

How to Prepare for an IEP meeting

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting is a meeting to review and develop a plan for a child who needs special education support and services. The goal of IEP meetings is to create a unique plan that is designed to support a student with a disability in order for them to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

Here are some tips to help you prepare for the meeting.

1. Get Support.

- Although parents don't need representation at IEP meetings, if you think you need an advocate or an attorney to represent you and your child at this meeting, you should contact someone as soon as possible to ensure they have enough time to prepare and clear their schedule. Sometimes meetings can be rescheduled if you need time to seek help.
- If you don't have an advocate, you can find one through the [Arc of Colorado's website](#). Look for your county on the map and contact the appropriate agency. If you don't have an advocate, it is always helpful to bring someone with you that can support you, even if it's a close friend that can sit with you to provide emotional support and take some notes.
- Disability Law Colorado is also a good resource for support. You can contact us at 303.722.0300 or fill out an [Intake Packet](#).

2. Review your child's records.

- You will want to review the current IEP (if there is one) and become familiar with your child's services.
- You should also review their most recent evaluation and any outside evaluations or other relevant records that might inform their educational needs.
- Think about your child's strengths and needs. It can be helpful to write these down and start an IEP meeting with a discussion about strengths.
- Be prepared to discuss new likes and dislikes. What has worked for you at home could also work well in class.
- Consider class sizes and how much time is spent in the general education classroom.
- If your child has a Behavior Support Plan, consider what is working for them and what needs updated. Stickers may have been a great reward at age 6 but do they work so well now?
- Related services: Consider what supplemental supportive services will help your child succeed in a traditional classroom.
- Transition services: If your child is 14 or older the team needs to look at vocational and advanced placements for after high school.

3. Tell the team in advance if there is something specific you would like to discuss.

- Write down what you want to discuss so you don't forget something important.
- The more prepared you are with how and what you are going to say, the more confident you will be at the meeting.

4. Think about who will be at the meeting. People present should include:

- The student (as appropriate),
- Parents or guardians,
- Regular education teacher,
- Special education teacher,
- School Principal,
- District Representative who can commit resources and make decisions, and
- Other people with information about the child such as a school psychologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, or speech language pathologist.

NOTE: Review the list of meeting participants before the meeting and make sure all necessary personnel are going to be there. This list will be in the meeting notice. You should notify the school if you plan to bring anyone additional to the meeting such as an attorney or advocate.

What questions should I be asking myself before and during the IEP meeting?

- Is there an advocate, attorney, family member, or friend that I want to invite?
- Have I reviewed all of my child's documents?
- When was my child's last evaluation? Has anything changed since then? Is it time for a new evaluation?
- Does my child have enough support in school? If not, in what areas could they use more support? Are there things that work at home that might also work at school?
- Is this the right placement for my child? Is this the Least Restrictive Environment for them?

Where can I get more information?

- [The Colorado Department of Education's IEP Resources](#)
- [IDEA Regulations about IEP Meetings](#)
- [DLC's Fact Sheet on Meaningful Parent Participation](#)
- [DLC's Fact Sheet on Free Appropriate Public Education](#)
- [DLC's Fact Sheet on Eligibility](#)
- [DLC's Fact Sheet on Evaluation](#)
- [DLC's Fact Sheet on Least Restrictive Environment](#)