

# The IEP and YOU

A Guide For Parents  
With Information About The  
Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting

Revised  
September 2016

Copyright © 2016, 2012 by Los Angeles Unified School District  
All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced by any process or technique, without prior written consent of the Associate Superintendent, Division of Special Education of the Los Angeles Unified School District. This publication does not constitute legal advice nor should it be treated as a substitute for seeking the independent advice of counsel.



## **LAUSD'S COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES**

- High standards for all children
- Opportunities for children to interact with nondisabled children
- Access to general education curriculum
- Progress monitoring of instruction and achievement
- Appropriate special education supports and services to meet children's individual assessed needs

The Los Angeles Unified School District acknowledges the source of some of the contents of this publication is derived from "A Parent's Guide, Developing Your Child's IEP", Theresa Reborn, National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities, PA12, October 2002

This publication does not constitute legal advice nor should it be treated as a substitution for seeking the independent advice of counsel.

## THE IEP AND YOU

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This guide was developed to give you information on how the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting works so you can participate in making informed decisions about your child's educational program.<sup>1</sup> The guide gives suggestions on what you can do to prepare for the meeting, and information about what happens during the meeting, including the development of the IEP document. It also tells you what happens after the IEP meeting and lists resources and definitions of special education terms. The guide contains the following sections:

- Before the IEP Meeting
- During the IEP Meeting
- The IEP Document
- At the End of the IEP Meeting
- After the IEP Meeting
- Parent Resources
- Definitions of Special Education Terms

If your child is eligible for special education services he or she is entitled, by federal law known as the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)<sup>2</sup> at no expense to the family. FAPE is different for each child because each child has unique or individual needs. Generally, children receiving special education supports and services should have access to and make progress in the general education curriculum. They should also be allowed to fully participate in all activities sponsored by the school, as appropriate.<sup>3</sup>

Federal law requires that children with disabilities must be educated in the general education classroom with their nondisabled peers as much as possible based on what is appropriate for the child. This is known as the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).<sup>4</sup> LRE means that the IEP team must first consider educating a child at the school the child would attend if nondisabled, in a general education classroom, with appropriate supports and services.

If the IEP team believes the child's unique needs cannot be met there, then other options are considered.

One of the most important parts of the special education process for children found eligible for special education services is creating a written educational plan. This plan is called the Individualized Education Program (IEP)<sup>5</sup>. The IEP is developed by a team and you are a very important member of the team that develops the IEP document.

This guide provides helpful information about your child's IEP meeting. It is suggested that you also read *"A Parent's Guide to Special Education Services (Including Procedural Rights and Safeguards)"* which explains the entire special education process and your rights as a parent. For parents with children 14 years or older, it is recommended that you review the *"ITP and You"* which describes transition services to prepare your child for adult life.

IDEA makes it clear that parents are full and equal partners with schools in determining and meeting the needs of their children. The District welcomes you as a valuable member of the IEP team.



**Los Angeles Unified District  
Division of Special Education**

### Special Symbols in This Guide

The citations for the reference numbers throughout the document are listed on page 17. These citations refer to specific sections of the Code of Federal Regulations, sometimes referred to as 34 CFR. You can use these references to find the specific sections of the Federal regulations that address the issue being discussed. For example, 34 CFR §300.39 is the section that describes "Special Education".

## BEFORE THE IEP MEETING

Remember the IEP team meeting is the way for you and the school to talk about your child's needs and to create a plan to meet those needs. Here are some ways you can get ready.

- ☐ A look at recent information about your child's progress, such as report cards, progress reports, test results, assessment reports, and recent work samples.
- ☐ Review your child's current IEP and reports of progress toward the annual goals.
- ☐ Go over important information you have about your child that you want to share at the IEP meeting. This may include information and evaluations from doctors, private therapists, or tutors.
- ☐ Give your child's school copies of any recent private evaluation reports that you want to share with the IEP team.
- ☐ Talk to your child about school and ask what things are hard and what things are easy. This will let you know what your child thinks are his or her strengths and needs.
- ☐ Talk to your child in a way he or she can understand about what will happen at the IEP meeting if your child plans to attend. You should let your child know his or her input and opinions are valuable.
- ☐ Visit your child's school and meet with his or her teacher to talk about your child's progress. This will allow you to share information about what you and the teacher think are your child's strengths and needs.
- ☐ Think about how your child is participating in general education classes and, if so, what supports or services may be needed to be successful in that setting.
- ☐ Write down questions you want to ask and thoughts and concerns you want to talk about at the IEP meeting. This will help you remember important things that you want to discuss at the meeting.



