



Capitol County Children's Collaborative
Engage. Educate. Empower.

CCCC's Education Reference Guide

Timelines, Templates and Tips to Guide Parents

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Understanding the special education process can be difficult. This booklet serves as a point of reference to guide you through your child's IEP development and implementation.

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Common Terminology

Academic Achievement

Youth's skills and performance in academic areas such as reading, writing, science, and math (for a youth of pre-school age, it refers to developmental level)

Accommodations

As part of a youth's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan, accommodations are individualized adaptations which change how they learn what is being taught. Examples of accommodations include textbooks for at-home use, alternative communication device, provision of notes/outlines, adaptive writing tools, special environment for testing, use of a recording device, additional time to complete a project, use of sensory tools, an area to relax when anxious, use of visual aids or study guides and much more.

Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)

Essential activities a child needs to do on a daily basis. These skills include communicating, taking a bath or shower, walking, eating and using the toilet.

Aide

An aide is a person assigned to support one or more youth during part of or for an entire school day, to help provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). The aide may be needed to support a child in specific classes or situations for such things as instructional support, behavior management, activities of daily living, social skills, etc.

Annual Goals

The IEP document lists the academic and functional (everyday) skills the IEP team thinks your child can achieve by the end of the year. These goals are geared toward helping your child take part in the general education classroom. IEP goals need to be realistic and measurable.

Annual IEP Review

A youth's IEP must be reviewed at least once a year. A parent can request an IEP review or revision as a member of their youth's IEP team. The parent can suggest changes and provide input to any of the components of the IEP for the upcoming year including the goals and

placement. As part of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) requirements, a child must be re-evaluated at least every three years to determine eligibility and current needs.

Assessments/Evaluations

School districts conduct assessments and evaluations to gather information for a youth's eligibility for special education services. Common assessments can include evaluations of cognitive level, assessments of academic achievement, behavioral assessments, speech and language evaluations and assessments of a student's functioning in various school environments. A parent can request specific evaluations by the school district based on the youth's age and needs. A parent can also seek independent private evaluations at the parent's own expense.

Assistive Technology (AT)

Within special education programs, assistive technology refers to equipment or software used to increase, maintain, or improve function. The IDEA requires consideration of AT as an accommodation, but there are no established conditions for how, when or where AT should be used by a student. The IEP can recommend a needs assessment to determine if AT is needed as well as the appropriate device, features and use to meet the child's individual needs. AT can be high-tech or low-tech and can include such things as communication devices, wheelchairs, educational software, pencil holders, eye-gaze and head trackers, etc. If the youth's IEP team determines the need for AT, the school district is responsible for obtaining and providing the appropriate device at no cost to the parent.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

The IDEA requires consideration of a positive behavior intervention plan when a child's behavior has been found to be disruptive to his or her learning or that of others. A BIP is put into a youth's IEP as a preventive plan to help reduce the possibility of challenging behaviors. It includes positive behavior interventions, strategies, and supports to address the identified needs. BIPs can include classroom environment changes, strategies for developing appropriate behaviors, and additional supports in school settings. A BIP is developed by the youth's IEP team as a result of a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA).

Case Manager

A person designated by the youth's school district to ensure a youth's special education services and adaptations are in place. They facilitate and coordinate communications, updates, meetings, and gathering information related to the youth's IEP.

Child Find

A process where school districts locate, identify and evaluate children ages three to twenty-one who are in need of special education services.

Classification

As identified in the IDEA, the classification includes at least one of thirteen specific disabilities which adversely affect a youth's academic performance.

Crisis Plan

Related to the mental health or behavioral health needs of a youth, a crisis plan is an individualized action plan developed by the youth's IEP to respond when the youth is at risk of harming themselves or others. This plan focuses on immediate response to and support for the actions. A BIP is used to prevent and teach appropriate and safe behaviors.

Disability

There are specific disabilities the IDEA considers when determining eligibility for services. Among youth age 3 to 9, delays in a youth's physical, cognitive, communication, social/emotional, and adaptive development are evaluated. For youth age 3 to 21, the IDEA currently identifies disability related to special education eligibility in thirteen categories. These categories include autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment (including blindness).

Due Process

A formal process for resolving disputes with a school about special education and IEPs. Due process isn't the only way to resolve a dispute. There are other options, like mediation and filing a state complaint.

