

Introduction to Individualized Education

Introduction to Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)

1. What Is an IEP?

- **Definition:** A legally binding document that outlines specially designed instruction, supports, and services for a student with a disability.
- **Purpose:**
 - Ensure the student receives a free appropriate public education (FAPE).
 - Set measurable goals that address academic and functional needs.
 - Provide a roadmap for teachers, specialists, families, and the student.

2. Who Is Eligible?

Category	Typical Examples
Specific Learning Disabilities	Dyslexia, dyscalculia
Intellectual Disabilities	Moderate to severe cognitive delays
Autism Spectrum Disorder	Communication and social interaction challenges
Emotional/Behavioral Disorders	Anxiety, oppositional behavior
Other Health Impairments	ADHD, chronic illnesses
Sensory Impairments	Visual or hearing loss
Multiple Disabilities	Combination of two or more categories

Eligibility is determined through a formal evaluation process that includes:

- Parent/guardian input
- Teacher observations
- Psychological, medical, or speech/language assessments

3. Key Components of an IEP

Component	What It Covers	Example
Student Profile	Strengths, interests, present levels of performance (PLOP)	“Reading fluency at grade level; struggles with comprehension.”

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Component	What It Covers	Example
Plans (IEPs)		
Annual Goals	Specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, time-bound (SMART)	“By June, increase reading comprehension score from 65% to 80% on grade-level passages.”
Special Education Services	Type, frequency, location, and duration of instruction	30-min of small-group reading intervention, 4 days/week, in the resource room.
Related Services	Supportive services (e.g., OT, PT, speech, counseling)	Speech therapy 2x/30-min/week for language production.
Accommodations & Modifications	Changes to how the curriculum is delivered or assessed	Extended time on tests, text-to-speech software, reduced homework load.
Transition Planning (age 14+)	Post-secondary goals, vocational training, independent living	“Enroll in a community college program for graphic design.”
Progress Monitoring	How and when progress will be measured and reported	Quarterly data collection; report cards sent home each term.
Team Members	Parents, special-ed teacher, general-ed teacher, related-service providers, school administrator, and—when appropriate—the student	Signature line for each participant.

4. The IEP Process – Step-by-Step

1. Referral

- Initiated by parent, teacher, or other professional who suspects a disability.

2. Evaluation

- Consent obtained from parents.
- Comprehensive assessments (academic, cognitive, functional).

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3. Eligibility Determination

Plans (IEPs)

- Multidisciplinary team reviews data against IDEA criteria.

4. IEP Meeting

- Occurs within 30 days of eligibility.
- Team drafts the IEP document.

5. Implementation

- Special?ed teacher coordinates services.
- General?ed teacher adapts instruction as specified.

6. Progress Reporting

- Formal report at least once a year; informal updates each grading period.

7. Annual Review & Revision

- Re?evaluate goals, services, and placement.

8.