- ☐ Review and return the “Notification to Participate in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting”<sup>6</sup> you will receive from the school. This notification should include the date, time, purpose of the meeting, and those expected to attend. If the date or time of the meeting is not convenient for you, call the school as soon as possible to arrange another date and time that works for everyone. It is important that you be there!
- ☐ If you would like to, you may ask the school for copies of IEP information that may have been drafted by school staff to prepare for the IEP team meeting.<sup>7</sup>
- ☐ Complete a “Parent Request for Reasonable Accommodations” form. This form is a way to let the school know if you need special accommodations to participate in developing your child's IEP, such as an interpreter or Braille copies of the IEP document. You may ask for the form from the school if you did not already receive one.
- ☐ Know your rights. Review *A Parent's Guide to Special Education Services (Including Procedural Rights and Safeguards.)* If your child is 14 years of age, also review *The ITP and You*.

## DURING THE IEP MEETING

All members of the IEP team gather in one location to discuss your child and decide whether he or she needs special education services. During the meeting you, as an IEP team member, should:

- Share information about your child. Ask questions or ask for explanations of special education terms if you do not understand.
- Speak up on your child's behalf if you disagree with something, explain why, and offer your point of view.
- Keep in mind that the goal of the IEP team is to design an educational plan to meet your child's individual needs.

The IEP team meeting will follow an agenda similar to what is described below.

- The meeting will begin with introductions of the IEP team members. The following people are required at all IEP meetings:<sup>8</sup>
  - You, the parent/guardian, who knows your child's strengths, needs and individual differences. You may bring someone with you who knows your child such as a friend or relative.
  - A school administrator or administrator designee who knows about special education services and has the authority to commit District resources.
  - A special education teacher who understands how and when to use different teaching styles and teaching methods.
  - At least one general education teacher who knows the curriculum for your child's grade level and what children in general education classes are typically expected to do.
  - A qualified District staff member who can explain assessment results and use the results to help plan instruction. This may be one of the team members listed above.
- When appropriate, the following people may also attend the IEP meeting:
  - Others with knowledge or special expertise about your child, invited by you or the District.
  - The child, if appropriate, especially if an individual transition plan is being developed.

- Representatives from outside agencies that are likely to provide services.
- An interpreter if you ask for their services.

- Sometimes members of the IEP team may be excused from attending all or part of the IEP meeting with written approval from you and the consent of the District.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to *The IEP and You* guide, you will be offered the guides listed below. The administrator of the IEP team will explain the contents of the guides to you.

- *A Parent's Guide to Special Education Services (Including Procedural Rights and Safeguards)*
- *The IEP and You* (If your child is 14 years of age or older)

The IEP team will then develop, review, and/or revise the IEP document. Before we talk about the IEP document, let's discuss the guiding principle in developing an IEP, Least Restrictive Environment.

### IEP MEETING AGENDA (SAMPLE)

Welcome & Introductions  
IEP Team Meeting Introductory Statements  
Overview/Time Constraints  
Ground Rules  
Decision Making Process  
Parent Rights  
IEP Development  
Present Levels of Performance  
Eligibility  
Recommend/Establish Goals & Objectives  
Supports & Services  
Placement and Consideration of  
Least Restrictive Environment  
Offer of FAPE  
Consent & Signatures  
Next Steps

## LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Once the IEP team has decided *what* services your child needs, a decision must be made about *where* services will be provided. Where your child's IEP services are provided is called *placement*. You as the parent have the right to be part of the group that decides your child's placement.

In deciding your child's placement the IEP team must make sure that your child is educated with children who do not have disabilities, as much as possible, based on what is appropriate for your child. The team considers academic, nonacademic, and extracurricular activities.<sup>10</sup> This part of the law is called *Least Restrictive Environment* or *LRE*.

Least Restrictive Environment is explained in IDEA as follows:

"...To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities... are educated with children who are not disabled, and... special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily."<sup>11</sup>

The federal regulations also say:

- The child's placement is determined at least annually.
- It is based on the child's IEP.
- Unless the IEP requires some other arrangement, the child is educated in the school that he or she would attend if nondisabled.
- If the child cannot be educated at his school of residence, placement must be as close as possible to the child's home.
- When looking at placement options, the IEP team must consider any potential harmful effect on the child or on the quality of services that he or she needs.