Eligibility Meeting

A meeting held to determine if a youth qualifies for special education and an IEP.

Extended School Year (ESY)

A part of the IDEA, an extended school year can provide special education and related services for a child beyond the school's regular school year, at no cost to the parents. IDEA allows school districts to establish the conditions for ESY eligibility with decisions made by the youth's IEP team. To be considered for ESY, the IEP team must determine the student would lose critical

skills learned during the school year and that it would take a significant amount of time in the upcoming school year to regain those skills.

Formal Assessments/Evaluations

These include statewide, standardized, district-wide, transition, and/or functional behavior assessments as well as observations.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

In the United States, public schools are required by law to give youth a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Educational programs must meet each youth's individual needs, provide access to the general education curriculum, and meet the current grade-level standards of the state when the child lives.

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)

This assessment is used to determine why a youth may be engaging in certain behaviors. Representatives within the school district work together to collect specific information to identify where, when and with whom these behaviors are occurring. The goal is to evaluate and determine the reason(s) for the specific behaviors to establish preventative and response plans.

Functional Performance

A youth's ability to perform skills and activities which are not considered part of academic achievement (unique for each child but can include communication, self-care, mobility/getting around the school building, organizational skills and social skills).

Inclusion

Within educational programs, inclusion encourages the acceptance and appreciation of each person's uniqueness. Inclusion involves a commitment to helping youth learn more about people's similarities and differences in school and in their lives. Although the term inclusion is not identified in the IDEA, a child must be placed in a LRE. Inclusion refers to environments which are accessible to all, regardless of abilities, learning styles, or backgrounds.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

An IEP is a legal document which defines how a student's school will meet their specific educational needs which result from an eligible disability. The IEP contains reasonable and measurable goals for the student and identifies specific modifications, accommodations, and related services the school district will provide. As required by the IDEA, an IEP must include: the

youth's present level of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP), goals and services.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Goals

Academic, behavioral, social, and/or transition goals are written to measure a child's progress based on their recognized areas of need. IEP goals need to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Team

There are five mandatory members of an IEP team. These include at least one parent, general education teacher, special education teacher, representative of the school district (case manager), and an individual who is able to interpret the academic/instructional effects of the youth's evaluations. Whenever appropriate, the youth should be part of the team. Others who have knowledge or special expertise regarding youth can also participate (including those involved in the youth's related services). In New Jersey, this team is referred to as a Child Study Team.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

A federal law requiring schools to serve the educational needs of eligible students with disabilities. It requires schools to provide special education services as specified in a youth's IEP. It also indicates requirements to ensure a youth receives a FAPE in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

Informal Assessments/Evaluations

These include curriculum-based, teacher-created, and transition assessments as well as observations and interviews.

Initial Evaluation

A full evaluation must be conducted through the youth's school district before a youth's can be found eligible for special education for the first time.

Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs)

Non-essential activities a youth needs to learn in order to live as independently as possible at home and in the community. Some IADLs include shopping, using a telephone, managing money, cleaning the house, and recreation activities.

Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant (LDTC)

A person who evaluates a youth's knowledge, educational level, and learning style. An LDTC can be a part of a youth's IEP team and can help to determine how a youth's disability affects their education.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

To the maximum extent appropriate, the school district must ensure a youth is educated with youth who are not disabled-with or without accommodations and modifications-in the school they would attend if not disabled.

Modifications

As part of a youth's IEP or Section 504 Plan, modifications are individualized adaptations which change what the youth is expected to learn or what material is taught. Examples of modifications include having different test questions, alternate assignments, and learning different material than their peers.

Parent Report Section of the IEP

An optional but important section of the IEP provided by the parents which concisely lists parent concerns such as strategies that are working/not working, behavioral challenges, medical issues, areas of need which have not been identified, and supportive data related to requests for accommodations and modifications.

Placement

After IEP services have been determined, the IEP team (including the parents) make a determination of where these services will take place. Placement options can include in-district general education placement, part-time/supplemental placement, self-contained environments, out of district placement, and residential placement. The placement must ensure the child has maximum opportunities to be in least restrictive educational environments with non-disabled peers.

Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)

A concise, clearly written, positive statement describing how a youth's disability currently impacts their academic achievement and functional performance within the general education curriculum. The PLAAFP is the first written statement in the youth's IEP and includes information from formal and informal assessments/evaluations and comments/observations of teachers, parents, and other knowledgeable individuals. The PLAAFP is an important statement which includes the areas affected by the youth's disability, how the disability impacts youth in the

general education curriculum, and specific academic areas impacted by the disability. A youth's IEP goals should be based on their PLAAFP.

Progress reporting

How a school will report a youth's progress on annual goals. This is specified in the IEP.

Pull-Out Programs

Pull-outs are special educational services which typically occur in settings outside the general education classroom. These may provide more concentrated instruction with less distractions and more individualized interaction with the educational providers.

Push-In Programs

Push-Ins are special education supports or related service which are provided to a student within general education classes.

Referral

Written request to have a youth evaluated for special education services. A referral can be originated by a parent or a teacher or other school/district representative. A referral should be dated, signed, and copied to keep as a personal record.

Related Services

Supports, aids, and/or services put into a youth's IEP based on evaluations of the youth's needs to help them benefit from the special education program. Related services can include the following: speech-language pathology, audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, physical therapy, occupational therapy, behavioral services to support an IEP behavior plan, recreation, early identification and assessment disabilities, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling, orientation and mobility services, medical services, school health services, social work services, parent counseling/training, transportation, etc.

Resource Room

As part of a youth's special education program, a resource room is either a special class or a general education class with additional supportive instruction. If a resource room is within a youth's IEP, the location, frequency, length of time, curriculum and method of instruction should be specified. A student can have access to a resource room for a portion of the day to work on a specific subject with a special education teacher.

School Psychologist

A person from the school district who evaluates a youth's aptitude and intellectual functioning. A school psychologist can be a part of a youth's IEP team.

School Records

The school district keeps information and records relating to a youth's education. These records include evaluations/assessment, reports, letters, classes, grades, meetings, attendance, student observations, forms, 504 Plan/IEP history, and other information related to the youth's education. A student's health records are kept separately from school records. Parents have the right to review and get copies of their child's school records within 10 days of their request. The district is not permitted to alter student records during this time.

School Social Worker

A person from the school district who can provide counseling for students. A social worker can be part of a youth's IEP team.

Section 504 Plan

A civil rights law which protects students against discrimination. A 504 Plan is used for students who may need academic support such as extra time for tests, extra set of books at home, or extra study period or temporary support due to an accident, illness, or injury. These supports are based upon the youth's specific needs. Parent approval and involvement are not required for a 504 Plan but is helpful. When in place, all teachers in the youth's educational program are responsible for implementing the support specified in the Plan. A 504 Plan can be terminated when the team determines the youth no longer has a disability and/or no longer needs accommodations/services to meet their identified needs in the general education program.

Self-contained Class

For some special education students, the least restrictive environment may not be able to be achieved in a fully inclusive classroom environment. Although not defined in the IDEA, self-contained classes focus on smaller groups of students and more one-on-one attention. These classes can be implemented on a part-time or full-time basis, as determined in a youth's IEP.

Special Education

As part of the IDEA, special education is specially designed instruction provided to eligible students-at no cost to parents-to meet the unique needs of a youth with a disability. It is put into

place to describe a youth's specific challenges and needs, define educational goals, and outline accommodations, and modifications which need to be put into place to meet these goals.

Transition Plan

A transition plan is a part of a youth's IEP which identifies and outlines goals and services when transitioning from high school to young adulthood. The transition plan is based on a youth's individual needs, strengths, skills, and interests and identifies goals to be achieved in their current academic year. The plan can focus on independent living skills, career and vocational skills and post-secondary education.

Special Education Process

Step 1: Pre-Referral

There are different pre-referral interventions through which to initiate the IEP process. These interventions are implemented based on the type of disability exhibited by the student.

The main objectives of pre-referral are:

- Document and elaborate the challenges and difficulties exhibited by the child.
- Evaluate the usefulness of classroom accommodation and changes.
- Review the power of different instructional interventions.
- Supervise the development of the student.

The pre-referral process helps to determine whether behavioral and educational challenges exhibited by the child can be resolved in a general education classroom. To avoid unnecessary evaluations and placements, the assessments used at this stage are purely intervention-based. Typically crafted in the general education class, this step is conducted with the use of direct performance procedures. Helping to save money, time and other resources in the process.

