



## Individualized Education Program (IEP)

The IEP is a written document created for each student in a public school who receives special education programs and services. There are three basic reasons for the IEP: 1) to identify the student's needs, 2) to set goals that are important and possible for the student, and 3) to put services in writing that a school district will provide for a student.

The following was adapted from the [Parent Center Hub](#).

## What's in the IEP?

The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) requires certain information be in the IEP. IEP forms can look different, but must include:

1. Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP), which is information on how your child is doing in school and how his or her disability may affect progress in the general education curriculum.
2. Yearly goals for your child that the IEP team thinks your child can meet in a year.
3. A description of how progress on yearly goals will be measured for your child.
4. Special education and related services (such as speech therapy), including supplementary (or additional) aids and services your child will get at school (also called accommodations).
5. Amount of time during the school day, if any, your child spends apart from his or her peers without disabilities.
6. Your child's participation in alternate state and district tests, or accommodations related to the state test.
7. The projected start date for the services and modifications for your child, and where, how often, and how long they are provided.

### When to do the IEP

An initial IEP must be completed and notice provided within 30 school days after you provide consent for your child's evaluation. Your child's eligibility is determined at the initial IEP meeting, based on the results of the evaluation and other relevant information. However, the IEP meeting and notice of the offer of special education programs or services might not be on the same day.

The IEP must be reviewed annually to develop and/or revise the contents for your child's IEP. An IEP can happen more than once a year if revisions are needed.

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## The IEP Team

A team to support your child's IEP will be put into place. Required members of the IEP team include a general education teacher (if your child will participate in a general education setting), a special education teacher or service provider, a district representative, and someone who can interpret evaluation results. Other district and school staff may also attend if appropriate. The team is different for each child depending on the child's needs.

As the parent, you are also a team member and must be invited to each IEP team meeting. The school must make a reasonable attempt to have a meeting when you can attend.

The IEP team may also include other people invited by you or the school, such as other family members, advocates, students, peers, or evaluators.

## IEPs are legal, enforceable documents

After an IEP becomes final, the school district is required to provide what is written in the IEP (the supports and services).

The school may prepare a draft of the IEP and share it before or during the meeting. Drafts are not considered enforceable documents.

You will need to provide signed consent before the school implements your child's first IEP. However, after that, the school does not need your signed consent again for future IEPs. Your signature is not needed to make an IEP final.

If you do not agree with the final IEP, work with the school to make changes. If you cannot reach an agreement, other options can be sought including mediation, filing a state complaint, filing a due process complaint (request for a hearing), or withdrawing (or revoking) consent for services.

## Including Your Child

Often children begin taking part in the IEP process in high school when transition services are discussed. But your child can take part in the process at any age. The earlier your child is involved in educational planning, the more it helps him or her grow independence and self-advocacy. When your child is young, he or she may only be involved in the IEP for shorter periods, but this can be increased over time.

## Resources



[Michigan Alliance for Families: Individualized Education Program](#)

The Alliance IEP resources include a checklist and a webinar.

- [Center for Parent Information and Resources \(CPIR\): The Short-and-Sweet IEP Overview](#)
- [Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education \(MARSE\)](#)
- [Michigan Department of Education: IEP Development Process](#)