### **You as a parent have the right to be part of the group that decides your child's educational placement.**

- A child with a disability may not be removed from education in age-appropriate regular classrooms just because he or she needs modifications to the general curriculum.

When discussing placement, the IEP team should consider your child's individual needs and determine what the least restrictive placement for your child is, based on those needs. A placement that is least restrictive for one child may not be least restrictive for another. *What is least restrictive for each child is based on that child's individual needs.* This means that the District cannot use a "one size fits all" approach to educating children who have a disability. Decisions must be based on individual needs as stated in the IEP, **not** on the:

- Child's disability (such as placement in a special class for students with intellectual disability just because a child has cognitive delays or placement in a particular Specific Learning Disabilities program just because a child needs specific learning disability services)
- Location of staff
- Funds that are available, or
- Convenience of the school district

In making placement decisions, the team looks to another important part of the IDEA, the *continuum of alternative placements*.<sup>12</sup> The continuum includes the different options where children can receive services.

These options include placements such as:

- A general education class
- A special education class
- A special education school
- At home, in a hospital, or other public or private institution

A student's placement in the general education classroom is the *first* option the IEP team should consider. Can your child be educated satisfactorily in the general education classroom? What aids, services, and supports does your child need to make this possible? If the IEP team decides that your child's needs can be met in the general education class with supports, then that placement is the least restrictive environment for your child.

The District offers a range of service options to support access to the general education curriculum and meet your child's individual needs. Services for your child may be provided at the school of residence or nonresident school with the following flexible levels of support:

- General education classroom with in-class special education support which may include co-teaching, inclusion, and related services.
- General education classroom with out-of-class special education support which may include strategy instruction, the use of supplemental programs and on-going progress monitoring and/or related services.
- Special education classroom with or without participation in general education. Services may be provided at the resident or nonresident school, Special School or Center, Nonpublic School, at Home or in a Hospital Program, or State Residential School.

Schools that support LRE make the following commitments to students with disabilities and their families:

- High standards for all children
- Opportunities for children with disabilities to interact with nondisabled children
- Equitable access to general education curriculum
- Progress monitoring of instruction and achievement
- Appropriate special education instructional, curricular, and behavioral supports and services layered within the school environment to meet children's individual assessed needs.



### **Underlying Principles of Least Restrictive Environment**

- A continuum of services
- Instruction in general education classrooms
- Access and progress in general education curriculum
- Instructional, curricular, and behavioral supports layered within the school environment
- Interaction with nondisabled students

## THE IEP DOCUMENT

The following information will be discussed and documented by the IEP team members:<sup>13</sup>

- **Present Levels of Performance (PLP)** PLPs describe what your child can do and what he or she needs to learn in academic and functional skill areas such as: reading, writing, math, behavior, or self-help. This information comes from different sources such as: classroom performance, report card grades, assessment results, response to classroom interventions, and parent, teacher and service providers' input and observations.

PLPs also include a statement that describes how the disability impacts your child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum. For preschoolers, it describes how the disability impacts involvement in typical preschool activities.

PLPs should be discussed and written in a way that gives IEP team members the information they need to make good educational decisions for your child and evaluate your child's progress from one year to the next.

- **Eligibility for Special Education Services**

After considering screening information, use and results of prior educational interventions, information from the review of existing data, test results, and other relevant information provided at the meeting, the IEP team will determine if your child has a disability as defined in the law.

If the team determines that your child has a disability, the team then decides if your child is eligible for special education and related services.<sup>14</sup>

Some children who have disabilities are not eligible for special education services because they are making adequate progress in the general education curriculum.

If a child is found ineligible for special education services, other types of assistance such as general education supports or a Section 504 Plan may be considered.

### PRESENT LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE

Sample: Math

**Strengths:** Max is able to count, read, and write whole numbers to 100 without the use of a model. He can add and subtract without regrouping. He can set up and solve one-step word problems with addition and subtraction. He can tell time to the hour.

**Needs:** Max has difficulty adding and subtracting two-digit numbers with regrouping. Teacher reports he does not know basic multiplication facts of 2s and 5s. He is not able to tell time to the half hour. He has difficulty choosing the correct operations to solve two- or three-step word problems.

**Impact of Disability:** Max's auditory processing disability affects his ability to recall and retain math concepts which makes it difficult for him to perform more difficult math operations and solve two- and three-step problems. This impacts his involvement and progress in the general education math curriculum.