During the pre-referral stage, teachers will try various certified teaching approaches in hopes of establishing whether flawed instruction could be the cause of the problems exhibited. Children whose learning remains challenged will be referred to the next step in the IEP process, referred for special education services.

Step 2: Referral

If the pre-referral interventions prove unsuccessful, the student is referred for special education services. Referrals can come from parents, teachers, administrators, school nurses, doctors, social service agencies. Referral for special education services can happen at different stages during a child's life and vary a great deal based on their individual needs. Often, poor academic performance, continued misbehavior or disruption of their learning environment are prerequisites to this stage. It is important that you keep a signed and dated copy of the letter for your records (the special education department can provide a copy with a date received stamp as well).

Step 3: Identification/Assessment

Upon receiving a referral, the Child Study Team (CST) has 20 calendar days including weekends, but excluding school breaks/holidays, to meet with the parent for an initial planning meeting. Notice of a meeting is given to the parent including providing parent with a copy of Parent Rights in Special Education (PRISE). If evaluations are warranted, the CST must obtain written consent from the parent and has 90 days to complete the evaluations and develop an IEP, if eligible. If evaluations are not warranted, youth may still be eligible for a 504 Plan.

Step 4: Eligibility

The information gathered during the assessment stage is used to categorize those who have a disability and are eligible for special education services based on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The IEP committee creates different elements of the services required to plan and deliver an appropriate education framework. Students who do not meet the qualifications for special education services remain in the traditional classroom setting.

Step 5: Development of the IEP

The next step in the process is to create the actual IEP. An IEP team includes the child's parent(s), educators, administrators, and other specialists. As a parent attending an IEP for the first time may be an overwhelming experience. To help calm your nerves and know your child is receiving the help they deserve, you have the right to bring a child advocate with you to the meeting. Child advocates are paid professionals familiar with these proceedings and work specifically for the child and their parents. You additionally can bring any supports you feel necessary, for example an FSO Parent Partner or a CMO Care Manager. During the meeting, resources required

by the child are identified and their individualized learning style, long term and short-term goals are determined.

Step 6: Implementation

At this stage, the student's IEP and associated services commence. Accommodations are provided for both instruction and testing along with a range of multidisciplinary services required from different providers to support the child's educational program. The providers your child with special needs will interact with moving forward could include psychologists, occupational or physical therapists, speech/language pathologists and other special education professionals.

Step 7: Re-evaluation and Review

Each IEP developed requires accountability and consistent follow up by the child's parent(s) and team. A review is conducted annually. The purpose for these reviews is to determine whether the child is meeting their educational goals.

If the goals are not being met, revisions are made in the IEP. If the child is meeting and even exceeding their IEP goals, new milestones are determined. In some cases, the child may be moved back into the traditional classroom setting.

