples
- Behavioral data
- Information from outside providers

Also consider bringing these documents to the meeting...

## What to Bring to the IEP Meeting



- Paper and pen or laptop to take notes
- Documents (such as those listed previously)
- Photo of your child (if your child is not attending)
- Folder in which to store documents
- People to support you or contribute information to the meeting

## 8 Steps to a Better IEP Meeting

Make every attempt to sustain relationships

Keep the focus on the child's needs

Always provide “face saving” ways out of a dilemma

Build your record

Walk a mile in another's shoes

Listen actively, especially to the things you don't want to hear

Encourage everyone to love your child – and let them!

Have faith that all parties want your child to succeed

(Bolero, 2017)

## What to Do at the Meeting



- Take a friend or family member
- Reschedule if key people are not present
- Clearly describe what you want and why
- Listen to what others say, even if you disagree
- Get issues out in the open; you are allowed to disagree
- Make sure all services and supports are included in the IEP
- Sign the IEP – this signifies you were present at the meeting
- Wait to sign the NOREP if you want to

## Think, Pair, Share

- Consider the following questions:
  - What are the primary issues I want to see addressed at my child's IEP meeting?
  - What are two or three questions I'd like to ask at the meeting?
  - Who can I bring along to support me?
- Talk with your elbow partner and prepare to share out



THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT...



## Document Storing Apps



DocWallet

iBooks

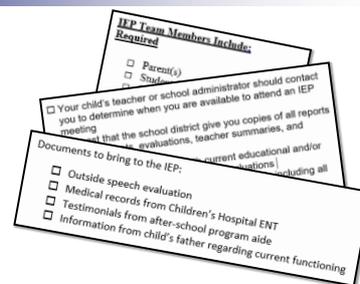
DropBox

Smart Vault

The Vault

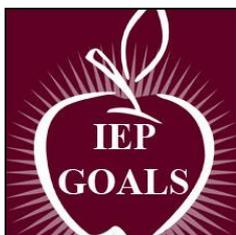
## Checklist Apps

- Checklist+
- Wunderlist
- Todoist
- Any.do
- Things



## IEP Specific Apps

- iAdvocate – Provides strategies for working with a team, as well as suggestions regarding how to respond to statements from school personnel
- NASET IEP Goals and Objectives – Record goals, objectives and strategies, and track progress



## Consider This

- What is one app that you might use to prepare for an IEP meeting?
- What app might you use during the meeting or for follow-up?
- Share your thoughts with your elbow partner.



## Additional Resources for Parents

All About the IEP

[www.parentcenterhub.org/iep/](http://www.parentcenterhub.org/iep/)

Wrights Law

[www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com)

A Guide to the Individualized Education Program

[www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html](http://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html)

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

[www.kidstogether.org/IEP.htm](http://www.kidstogether.org/IEP.htm)

Individualized Education Program (IEP) Guide and Other Resources

[www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/iep-guide](http://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/tool-kits/iep-guide)

Resources on IEPs for Children with Disabilities

[www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/sr/iepresources.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/sr/iepresources.asp)



## Contact Information

[www.pattan.net](http://www.pattan.net)

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