If your child is eligible for special education, the team will discuss, develop, and decide on the following:

- **Measurable Goals and Objectives** Academic and functional goals are developed based on the needs discussed in your child's PLPs. Goals describe what your child can be expected to do, generally, within a 12-month period. Academic goals must be based on California standards, and for students in the general education curriculum, goals must be at grade level. Objectives are steps toward meeting the goals.
- **Progress Reporting** If your child already has an IEP, progress toward meeting past goals is discussed by the team. For the new goals, the IEP team will determine how your child's progress will be measured and reported to you.



- **Special Education Services** These are services that help your child access the general education curriculum and may include the Resource Specialist Program or Special Day Program. Dates when services will begin and end, the amount of services, how often services will be provided and where they will take place must be written in the IEP.
- **Related Services** These are services that help your child benefit from special education and may include services such as Physical Therapy or Counseling Services. Dates when services will begin and end, the amount of services, how often services will be provided and where they will take place must be written in the IEP.
- **Accommodations to Access the General Education Curriculum** These are changes in the way instruction is delivered. Accommodations do not alter the content of the curriculum and may include: extra time for completing assignments, shortened assignments, study guides, or use of additional reading or math programs.
- **Modifications to Access the General Education Curriculum** These are changes in the content of the instruction. Modifications do change what the assignment is supposed to measure. Examples include: use of lower grade reading books, completing part of an assignment, or giving a student an easier assignment.
- **Supplementary Aids** These will help a child to engage in activities with nondisabled peers such as assigning an interpreter for a deaf student, or use of adapted materials such as books on tape, large print, or highlighted notes.
- **Supports for School Staff** These will help staff work more effectively with your child, and include such things as training staff on special equipment or materials your child needs in order to learn.
- **Delivery of Services** Once the IEP team has decided what services your child needs, a decision is made about where services will be provided based on those individual needs. In making this decision the IEP team must make sure your child has appropriate opportunities to learn with children who do not have disabilities in academic and nonacademic activities.

### **Accommodations or Modifications are most often made in:**

- ✓ **Scheduling** (extra time to complete work)
- ✓ **Setting** (working in small group)
- ✓ **Materials** (audiotape lectures)
- ✓ **Instruction** (reducing the reading level)
- ✓ **Student response** (using a word processor for written work)

- **Provision of Service Outside the General Education Classroom** A statement explaining why your child needs services provided outside the general education instructional setting, as appropriate.
- **State or Districtwide Assessments** The IEP team will determine how your child will participate in state and districtwide assessments.
- **For English Language Learners** In the case of a child with limited English proficiency, the language needs of the student are considered as they relate to the child's IEP.
- **Individual Transition Plan (ITP)** A plan written for children 14 years or older which identifies goals and activities to help them move from high school to adult life.
- **Transfer of Rights** When a child is 17 years of age, the child and parent must be informed that the educational decision making rights will transfer to the child at age 18. This means that the child assumes all the rights, roles, and responsibilities previously held by his/her parents, unless parents have conservatorship.<sup>15</sup> See the "*The ITP and You*" for more information.

## THE END OF THE IEP MEETING

When the IEP team has finished discussing and developing the IEP, the Administrator or Administrator Designee will summarize decisions made by the IEP team and present the District's offer of a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

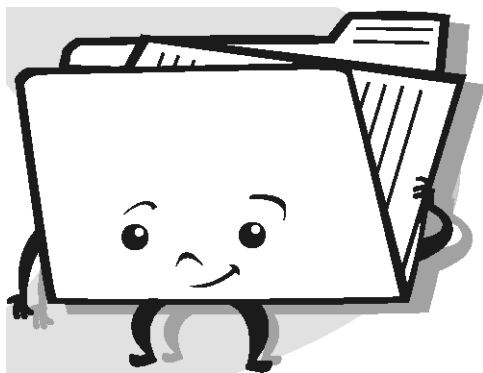
- You will be asked to indicate your consent to or disagreement with the IEP.
- If you consent to the IEP as written, sign and write the date of your consent.
- If you want to review the IEP before you sign it, ask to take it home. Your child's services will not go into effect until you sign and return the IEP.
- If you disagree with parts or all of the IEP:
  - You will be asked to clarify the areas of disagreement (assessment, eligibility, instructional setting, or specific instruction and services).
  - You are always encouraged to try to work out the disagreement with the other members of the IEP team.
- If you still disagree with the IEP, your concerns and comments regarding those areas of disagreement will be documented in the IEP by the Administrator or Administrative Designee.
- The next steps to resolve the disagreement will be explained to you. [See *A Parent's Guide to Special Education Services (Including Procedural Rights and Safeguards)*]<sup>16</sup>
- All team members who participated in the IEP meeting will be asked to sign the IEP as participants.
- A copy of the IEP will be given to you.
- Upon request, the IEP will be translated into your primary language. A copy will be sent to you upon completion.
- You will be given a *Parent Input Survey* to voluntarily complete about your experience at the IEP team meeting. The information you provide will help improve the IEP process. Your answers to the survey are confidential.