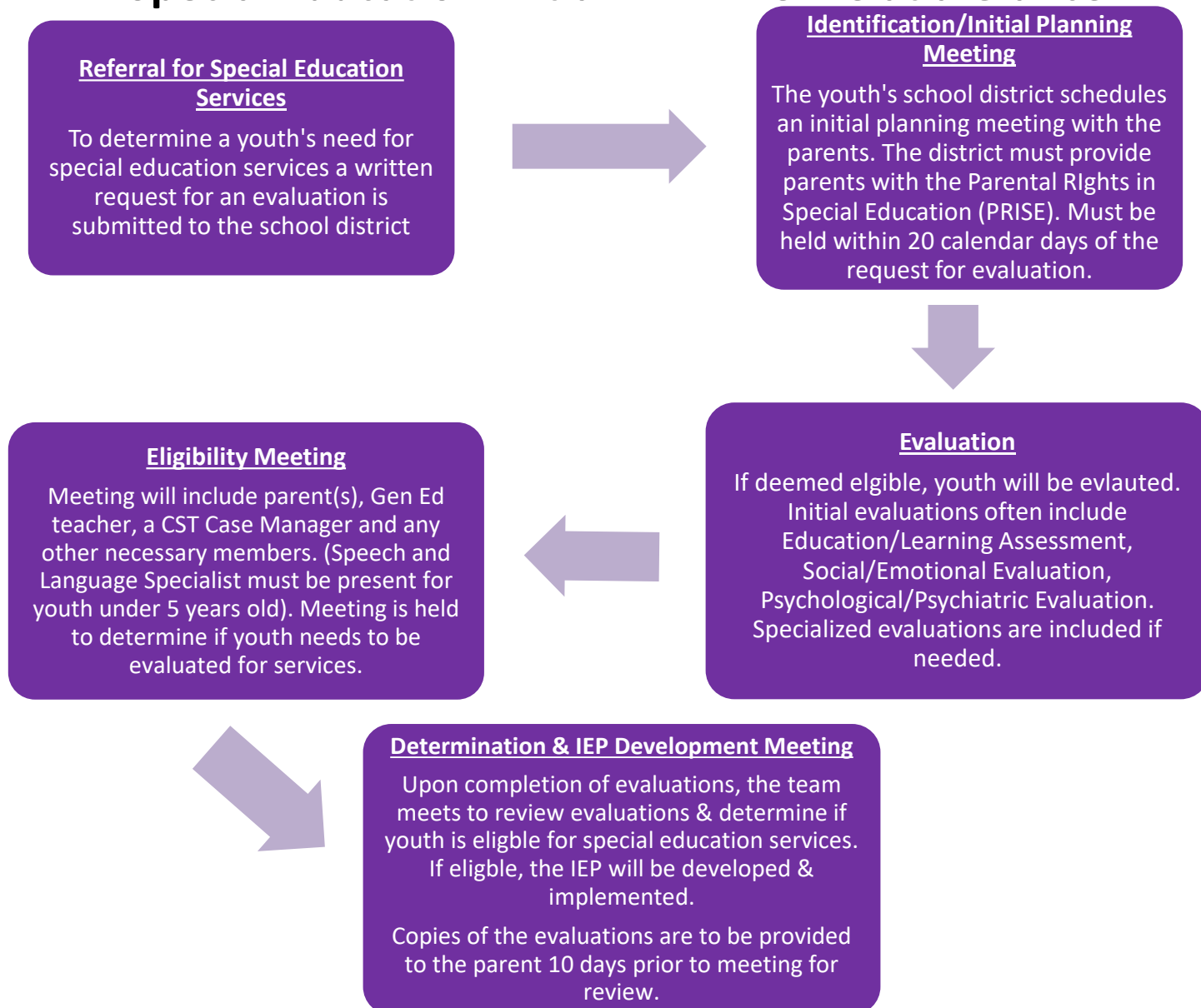
The evaluations are redone every three years. This includes the Education/Learning Assessment, Psychological Evaluation, Social/Emotional Assessment and any others needed.

Initial IEP Evaluation Timeline

1. Referral-Request for CST Evaluation is made by parent (or other party)
2. Initial Planning Meeting -Must be scheduled & held within 20 calendar days from the date the letter was received. This includes weekends, but excludes school breaks/holidays. Parents must be provided with a copy of the Parental

- Rights in Special Education (PRISE). Eligibility for evaluation is determined. Parent must sign consent for evaluations to occur.
3. Evaluations are Completed within 90 days from consent being received. Education/Learning Assessment, Social/Emotional Assessment, Psychological Evaluations are completed along with any specialty evaluations that are needed (i.e. speech/language, occupational therap, etc).
 4. The evaluations are to be provided to the parent/guardian 10 days prior to the eligibility meeting, for review.
 5. Eligibility Meeting is held within 90 days of receipt of consent. Evaluations are reviewed and special education eligibility is determined. If eligible, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed and implemented.

Special Education Initial IEP Timeline at a Glance



What is an Individualized Education Plan?

An IEP provides Individualized special education and related services for a student whose educational needs cannot be met within a general education program. It established modifications, and related services needed to help the student achieve those goals.

To be eligible for an IEP, the student must have one or more of these 13 specific disabilities (a classification) as indicated in the IDEA:

- Autism
- Deaf-Blindness
- Deafness
- Emotional Disturbance
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech or Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment, including blindness

It **MUST** be determined that the youth's disability impacts his or her educational performance.

What's the Difference?

