

Developing a Comprehensive IEP

1. What is the gap between the child's current achievement levels and the advanced or proficient achievement levels established by the state in each subject for the appropriate grade level?
2. Did the child make progress toward reaching these goals during the last year in each subject?
3. Can the achievement gaps and rate of academic progress be improved by changing elements of the child's IEP?
4. Would more evaluation help to clarify these issues and possible solutions?
5. Has the child received the same high expectations and an opportunity to learn according to the same academic standards as other students in his or her grade?
6. Over the next school year, will the child learn under the same academic standards and curriculum as other students?
7. Are modifications in curriculum and standards needed to help the student for one or more academic subjects, such as math, English, reading, science, or social studies?
8. How will each teacher measure (assess) the child's academic progress during the school year? How will that information be reported to families? [Possible measurements include homework, daily questioning, active demonstration, quizzes, exams, research projects, and state standardized tests. Do not rely only on standardized tests to measure progress.]
9. What accommodations and supports will the child need to ensure that different progress measurements accurately reflect the knowledge and skills he/she is learning? Can these regular accommodations and supports be used when the child takes state assessments?
10. How did the child perform on state assessments when they were last given? How can these results be used to improve the classroom learning of the child in each subject? [Attach copies of the results to the IEP.]
11. Will the child learn the knowledge/skills needed to perform this year with grade-level proficiency on state assessments? If not, how can the IEP be changed to improve the child's academic achievement in each subject area?
12. Will the child's academic goals be different in any way from the academic goals and expectations for other students in his or her grade? What are the specific knowledge, skills, and levels of achievement expected of my child?
13. For each subject, try to incorporate the state academic standards into the child's goals in the IEP in appropriate ways. Which standards are most important for the child over the next year?
14. What accommodations/supports will my child need to meet these standards?
15. How will the teachers use the academic standards in each subject, raise academic expectations, and challenge my child with rigorous content knowledge and advanced skills at the appropriate grade level?
16. To meet more challenging academic standards, does the child need:
 - (a) a less restrictive environment;
 - (b) a better curriculum;
 - (c) improved modifications and supports;
 - (d) assistive technology; or
 - (e) new training and supervision for teachers? Are different accommodations or supports needed for each academic subject?
17. Are the teachers for the child "highly qualified" under IDEA and other laws?


18. What is the specific level of knowledge and certification of the child's teachers in each academic subject? [Nationally certified; graduate degree; college major]
19. Do the teachers for the child have the level of knowledge and certification needed to help the child meet his or her annual IEP goals, to learn under state academic standards, and to perform at a proficient level on state assessments?
20. If the teachers may not have an adequate level of knowledge or certification, what options for services or placement would provide the child with more qualified teachers? What supports, training, and supervision are needed for the child's teachers?
21. For my child's mainstreamed classes, what supports will the teacher(s) need to properly and fully address the special needs of my child? [Consultation/team teaching with special education teacher; professional development classes in teaching students with disabilities; extra supervision such as lesson plan reviews and observations.]
22. For my child's special education classes, what supports with the teacher(s) need to give my child full and proper access to the academic and achievement standards for my child's grade level?

IEP Questions About Research-Based Practices

1. What is the research behind each element of the child's IEP? If the school is not basing its IEP decisions on research, then what is the reason for these decisions?
2. Does the child's school receive Title I funds? Is the school failing to make adequate yearly progress? Under one or both of these conditions, how is the school using research to improve the education of children with disabilities?
3. Can parents identify programs, services, or accommodations that "based on research" will improve the child's education? If the school district's approach is not research-based, parents can then propose through the IEP process that the school adopt and implement their proposal for a research based approach. Copies or summaries of the research may be provided to IEP members and attached to the IEP.

IEP Questions About Parent Involvement

1. Are parents receiving regular, two-way, and meaningful communication with teachers and administrators about their child's education?
2. Are parents having parent-teacher conferences, frequent progress reports, and reasonable access to staff?
3. Is the school allowing parents to volunteer, participate in their child's class, and observe classroom activities? How can better arrangements be made for these areas of parent communication and participation? Could the parent help to identify potential IEP problems by observing the classroom and seeing the teacher's methods for academic instruction and student behavior modification?
4. Are parents able to examine:
 - (a) the education records of their child at school; and
 - (b) a file in the school office containing the professional qualifications of their child's teachers and paraprofessionals? How can better arrangements be made for these areas of information sharing?
5. Have parents received the proper written notice about their rights regarding:
 - (a) the parent consent and agreement needed by the school for most special education decisions;
 - (b) the parent right to participate in most special education meetings for their child; and
 - (c) the parent rights to make complaints, request mediation, request due process hearings, and file appeals in court about special education issues?
6. Has the school provided parents with prior written notice about special education decisions, actions, and changes?
7. Has the school given timely notice to parents if their child has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified?

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PATH Project: 1-800-866-4726



PEN Project: 1-877-762-1435



TEAM Project: 1-877-832-8945

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