## AFTER THE IEP TEAM MEETING

After the IEP team meeting is over, the school will:

- Implement your child's entire IEP or the parts of the IEP you consent to.
- Distribute copies or summaries of the IEP to your child's teacher and other school staff responsible for implementing the IEP so they can begin providing services to your child.<sup>17</sup>
- Notify District staff responsible for follow-up actions such as assessment, translation of the IEP, or arranging for transportation.
- Provide you with reports on your child's progress towards meeting his/her IEP goals and objectives at report card time.
- Review the IEP at least once a year. If you or the school think that your child is not making progress toward his/her goals, a meeting may be requested at any time to review and revise the IEP.<sup>18</sup>
- Although it is strongly recommended that you attend the meeting, if you do not attend, a copy of the IEP will be sent to you. Someone from the school will contact you to discuss the contents of the IEP.



After the IEP team meeting is over, you as a parent should:

- ☐ Ask staff responsible for providing special education services to your child what you can do to reinforce skills at home.
- ☐ Schedule conferences during the school year with your child's teacher, service providers, and/or school administrators to discuss your child's progress, ask questions, or express concerns.
- ☐ Review this booklet, *A Parent's Guide to Special Education Services (Including Procedural Rights and Safeguards)*, and *The ITP and You*.
- ☐ See the "Parent Resources" section of this guide for telephone numbers of school district staff and other individuals you can contact if you have any questions or need any further information.
- ☐ Share a copy of the IEP or information from the IEP with non-District professionals who work with your child, such as a private therapist or tutor.
- ☐ Make a folder or notebook to keep copies of your child's IEPs, reports, and other information related to special education. See the "*Resource*" section of this guide for a checklist of important documents you may want to keep.
- ☐ Keep in mind that developing an IEP is a learning experience. As you attend each IEP meeting, you will become more knowledgeable about the IEP process.

## PARENT RESOURCES

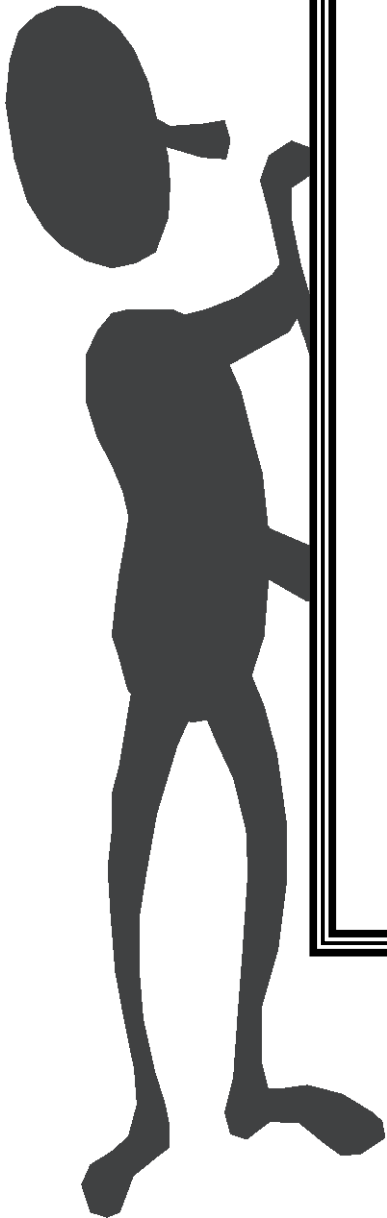
Use this list of resources to get additional information:

- Your child's **general education classroom teacher**, special education teacher, and Related Services staff providing services to your child.
- The **Principal**, Assistant Principal or another administrator at your child's school who is responsible for special education.
- **Special Education Service Center** staff who work with your child's school. Ask the Principal or another member of the school staff for the name of the person at the Special Education Service Center who will be able to help you. The main phone number for the Division of Special Education: (213) 241-6701.
- **Los Angeles Unified School District's Special Education website:** <http://achieve.lausd.net/sped>. The District's website includes a parent training calendar. It also includes web links to District, local, state, and national agencies and organizations related to special education.
  - ★ Internet access is available free of charge to the public at all Los Angeles Public Libraries.
- **Complaint Response Unit (CRU):** 1-800-933-8133. This office provides an opportunity to resolve parent complaints at the District level and provides information and training to parents. The CRU is available to answer questions regarding the IEP process prior to or following the IEP meeting.