504 Plans

- Established as part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and overseen by the U.S. Office of Civil Rights
- Does not require any formal evaluation
- Supports students who do not qualify for special education services
- Provides accommodations and other supports for the student; No specified goals or timeline for services
- No formal review process; typically reviewed annually
- Parents are not required to help develop, implement, or review the youth's plan. The school/district must notify the parents, but does not have to be in writing
- No official method to dispute services
- Applicable throughout the youth's lifetime (can transfer to a college or university)

IEPs

- Established as part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1973 and overseen by the U.S. Department of Education
- Requires student to be evaluated by a multi-disciplinary team (to be eligible, the youth's disability must meet specific IDEA criteria, impact the child's education and requires special education.)
- Provides a structured outline of goals, objectives, accommodations and modifications
- A legal document reassessed every three years
- Parents are part of the IEP development and review (collaborative effort)
- Provides official processes for families to dispute and resolve issues
- Applicable through age 21

Components of an IEP

As required by the IDEA, a youth's IEP must contain specific information....

- Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)
- A statement indicating your child's disability(ies)
- A list of program accommodations, modifications, related services, and other supports which have been determined appropriate for youth to
 - Meet established goals
 - Make progress toward the general education curriculum
 - Participate in extra-curricular/non-academic activities
 - Be educated with youth's peers as much as possible
- Measurable annual goals (S.M.A.R.T goals) which describe how often, when and where special education services will take place
- A statement specifying when reports of youth's progress will be provided
- An explanation of how youth will and will not participate with non-disabled peers in general education and extra-curricular activities
- If appropriate, specific plans to address youth's behavioral, health and/or transition needs

IEP S.M.A.R.T Goals

Specific

- What needs to be accomplished? What method(s) will be used to achieve the goal? How will it be done? By whom? How often?

Measurable

- How will you know when the goal has been reached?

Achievable

- Does the youth have the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to achieve the goal in a reasonable amount of time?

Relevant

- How is the goal related to the PLAAPF?

Timely

- What is the time period for the goal to be reached?

Do youth's IEP goals answer these questions?

By when should the goal be achieved?

What must youth do to reach the goal?

How will the goal be measured?

Where will the goal be measured?

What supports will be used to achieve the goal?

How accurate does youth have to be?

Top 5 IEP Tips

1

- Make sure all IEP communication is dated and in writing (either by mail or email)

2

- Each year, read or review the NJ Parental Rights in Special Education (PRISE). Your child's CST Case Manager can provide you with a copy. It is also available via your CMO CM or online.

3

- Keep copies of your child's IEPs, Evaluations, school letters, state testing, progress reports, report cards, and correspondence in a binder for each school year. If you are missing any documents, request a copy from your school district. Your CMO CM can provide you with a binder if needed.

4

- Read the PLAAFP section of your child's IEP each time you review your child's IEP. It should reflect your child's current strengths and needs. This statement is the foundation for your child's IEP goals.

5

- Always use the Parental Concerns and Reports section of your child's IEP to communicate your specific concerns and recommendations. This section is specifically there for you.

What do Child Study Team Case Managers Do?

- Coordinate and oversee the development and implementation of a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- Monitor the student's progress towards IEP goals and adjust the plan as needed
- Facilitate communication among all members of the IEP team, including teachers, therapists and parents
- Schedule and lead IEP meetings, including annual review and reevaluations
- Maintain and organize documentation related to the students; educational and related service needs
- Ensure that services are delivered in the least restrictive environment appropriate for the student
- Engage in crisis management depending on their role
- Serve as members of the intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) team, or threat and risk assessment teams
- Risk and threat assessments
- Provide individual and group counseling to support students' emotional and behavioral needs
- Conduct evaluations
- Average caseload for a typical Case Manager is approximately 60 students (varies by district)
- Advocates for you child at school
- Completes classroom observations
- Makes sure transportation services are provided as specified
- Manages all paperwork

Sample Letters

Request an Initial Evaluation for Special Education Services

From: Parent or caregiver name
Parent address
Parent telephone number
Email

Date of Letter

To: Director/Supervisor of Special Education
School District
District Address

Re: Request for Child Study Team Evaluation

Dear Director / Supervisor of Special Education:

I am the parent of _____, whose date of birth is _____. My child is struggling in the following areas:

- (List all areas of struggle)

As a result, I believe my child may need special education services. I am therefore requesting a Child Study Team evaluation to determine whether my child is eligible for special education. I understand under New Jersey State regulations, I am a member of the evaluation team and within 20 calendar days of receipt of this letter, we will meet to discuss evaluating my child. Please contact me to let me know the date and time of the meeting. Should you have any questions about this request, please contact me. Thank you.

