

Amending an IEP without a Meeting

What is an IEP amendment? – During the school year, a parent or team member might decide that a student's IEP needs a slight adjustment that may not warrant a full team meeting. When changes are small or limited to a particular service, amending without waiting for a meeting can be a useful way to quickly enact the change. For example, a new semester or school year might mean that goals or services need tweaking to work in the new setting. These adjustments may not require consulting with the entire IEP team. Similarly, a conversation between the parent and a speech therapist may reveal that the student needs a new speech/language goal. The parent and speech therapist might agree on an appropriate goal without feeling the need for input from the rest of the IEP team. In these situations, the parent and district can agree to change the IEP without calling a meeting of the entire team. This change is called an IEP amendment. An IEP amendment cannot take the place of the required annual IEP meeting.

How do I amend an IEP without a meeting? – IEP amendments require that the parent and the district agree on the change. If you would like to propose an amendment, or if you have discussed a possible amendment with school staff, send a letter to the Director of Special Education documenting the conversation and outlining the proposed change. Services cannot be guaranteed by a verbal agreement alone; the amendment must be put into writing and attached to the existing IEP document. Once an agreement has been reached, the school district will produce an IEP amendment page for you to sign. Read this form over before signing it to make sure it outlines the changes as you understand them. Once you sign, giving your consent, this form is added to your child's IEP. Even if the team is not involved in the decision-making process, the district must ensure that all team members are informed of the change.

What if there is disagreement about a proposed IEP amendment? – Whether made at an IEP team meeting or by amendment, changes to an IEP are always subject to agreement between the school district and parent. An IEP amendment cannot replace the required annual IEP meeting, and parents always have the option to call an IEP meeting to consider IEP changes. If there is uncertainty on either side, it may be best to meet rather than to use the more informal amendment process. For example, if the district resists an amendment proposed by a parent or specialist, an in-depth discussion of your child's needs and the proposed changes may be warranted. Also, some changes are significant enough to necessitate team input and discussion. If a specialist proposes a change in your child's placement or reduction of related services (such as speech, OT, or paraprofessional support), you may want to include all team members in the decision. It is important to get feedback from everyone and to have as complete a picture as possible about your child's current progress before making any significant change to the existing program. Even for minor changes, if you feel you do not have enough information to make an informed decision, consider convening the IEP team instead of simply agreeing to the amendment.

Conclusion – IDEA allows the school district and parents to agree to IEP changes by amendment without convening the full IEP team. This process can be useful when all parties agree on the change and agree that there is no need for full team discussion. However, this is not always the best course of action. For more information on amendments, or to discuss the use of an IEP amendment in your child's IEP, call your local Parent Training and Information Center (PTI); to find your local PTI visit: www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center

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