- **Community Advisory Committee (CAC):** (213) 241-6701. This group advises the District on the development of the Local Plan for Special Education. Educational topics such as special education instruction, related services, District policies, and pending legislation affecting education are discussed at the CAC meeting.
- **School Family and Support Services (SFSS):** (213) 241-6701. This office can assist with questions, concerns, and/or complaints related to special education or specifically about a child's IEP.



- The Parent-Student Handbook is available at all District schools.
- California Department of Education (CDE) web site: <http://www.cde.ca.gov> or (916) 445-4613.
- U.S. Department of Education web site: <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/IDEA>.
- Legal Aid Foundation: (213) 487-3320 or (323) 801-7991.



### ITEMS PARENTS SHOULD KEEP

- Report cards and progress reports
- Standardized test scores
- Assessment results
- Individualized Education Programs (IEP)
- Medical records related to disability and ability to learn
- Notices of disciplinary actions
- Notes on your child's behavior or progress
- Letter or notes to and from the school or teacher, special educators, evaluators, and administrators
  - IEP meeting notices
  - Attendance records
- Parent-Student Handbook
- Awards received by your child
- Samples of school work

Keep track of your communications with the school including:

- Records of meetings and their outcomes
- Dates you sent or received important documents
- Dates of suspension or other disciplinary action
- Notes on telephone calls (including date, person with whom you spoke, and a short description of what was talked about)

## SPECIAL EDUCATION TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS FREQUENTLY USED AT IEP MEETINGS

**Accommodations** Changes in the timing, formatting, setting, scheduling, expectations, response, and/or presentation which allow a student to complete the same assignment or test as other students. The accommodation does not change what the test or assignment measures. An example of an accommodation is allowing a student with physical problems who has difficulty writing to give the answer by speaking while other students in the class are required to write the answer. The student with the accommodation is expected to know the same material and answer as completely as the other students.

**Adapted Physical Education (APE)** A program of gross motor activities, games, sports and rhythms for students with disabilities who cannot safely or successfully participate in the general or modified general physical education programs or a specially designed physical education program in a Special Day Program (SDP).

**Alternate Curriculum** A State and/or District adopted curriculum based on alternate achievement standards for students who cannot succeed in the general curriculum.

**Annual Review of an IEP** An IEP meeting is held at least once a year to discuss a child's progress, and write any new goals or services into the IEP.

**Assessment** State and District wide assessments that all students take, with or without accommodations, based on the child's curriculum of instruction, grade or developmental level and English language development level. Also see "Initial Assessment for Special Education" and "Reevaluation".

**Assistive Technology (AT)** Any item, piece of equipment, product or system, whether acquired commercially "off the shelf", modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of students with disabilities. It does not include medical devices that have been surgically implanted.

**Autism (AUT)** A disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, which adversely affects a child's educational performance. Characteristics of autism, which can occur in any combination and with varying degrees of severity, include: irregularities and impairments in communication, engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.

**Behavior Support Plan (BSP)** A written document developed by an IEP team for any child with a disability experiencing daily behavior challenges in the classroom setting or school setting which interferes with the child's learning and progress toward mastery of individualized education program goals and objectives.

**Deaf-Blind (DB)** A disability characterized by both hearing and vision impairments which cause severe communication, developmental, and educational problems.

**Deaf or Hard of Hearing (HOH)** A disability characterized by a permanent or fluctuating hearing loss that impairs the processing of speech and language, even with amplification, and that adversely affects educational performance.

**Dual Placement/Enrollment** A child with a disability is educated part-time in a nonpublic school and part-time in a public school. This decision is made by the IEP team.

**Early Education Class** A class to serve students between the ages of 4 years and 9 months and 7 years and 9 months, with severe or non-severe disabilities, in special education classrooms.

