Navigating the IEP Process - Transition plan
Who We Are And What We Do

Chicago’s Metropolitan Area Parent Training and Information Center!

FRCD is here to help you:

• Learn about your Rights and Responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
• Make informed decisions about your child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP)
• Obtain appropriate services for your child
• Learn more about Early Intervention and transition services
• Effect positive change in your child’s school
• Learn about what he or she needs to lead a productive and independent adult life
I.D.E.A.

- Free appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for All children with Disabilities.
- Appropriate evaluation
- IEP based on **Individual** & **Unique** Needs of a child
- Services in the Least Restrictive Environment **LRE**
- Parents are **Equal** Partners
- Procedural safeguard
Disabilities categories under which children may be eligible for services.

- Autism
- Cognitive Disability
- Deaf-Blindness
- Deafness
- Developmental Delay
- Emotional Disability
- Hearing Impairment
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impaired
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech or Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment
Step 1: Request for Evaluation
A request for an evaluation is made by the parent to determine the child’s eligibility for special education.

Step 2: Decision to Proceed
At this stage, the district meets with the parent to determine whether an evaluation should proceed. If yes, the district needs to determine what domains will be evaluated and will request the parent’s consent to do the evaluation.

Step 3: Consent to Evaluate
The evaluation cannot proceed until the parent has provided informed written consent for the district to begin the evaluation. Timelines for completing the evaluation do not start until consent has been given by the parent.
Step 4: Evaluation
During a period of up to 60 school days, district personnel can take the steps needed to complete the evaluation. If any part of the evaluation has been written in final form, it may be shared with the parent.

Step 5: Eligibility Conference & IEP
By the end of the 60th school day, the evaluation team must meet with the parent to decide if the child is eligible for special education. If yes, an IEP team must then meet with the parent to develop the IEP for the student.

Step 6: Consent for Placement
Before the special education services can begin, the parent must provide written informed consent to allow the district to proceed with the placement. Placement may begin no sooner than 10 days after the parent consents, unless the parent gives permission for it to start sooner.

*Initial Placement does not occur until parent signs consent*
How does the IEP process work?

A referral is made if it is determined the child needs an evaluation. Once the evaluation is completed an IEP meeting is scheduled.

- An IEP team is formed
- You are an equal partner in the IEP process
- As parents, you are the only team members who will remain constant throughout your child’s education
The IEP Team is Required to Include:

- The student’s parents
- At least 1 regular education teacher
- A representative of the school district (LEA) who can provide or supervise special education and who is knowledgeable about the curriculum and the district’s resources and, most importantly has the authorized to make decisions!
The IEP Team Must Include:

- A person who can interpret evaluation results
- Others invited by the school or the parents who have knowledge or special expertise about the student
- The student, whenever it is appropriate
What is an IEP?

- Individualized Education Program
- Each student who qualifies for special education must have one
- Written document
- Parents must be involved
- Developed by an IEP team
- A legally binding document
What is an IEP?

• Students can be involved/Must be involved—at least by transition age 14½.
• Reviewed at least once a year
• More often if needed
• Triennial Re-evaluation
  – The school must evaluate at least every 3 years unless the parent and school agree that a re-evaluation is not necessary.
The IEP should explain:

- What services, accommodations/modifications and supports will be provided
- Who will provide them
- When they will start
- Where they will be provided
- How often they will be provided
- How long they will continue to be provided
IEP Meetings Are Held:

• After the 1st initial evaluation
• At least once a year
• More often if the parents or school request it
• At a time and place that is mutually convenient to all participants
Parents Are Entitled To:

- Receive 10 day prior notice of the meeting and the issues to be discussed
- Be given reasonable time to prepare for the meeting
- Ask for the meeting to be rescheduled to a mutually convenient time.
The IEP Team Must Consider:

• The strengths of the child
• The concerns of the parents
• The results of an initial evaluation or the most recent re-evaluation
• The academic, developmental and functional needs of the child
Special Considerations May Apply:

• Behavioral interventions or supports if the child’s behavior interferes with learning

• Language needs of the child if the child is not proficient in English

• Instruction in Braille if the child is blind or visually impaired
Special Considerations May Apply:

• Language and communication needs if the child is deaf or hearing impaired

• The need for assistive technology devices or services
What should the IEP contain?

• Think of the components of the IEP as the “GAME PLAN” for your child’s education

• The team sets goals, follows the plan, and makes adjustments as needed
Individual Goals

Academic and when necessary functional goals will enable your child to access the general education curriculum.

• Enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum

• Meet the child’s educational needs that result from a disability
MEASURABLE GOALS

• How will you and the other members of the IEP team be able to tell how much progress your child is making?

• The goals should make that clear

S  Specific
M  Measurable
A  Use Action Words
R  Realistic and relevant
T  Time-limited
The IEP Must Contain:

• A description of how the child’s progress toward meeting annual goals will be measured and when progress reports will be made to parents.