Sincerely,

****Always keep a copy of your letter for your own files.****

Sample Letters

Request an IEP Meeting to Review or Revise My Child's IEP

From: Parent or caregiver name
Parent address
Parent telephone number
Email

Date of Letter

To: Director/Supervisor of Special Education
School District
District Address

Re: Request for IEP Meeting to Review/Revise My Child's IEP

Dear Director / Supervisor of Special Education:

I am the parent of _____, whose date of birth is _____. I am writing to request an IEP review meeting to discuss making some possible changes. I am concerned about _____ and would like to discuss this in more detail with the members of my child's IEP team.

I understand the IEP team must meet within 2 calendar days from the receipt of this letter to review the IEP. Please let me know what dates and times are available for me to choose for this meeting. Thank you.

Sincerely,

****Always keep a copy of your letter for your own files.****

Sample Letters

Request a Re-evaluation for My Child

From: Parent or caregiver name
Parent address
Parent telephone number
Email

Date of Letter

To: Director/Supervisor of Special Education
School District
District Address

Re: Request for Learning Re-Evaluation

Dear Director / Supervisor of Special Education:

I am the parent of _____, whose date of birth is _____. It has been approximately _____ years since my child has been evaluated. I am writing to request a re-evaluation by the Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant to measure my child's progress and determine whether their current program is still appropriate.

I understand you have 20 calendar days from the receipt of this letter to schedule a meeting with me to discuss this re-evaluation. Please contact me as soon as possible to schedule the meeting on a date and time which is convenient for all. Thank you.

Sincerely,

****Always keep a copy of your letter for your own files.****

Sample Letters

Request My Child's Education Records

From: Parent or caregiver name
Parent address
Parent telephone number
Email

Date of Letter

To: Director/Supervisor of Special Education
School District
District Address

Re: Request for My Child's Education records

Dear Director / Supervisor of Special Education:

I am the parent of _____, whose date of birth is _____. I am writing to schedule time to review my child's special education records. I will also need copies of some of these records.

I understand I have 10 calendar days from your receipt of this letter to view these records. Please let me know where and when I can come in to see the records. You can reach me during the day at _____ to set up a date and time. Thank you.

Sincerely,

****Always keep a copy of your letter for your own files.****

Sample Letters

Request an Independent Evaluation at the Public's Expense

From: Parent or caregiver name
 Parent address
 Parent telephone number
 Email

Date of Letter

To: Director/Supervisor of Special Education
 School District
 District Address

Re: Request for an Independent Evaluation

Dear Director / Supervisor of Special Education:

I am the parent of _____, whose date of birth is _____. I am requesting the following qualified independent evaluation(s) at public expense for my child,

Academic achievement (education/learning)
 Adaptive physical education (APE)
 Alternative/augmentative communication
 Assistive technology (AT)
 Functional behavioral assessment
 Health

Occupational therapy (fine motor)
 Psychological
 Physical Therapy (gross motor)
 Speech-language/Communication
 Other: _____

I disagree with the evaluation(s) completed by the school district because they were not comprehensive, accurate and/or appropriate in determining the special education needs of my child.

I understand the independent evaluation(s) are to be provided at no cost to me and that the school district has 20 calendar days from the receipt of this letter to respond. Thank you.

Sincerely,

****Always keep a copy of your letter for your own files.****

Contacts at a Glance

- **Mercer County Public School Districts**

- **Hamilton Public Schools**

- Superintendent-Scott Rocco srocco@htsdnj.org
- Director of Student Services-Marta Audino maudino@htsdnj.org
- Director of Counseling-Sue Diszler sdiszler@htsdnj.org

- **Trenton Public Schools**

- Superintendent-James Earle Jearle@trenton.k12.nj.us
- Director of Specialized Services-Abdel Gutierrez agutierrez@trenton.k12.nj.us
- Coordinator of Special Education-Selena Robinson skrobinson@trenton.k12.nj.us
- Director of Counseling-Linda Wyatt-Simpson lwyatt-simpson@trenton.k12.nj.us
- Manager of School Support-Terrance Stokes tstokes@trenton.k12.nj.us

