

# INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

## TIPS FOR PARENTS

### EVALUATION

#### Making a Referral and Request for Initial Evaluation:

- ✓ Ask in writing for evaluation; keep a copy of your request.
- ✓ Explain the child's problem(s) and why the evaluation is needed.
- ✓ Share information with school staff about the child's performance and your concerns.
- ✓ Keep the letter to one (1) page and use bullet points.
- ✓ You must give informed consent for evaluation.
- ✓ You have the right to an Independent Educational Evaluation of your child.

#### Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE):

- ✓ An Independent Evaluation can be used when you need more information, different information, or a second opinion about your child's disability and special education needs.
- ✓ Before initiating this process, discuss with your District the procedures you must follow with this request.
- ✓ You may request a list of recommended providers from the district that can provide an IEE.
- ✓ The evaluation conducted at public expense will become the property of the District.

#### Evaluation Questions to Ask:

- ✓ What is the test measuring?
- ✓ What is the average or normal on this test?
- ✓ Where is my child in relationship to that?
- ✓ What can my child do and not do?
- ✓ What does this mean in terms of teaching my child?

### PREPARATION FOR THE IEP MEETING

#### IEP Meeting Preparation:

- ✓ Let the team know as soon as possible if the meeting time does not work for you.
- ✓ Know who will be attending the meeting.
- ✓ Gather information to share: medical, psychological, other assessments.
  - Keep a file of all important information related to your child's educational record.
  - Review your child's school records and current IEP if there is one.
- ✓ List what you see as your child's strengths and needs.
- ✓ Write down your priorities and long range goals for your child.
- ✓ List services that you believe your child needs to attain the goals you have identified.
- ✓ Write down your questions.
- ✓ Communicate with your team prior to the meeting:
  - Ask for and review evaluation data.
  - Share your ideas for IEP goals with the team.
  - Ask to see a draft of the IEP goals prior to the team meeting.

#### Inviting Individuals to the IEP Meeting:

- ✓ Parents may invite anyone who will be helpful to the IEP meeting.
- ✓ It is appropriate to inform the school who you are inviting prior to the meeting.
- ✓ Parents can help their student prepare to participate in the IEP meeting.



## PARTICIPATION IN THE IEP MEETING

- ✓ Remind yourself to use good communication skills throughout the meeting.
- ✓ Introduce yourself if no one else does. Ask others to introduce themselves. Introduce anyone you bring with you.
- ✓ Ask who the LEA (Local Education Agency) representative is.
- ✓ Bring enough copies of information you have prepared about your child for all team members.
- ✓ Make sure the concerns about your child as well as the child's strengths are listed on the IEP.
- ✓ Communicate your priorities and suggestions for goals. Consider how they fit with the goals proposed by the rest of the team. Make sure that goals are written to address the high priority concerns and needs.
- ✓ Be prepared to negotiate. See if there are alternative ways to meet goals.
- ✓ Share your concerns and information as the discussion progresses. Clarify any information or statements that are unclear to you.
- ✓ Remember the IEP process is a logical process. If the team is not addressing some of the child's educational needs by providing appropriate services, you may need to go back and address this with the team.

### What Your Signature Means:

- ✓ All participants should sign the IEP.
- ✓ Signing shows participation and attendance.
  - *The LEA can implement the IEP with or without parental approval, and*
  - *Parent signature on the IEP means "attendance only".*
  - *Parents may note on the IEP that they "disagree" or have concerns.*

## FOLLOW-UP ON THE IEP MEETING

- ✓ Express appreciation for the efforts of school personnel.
- ✓ Monitor your child's progress.
- ✓ Communicate periodically with those implementing the IEP. Let them know what is going well and about any concerns. Know how often reports progress and communication from the school will occur.
- ✓ The IEP can be changed as needed. Ask for a meeting if progress has not been satisfactory or if problems that you believe might be affecting your child's progress begin to surface. IEP meetings are initiated and conducted at the discretion of the school. However, parents may request an IEP meeting if there are concerns or problems with the IEP or if the child is not making satisfactory progress. The school should grant any reasonable request for a meeting.
- ✓ Anticipate a year end review and or meeting as a minimum with the school team to assess your student's current status.

## PROBLEM SOLVING IN THE IEP PROCESS

**Proceed thoughtfully! Seek to resolve difficulties at the lowest possible level.**

### When It Just Doesn't Work:

- ✓ Communicate with your school team.
- ✓ Follow the chain of command. First, try to work things out with the teacher. The request that he or she go with you to the next level, usually the principal. Most problems are solved at this level. If you cannot work things out at the building level, always follow your school district's chain of command, which is typically:
  1. Teacher
  2. Principal
  3. School District Special Education Director/Supervisor
  4. Utah State Office of Education, Special Education.

*All provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) also apply to Charter Schools.*

