

STEP  
01

## Before The IEP Meeting:

### *Review and Respond to your... "Invitation to IEP Meeting"*

You should receive written notice to any meeting of your child's IEP Team 7-10 days before the proposed meeting date. This notice should be in your native language. If your child is (or will turn) 14 in the next 12 months, they should receive their own invitation.

#### *Review the invitation and consider:*

- Does the purpose of the meeting make sense to you, and does it match what you expected?
- Who will be attending the meeting, and in what roles? Will the right people be there?
- Have any team members asked to be excused from the meeting?
- Do the date, time and location work for your schedule?
- Will the Team be able to address the issues in the amount of time scheduled?

### *Organize and Review!*

*As you review your child's records, consider the following:*

- Where has your child made progress?
- What has worked well?
- What does your child say is going well?
- Are there new areas you'd like the IEP to address?
- Where do you **not** see progress?
- What does your child say is **not** going well?
- What challenges do you anticipate over the next twelve months?

### *Prepare!*

- Review Special Education Basics:** Use ECAC's website or other reliable sources to review the key purposes of special education law (IDEA '04), IEPs, and terms you'll hear in the meeting.
- Share What You Know About Your Child!** You might create a video, share pictures, or complete ECAC's "Painting the Big Picture" or "Student Snapshot."
- Share What's On Your Mind!** Create a meeting agenda that lists your concerns, questions, and top priorities for the next twelve months of your child's education. Include your family's vision for life after high school.
- Involve Your Child!** Prepare your child to participate in a way that fits their age, abilities, and interests. They might make a video, draw a picture, or attend the meeting themselves.



*Consider sharing your meeting agenda AND asking the school to send you the data they've collected, along with any parts of the IEP they may have drafted, several days before the meeting!*

## STEP 02

# The IEP Meeting: *Participate Effectively!*

- As the meeting begins, clarify who each person is and their role in the meeting.
- Keep all discussion focused on meeting your child's needs—look to the future, despite any past challenges.
- Communicate with the intent to find common ground and solutions.
- Support your child to participate if they are present.
- Ask questions to learn more about what you're hearing and to be sure you understand.
- Make sure that all wording on the IEP reflects what you believe the Team is agreeing to.
- Check yourself to be sure you're listening well, especially when your emotions run high.
- Take a break if you need to gather your thoughts or calm your emotions.
- Use your time well to address your top priorities.



**Use meeting time wisely! While IEP Teams try to reach agreements cooperatively, be aware that the LEA Representative has the authority to make decisions when the Team gets stuck.**

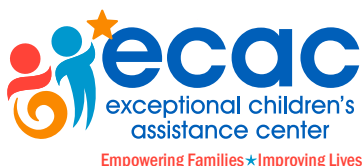
## As the Meeting Ends:

- Remember, you can always request another meeting and/or work on improving the IEP after this meeting.
- Make sure the Prior Written Notice that summarizes decisions made by the IEP Team accurately reflects areas where you agreed and did NOT agree with Team decisions.
- If all of the important areas could not be covered, try to leave the meeting with the next meeting already scheduled.
- Try to leave the meeting with a copy of the new IEP.

## STEP 03

# After The Meeting: *Keep Communication Going...*

- Send an email thanking everyone for their time and commitment to your child.
- Check in occasionally on any the IEP Team agreed to in the meeting, i.e. new goals, services, accommodations, etc.
- Monitor your child's progress on IEP goals regularly.
- Make building and maintaining positive relationships a priority.



All services are provided at no cost to parents, students and families.

1-800-962-6817 | [ecac@ecacmail.org](mailto:ecac@ecacmail.org) | [www.ecac-parentcenter.org](http://www.ecac-parentcenter.org)

When you contact ecac, you'll reach another parent with lived experience navigating special education. We're available to answer questions and address concerns as you advocate for your child!



REV04202022