- **East Windsor Regional School District**

- Superintendent-Mark Daniels mdaniels@ewrsd.k12.nj.us
- Director of Student Services-David Roe droe@ewrsd.k12.nj.us
- Director of Counseling-Lauren O'Brien lobrien@ewrsd.k12.nj.us

- **Ewing Public Schools**

- Superintendent-Dr. David Gentile dgentile@ewingboe.org
- Director of Special Services-Maria Petsos mpetsos@ewingboe.org
- Director of Counseling-pending

- **Lawrence Township Public Schools**

- Superintendent-Robyn Klim rklim@ltps.org
- Assistant Superintendent of Student Services-Vanessa Bekarciak vbekarciak@ltps.org
- Director of Counseling-Alyson Fischer afischer@ltps.org

- **West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District**

- Superintendent-David Aderhold david.aderhold@wwprsd.org
- Director of Student Services-Melissa Levine melissa.levine@wwprsd.org
- Director of Counseling-Jessica Smedley Jessica.smedley@wwprsd.org

- **Princeton Public Schools**

- Superintendent-Michael LaSusa MichaelLasusa@princetonk12.org
- Director of Student Services-Margarita Baldeo MargaritaBaldeo@princetonk12.org
- Director of Counseling-John McMichael JohnMcMichael@princetonk12.org

- **Robbinsville Public Schools**
 - Superintendent-Patrick Pizzo pizzo.patrick@robbinsville.k12.nj.us
 - Director of Student Services-Georgine Johnson
johnson.georgine@robbinsville.k12.nj.us
- **Hopewell Valley Regional Public School District**
 - Superintendent-Rosetta Treece rosettatreece@hvrsd.org
 - Director of Student Services-Pauline DiNardo paulettedinardo@hvrsd.org
- **Mercer County Special Services School District**
 - Superintendent-Matthew Carey superintendent@mcsssd.us
 - Director of Student Services-Ryan Haimer rhaimer@mcsssd.us
- **Mercer County Technical Schools**
 - Superintendent-Matthew Carey superintendent@mcsssd.us
 - Director of Student Services-Ryan Haimer rhaimer@mcsssd.us
- **New Jersey Department of Education**
 - Provides information regarding general and special education including forms and contact information.
 - 877-900-6960
- **New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Children’s System of Care (CSOC)**
 - Case managers work with the child’s parents, physicians and/or specialists to evaluate the child’s strengths and needs. They collaborate with the family and community-based partners to develop an individual service plan (ISP) for the child and family. Case managers are provided through county offices. New Jersey Special Child Health Services is operated through the NJ Department of Health.
 - www.nj.gov.health/fh/specialneeds/contact.shtml
- **New Jersey Department of Health, Family Health Services (Early Intervention)**
 - Evaluations and services are available when there are concerns about a child’s early development. Through the Early Intervention Program, parents can request assessments and services for their child between the ages of birth and thirty-six months.
- **Family Resource Network**
 - A comprehensive family-focused umbrella organization designed to meet the growing need for community-based programs and services to individuals and families with a variety of disabilities through its affiliate organizations: Autism Family Services of New Jersey, Caregivers of New Jersey, Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey and the Family Support Center of New Jersey.
 - 800-376-2345
- **Statewide Parent Advocacy Network-NJ (SPAN)**
 - Offers information, resources, support and advocacy assistance addressing child care, general and special education, dropout and bullying prevention and more.
- **Family Support Organization**
 - Provides support, education and advocacy to families.

- 609 586-1200 Warmline available to ask questions.
- Support groups available
- **The Arc of New Jersey**
 - Focused on helping families receive supports and services. The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute is dedicated to providing timely information, advocacy, support and training to family members of an individual with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- **New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDS)**
 - Information and services for individuals with developmental disabilities age 21 and older.
- **Mom 2 Mom**
 - Provides parents of children with special needs peer support, clinical professionals, a network of local service providers, and access to community support groups.
 - 877-914-6662

**For additional information or questions, please contact
Danielle Eveland, Community Education & outreach
Coordinator
at 609 649-8945 or develand@capitolkids.org.**