**Emotional Disturbance (ED)** A child exhibits one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a significant degree which adversely affects educational performance:

- Inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors
- Inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers
- Inappropriate types of behavior or responses under normal circumstances
- Pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression
- Tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems

**Established Medical Disability (EMD)** A disabling medical condition or congenital syndrome that the IEP team determines has a high chance of requiring special education services. This eligibility criteria applies only to children ages three and four.

**Extended School Year/Intersession** Special education and related services provided beyond the regular school year.

**Individual Transition Plan (ITP)** A plan developed as part of the IEP for a child 14 years of age and older. The plan identifies goals and activities to prepare for transition from school to adult living based on the child's interests and needs.

**Initial Assessment for Special Education** An assessment to determine if a child needs special education services. The assessment may include: parent information, response to interventions, teacher information, curriculum-based assessments, State and District test scores, report card grades, observations of the student, other existing data, and individual tests. Parental consent is required for an initial assessment for special education. An IEP meeting must be convened within 60 days from the date of the receipt of parent consent.

**Initial IEP** A student's first IEP after an initial evaluation for special education whether the student was found eligible or ineligible for special education services.

**Intellectual Disability (ID)** A disability characterized by a significantly below average general intellectual functioning and deficits in adaptive behavior, such as communication, self-care, health and safety, and independent living skills.

**Intervention Programs** Systematic, researched based individualized approaches for providing additional help that a student might need before, rather than after, they have failed. These programs are available to all students and are implemented and evaluated for effectiveness before a student is referred for special education.

**Language and Speech Services (LAS)** A related service for eligible students who have articulation, voice, fluency, or language disorders.

**Learning Center** A classroom where general and special education teachers instruct children for specific periods of time and monitor their progress. Children may go to the Learning Center to learn specific skills such as note taking or participate in additional research-based reading and math programs.

**Low Incidence Disability (LI)** One or more of the following disabilities (which occur less than one percent of the total statewide enrollment in kindergarten through grade 12): hearing, vision, and severe orthopedic impairments.

**Modification** An adjustment to an assignment or test that changes the standard or what the test or assignment is intended to measure. An example of a modification is a student completing an alternate assignment that is more easily achievable than the standard assignment that other students in the class are required to complete.

**Multiple Disabilities (MD)** A disability characterized by having two or more disabilities. One must be hearing, orthopedic, or vision impairment. The term does not include the eligibility deaf-blind.

**Nonpublic School (NPS)** A school certified by the California Department of Education (CDE) that is an alternative special education placement available to students with disabilities.

**Nonpublic Agency (NPA)** A private establishment or individual that is certified by the CDE and provides related services necessary to implement a student's IEP.

**Objectives** Benchmarks or steps toward meeting IEP goals.

**Occupational Therapy (OT)** A related service to support a child's educational program that assesses and addresses the following areas: postural stability, fine motor skills, visual perception and integration, and sensory motor. School occupational therapy may involve adaptation of a task or the environment, and consist of a combination of direct intervention, consultation, and monitoring.

**Orthopedically Impaired (OI)** A disability characterized by specific orthopedic or physical needs due to injury, congenital disorder, or disease that adversely affects the child's educational performance.

**Other Health Impaired (OHI)** A disability characterized by limited strength, vitality, or alertness including a heightened alertness to stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment due to chronic or acute health problems, such as asthma, attention deficit disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, leukemia, kidney disease, sickle cell anemia, or Tourette syndrome.

### **Parent (for special education decision making)**

Includes a person having legal custody of a child; any adult pupil for whom no guardian or conservator has been appointed; a person acting in the place of a natural or adoptive parent, including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative with whom the child lives; a foster parent if the natural parent's authority to make decisions has been limited by court order; or a district appointed surrogate parent.

**Physical Therapy (PT)** A related service to support a student's educational program that assesses and addresses following areas: posture, balance, strength, coordination, mobility; and gross motor skills. School physical therapy may involve adaptation of a task or the environment, and consist of a combination of direct intervention, consultation, and/or monitoring.

**Reassessment** An assessment conducted any time after the initial assessment and IEP. A reassessment shall not occur more than once a year, unless the parent and the school agree that it is necessary and shall occur at least every three years, unless the parent and school personnel agree in writing that a reassessment is not necessary.

**Referral for Assessment** Any request for assessment made by a parent, teacher, or other service provider. When an oral request is made, the school must offer assistance to the person making the request to put it in writing. Within 15 days of receipt of a written request for special education evaluation, parents must receive an assessment plan for their consent or a written notice that the request for assessment is not appropriate at the present time.

