Individualized Education Program FAQs

Information for Parents of Preschool Children

TN Department of Education

What is an IEP (individualized education program)?

An **IEP** is the legal document that spells out how the school district will meet your child's unique educational needs resulting from his or her disability.

You, anyone you invite, preschool teachers, specialists (as needed), and a school leader will work together as an **IEP team** to write your child's IEP. The IEP document serves three main purposes:

- to set meaningful learning goals for your child,
- to state the services and supports the school district will provide to help your child make progress toward achieving these goals, and
- to serve as the foundation for on-going teamwork to meet your child's unique educational needs.

What information about my child is included in an IEP?

- Information you share to help the team know who your child is (personality, interests, likes, dislikes, ways of doing things) and understand any special medical or other considerations
- Your concerns, priorities, and goals for your child
- How your child is currently doing in the places and activities meaningful to you and your child. This includes your child's abilities and needs related to
  - communicating and interacting with family, other adults, and other children
  - participating in getting dressed, eating, and washing hands
  - using materials and tools (such as crayons, scissors, puzzle pieces) and moving around indoor and outdoor spaces
  - playing, exploring, problem-solving, and following directions
  - understanding early academics (such as sorting building blocks by color or shape, exploring books about animals, scribbling or experimenting with paint)
- Information from evaluations and assessments of your child's development and learning
- How your child's disability impacts participation in preschool activities and learning

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How are my child's IEP goals created?

You and others on the IEP team decide on goals based on all the information included in the IEP. Your child's IEP goals must include an action, skill, or behavior you can see or hear your child do and how you will know when your child has achieved the goal.

Good IEP goals:

- help your child participate and learn with other children in everyday preschool routines and activities;
- are ambitious and achievable within one year; and
- are specific, easy to understand, and include a way to measure your child's progress

What kinds of services and supports might be included in my child's IEP?

The IEP must specify the services and supports necessary for your child to participate in preschool activities and the learning curriculum provided to all children. The IEP also must be designed and carried out in such a way to help your child make progress toward achieving IEP goals. Here is a short list of possible services and supports:

- special instruction
- therapy services (such as physical therapy or speech therapy)
- materials or equipment (such as picture labels; large print; a device to support communication or mobility; special seating, scissors, or eating utensils)
- transportation

What type of classroom will my child attend and where will IEP services be provided?

The law requires that children with disabilities are educated and receive IEP services and supports alongside nondisabled children in regular preschool settings as much as possible. The IEP team determines which setting meets this obligation based on your child's individual needs. The classroom where your child will attend and receive IEP services is known as your child's least restrictive environment or LRE.

The IEP team should not place your child in a special education classroom simply because your child may not have some skills that other children have, or because your child needs certain services or support. If your child is removed from a regular classroom and from activities with nondisabled children, the IEP must include an explanation for this decision.

What else should I know about IEPs?

- All parts of your child's IEP should be clear, easy to understand, and make sense to you. The school district will provide a copy of the IEP translated into your native language if needed.
- Your consent is required for the school district to begin providing special education services to your child. If you agree to the IEP, you can change your mind and end special education services at any time.
- The IEP must be reviewed annually. However, you can request to meet earlier to discuss your child's goals, services, classroom placement, or any IEP concerns you may have.

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