

Five Things Parents Should Know: What Should an Individualized Education Plan (“IEP”) Include?



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1. PURPOSE OF AN IEP

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”), your child has the right to a free appropriate public education (“FAPE”) that is designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, independent living, and employment. RI Reg. 300.1. The IEP explains how the IEP Team is going to provide your child with a FAPE.



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2. LANGUAGE USAGE

Be aware that the IDEA does not define the terms “**goal**,” “**objective**,” “**modifications**,” or “**accommodations**.” However, these terms have specific meaning when used in the context of an IEP. For example, “**goal**” describes what the student is expected to learn this year at school, and “**objective**” describes the short steps used to obtain that goal. “**Modifications**” are changes made to the goals, and “**accommodations**” are changes in how the student is expected to show that they are meeting the objectives.

3. THE COMPONENTS OF AN IEP

The IEP will include long-term and short-term goals, and specific ways of measuring those goals. Each goal should list specific objectives, and how an instructor will measure achievement of each. RI Reg. 300.320. For example:

Long-term goal: Student will accurately read the time on an analog clock face 100% of the time by May 1.

Objective: Work with student to read analog clock time 2x/day, 5 days/week.

The IEP will also include when extra therapy will be given (i.e., occupational or behavioral), specific accommodations, and related services. RI Reg. 300.34.

4. PRESENT LEVELS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND FUNCTIONAL PERFORMANCE

This section of the IEP is what the rest of the IEP is structured around, so it is important that the information about the student is accurate and thorough. It includes the student's areas of strengths and needs, and any parental concerns. RI Reg. 300.324. In certain situations, you can request an independent educational evaluation if you disagree with the evaluation done by the IEP Team. RI Reg. 300.502. The IEP Team must include any concerns you have in this section.

5. SPECIFIC ACCOMMODATIONS AND RELATED SERVICES

Specific Accommodations are modifications made to the way instructors present material in order to meet the functional needs of the student, such as audio or visual perception and processing.

A non-exhaustive list of **Related Services** includes parent counseling and training, psychological services, orientation and mobility services, occupational therapy, transportation to and from school, and speech pathology. RI Reg. 300.34. The IEP Team should tailor the Related Services to help the student benefit from the Specific Accommodations.

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