**Related Services** Specific services required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education. Some examples of related services are: Adapted Physical Education, Audiological Services, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Language and Speech Therapy, and Counseling Services.

**Resource Specialist Program (RSP)** Program to provide instruction and services to students with disabilities assigned to the general education classroom for the majority of the school day. The goal of the resource specialist program is to enable students with disabilities to succeed in the general education environment.



**Special Day Program (SDP)** Programs for students who benefit from enrollment in special education for a majority of the school day.

**Specific Learning Disability (SLD)** A disability characterized by a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language that may manifest itself in an impaired ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. It results in a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement in one or more academic areas that adversely affect a child's educational performance. SLD does not include children who have learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor handicaps; of intellectual disability; of emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

**Speech or Language Impairment (SLI)** A disability characterized by lack of the ability to understand or use spoken language to such an extent that it adversely affects the child's educational performance. The disability occurs in one or more of the following areas:

- **Articulation:** The production of speech sounds which significantly interferes with communication and attracts adverse attention.
- **Language:** Inappropriate or inadequate acquisition, comprehension, or expression of spoken language.
- **Fluency:** Difficulties which result in the abnormal flow of verbal expression to such a degree that they adversely affect communication.
- **Voice:** A voice that is characterized by persistent, defective vocal quality, pitch or loudness.

**Supplemental Programs** Research based reading, writing, and math programs to help children improve specific skills, such as reading comprehension and math facts. These programs are provided in addition to the programs used in the general education classroom.

**Surrogate Parent** A person appointed by the District to assume the role of parent in special education decision making when the student is a ward of the State or the parent is unknown or unavailable.

**Thirty-Day IEP** Within 30 calendar days from the date of enrollment, an IEP meeting is held for a student who has an IEP from another school district.

**Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)** An acquired injury to the brain caused by physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

## IEP CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS

Your participation in your child's IEP is important. Use this list to see if your child's IEP contains all of the parts required by federal mandate, IDEA 2004.

- ☐ YES      ☐ NO Does the present level of performance (PLP) section of the IEP contain information about the academic, developmental, and functional needs of your child?
- ☐ YES      ☐ NO Is the information in your child's PLP clearly stated and include strengths, needs and impact of disability as well as assessment and evaluation data, standardized test scores, curriculum based measurements or performance on District or Statewide assessments?
- ☐ YES      ☐ NO Knowing the effects of your child's disability, do the annual goals directly relate to your child's needs as stated in the present levels of performance?
- ☐ YES      ☐ NO Are your child's annual goals clearly stated and can they be measured?
- ☐ YES      ☐ NO Does the IEP indicate how your child will participate in State and District testing?
- ☐ YES      ☐ NO Does the IEP indicate how your child may participate in general education?
- ☐ YES      ☐ NO Was the need for related services discussed and addressed on the IEP if appropriate?
- ☐ YES      ☐ NO Does the IEP state who will be responsible for implementing the services listed?
- ☐ YES      ☐ NO Were accommodations discussed and listed if appropriate?
- ☐ YES      ☐ NO Was it explained to you how the IEP content will be communicated to staff responsible for its implementation?

---

<sup>1</sup> 34 CFR §300.327 Educational placements

<sup>2</sup> 34 CFR §300.17 Free appropriate public education

<sup>3</sup> 34 CFR §300.8 Child with a disability

<sup>4</sup> 34 CFR §300.114 LRE Requirements

<sup>5</sup> 34 CFR §300.22 Individualized Education Program (IEP)

<sup>6</sup> 34 CFR §300.322 Parent participation

<sup>7</sup> 34 CFR §300.613 Access rights

<sup>8</sup> 34 CFR §300.321 IEP Team

<sup>9</sup> 34 CFR §300.321 IEP Team

<sup>10</sup> 34 CFR §300.117 Nonacademic settings

<sup>11</sup> 34 CFR §300.114 LRE requirements

<sup>12</sup> 34 CFR §300.115 Continuum of alternative placements

<sup>13</sup> 34 CFR §300.320 Definition of individualized education program  
and 34 CFR §300.324 Development, review and revision of IEP

<sup>14</sup> 34 CFR §300.224 Requirements for establishing eligibility

<sup>15</sup> 34 CFR §300.520 Transfer of parental rights at age of majority

<sup>16</sup> 34 CFR §300.504 Procedural safeguards notice

<sup>17</sup> 34 CFR §300.323 When IEPs must be in effect