• Parents of students with IEP’s must receive progress reports/report cards at least as often as parents of general education students.
LRE
Least Restrictive Environment

- Each child’s LRE will be considered.
- The reasons must be due to the needs of the child, not the convenience of others.
Transition Planning

- It needs to start when a student is 14 ½ years of age (or younger if appropriate.)
- It is an Official Part of a Student’s I.E.P.
- It should include measurable post secondary goals

The four main areas of transition planning:

1. Employment
2. Community Living
3. Recreation and Leisure
4. Post-Secondary Education and Training
Planning for Post Secondary Success is Embedded in IDEA

The purpose of IDEA: Is to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them FAPE that emphasizes Special Education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living (34cfr 300.1(a))

- In Illinois Transition start when a student is 14 ½ years of age (or younger if appropriate.)
- It is an official part of a student’s I.E.P.
- It should include Measurable Post Secondary Goals.
The Transition Plan Helps Students, Staff, and Parents Clarify and Plan For:

- High School Course Choices
- Interests, Talents, Needs
- Career Options and Experiences
- Skill Development
- Connections with Adult Services
  - Education/Training
  - Agencies
  - Support Services
Before the Meeting

- This is the time to record your child’s strengths, interests and preferences and your concerns as parents
- Include information about the student’s progress, needs, and expectations for the future
Transition in the IEP

- IEP Team identifies present levels of strengths, needs, interests
- IEP: Measurable postsecondary goals
- Transition services

Annual Goals   Course of Study   Other
activities
• Post secondary goals: After High School, I will attend a community college full time in biology.

• Transition services: Improve reading skills

• Annual goals: Given access to community college information, I will demonstrate knowledge of the admission requirement with 80 percent accuracy by winter of my senior year

• Course work: Reading fundamentals (English 1)
Goals and Objectives examples

Post Secondary: Employment

• Post secondary goals: upon graduation, I will attend area adult training program part time in food service.

• Transition services: Locate adapted kitchen equipment

• Annual goals: Given instruction, I will learn to use five new pieces of adapted kitchen equipment effectively by end of the year.

• Course work: Work experience at community food service provider
A School District Should Also Provide an Age Appropriate Transition Assessment.

“……an ongoing process of collecting data on the individual, needs, preferences, and interests as they relate to the demands of current and future working, education, living, and personal and social environments.”

(From Council for Exceptional Children)
As you plan for the future and prepare for developing a transition plan, you should be thinking about your child’s:

- Long Range Employment and Life Goals
- Interest and Talents
- Learning Style
- Personality Traits
- Social Skills
- Work Experiences
- Options After High School
Your Child; Whenever Possible, Should Be Able to:

• Share Interests & Preferences
• Learn to Express Opinions
• Gather Information, Ask Questions/
• Participate Actively in Case Conferences/
• Exercise Choice
• Dare to Dream
A Little Final Advice for Parents

• Parents and the student have important roles in developing and revising the IEP and must have the opportunity to give meaningful input
The Key Factors For Developing A Successful Transition Plan Include:

- Realistic, Outcome Oriented, Quality Education
- Opportunities to Interact with Peers
- Social Skills and Social Connections Development
- Information on All Adult Options
- Support Services for Independence
Two Other Things To Consider:

• The Summary of Performance. You will receive a Summary of Performance (SOP) when your child graduates from high school or reaches the maximum age for eligibility (22). The ISOP is a summary of his/her academic achievements, functional performance, and recommendations.

• Your Child Reaches Age 18. Unless other arrangements have been made by the family, the student has the right to make the final decisions about his/her education.
Key Federal Legislation

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Schools’ responsibilities
- Services VS Accommodations
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), quality, and free appropriate public education
- Availability of federal funds
- Applies until student graduates or reaches the age of 22

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Individual responsibility
- Public institution responsibility for cost of assistance provision
- Focus on services and supports
- Focus on non-discrimination
- Receipt of Federal funds by public institutions is linked to compliance with the law
- Applications across environments

Americans with Disabilities Act
- Individual responsibility
- Institutions and employers responsibility for cost of assistance provision
- Focus on accommodations VS services or supports
- Focus on nondiscrimination, reasonableness and undue hardship
- No link between Federal funds and compliance with the law
- Application across all environments
Remember:

Entitled vs. Eligible. There is a big difference between being entitled to all the services your child gets in school and the services your child may be eligible for when he/she leaves school.

Who is Ultimately Responsible?

In School it is the School District. When School Ends it is YOU!!!
A Little Final Advice for Parents

- The instructional program (WHAT and HOW your child will learn) must be designed BEFORE the IEP team decides WHERE it will happen (general education classroom, special education classroom, or other setting):
  - Educational program FIRST
  - Placement SECOND
The bottom line is that the IEP process is your opportunity to have a strong voice in your child’s education and help design a program that is effective in meeting your child’s needs. The better you understand the process and your role in it, the better advocate you can be for your child.
Resources ...


• Frequently Asked Questions About the SOP. Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD).
http://www.ahead.org/resources/idea/introduction#1

http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/,root,dynamic,QaCorner,10,

• Summary of Performance Resources from NSTTAC website:
http://www.nsttac.org/content/summary-performance-resources
Family Resource Center on Disabilities

For more information contact:
FRCD
The Region One Parent Training and Information Center of Illinois

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