

## Participate Effectively in Your Child's Case Conference

As the parent or guardian of a child with a disability (eligible under Article 7) the following information will help you effectively participate in the IEP (Individual Education Plan) process to obtain appropriate special education and related services for your child.

### What is an IEP?

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The IEP is developed at a special meeting, called a case conference, which includes at least the following people:

- Parent/Guardian
- A General Education Teacher
- A Public Agency Representative (Administrator or Designee)
- A Special Education Teacher

### The following people **may** attend:

- School Psychologist or Educational Diagnostician
- Special Education Coordinator
- Other Specialists (OT, PT, SLP, Counselor)
- Your child, when appropriate
- Others chosen by you or by the school

The IEP is a written plan which is required by law. This plan outlines the specifics of your child's education program for a period of up to one calendar year.

### The IEP Must Contain?

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- The student's present education performance level
- Annual goals
- Specific Special Education services to be provided.
- Specific related services to be provided, if needed.
- Projected date and duration of these services
- The extent of your child's participation in the general education program and any accommodations needed.
- Criteria/evaluation procedures and schedule for determining whether the goals have been met.
- If needed, the extent of your child's participation in an extended school year (ESY) program.
- Transition services, beginning at age 14.
- The least restrictive environment for your child.
- A statement of your child's participation in state and district assessments.
- Other items may be included such as a Behavior Plan

**Annual Goal:** should be reasonably accomplished during one school year - a measurable statement of wanted progress in a specific skill.

### Your Child's IEP Should be Implemented in the Least Restrictive Environment

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Educating students in the least restrictive environment (LRE) means that, to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities are to be educated with students without disabilities. It means that having students with disabilities out of the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature and severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved. The

determination of the LRE for each student is made by the Case Conference Committee, based on the student's individual needs. The terms "mainstreaming", "integration", and "inclusion" do not appear in any law but are terms that are often used to describe various ways of meeting the LRE requirements.

### Appropriate Related/Supportive Services Must Be Provided to Meet Your Child's Needs as Indicated in the IEP:

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Depending on the student's needs, these may include:

- Psychological services, counseling services
- Interpreters, technology, etc.
- Physical and/or Occupational Therapy and other necessary therapeutic services
- Medical services for evaluation purposes
- Parent Counseling and Training
- Transportation services
- Pre-vocational and vocational services



The need for related services is determined by an evaluation and discussion of your child's needs.

- ✎ Related services must be provided if they are needed in order for your child to benefit from special education services. Related services are not provided based on medical need but on the basis of educational need.
- ✎ The IEP should state each needed related service, date of initiation, anticipated duration of the service, frequency of the service and type of service.

### Before the Case Conference You Can:

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- ✎ Attend a training session (free through IN\*Source and other groups)
- ✎ Get a copy of Article VII, State Special Education Rules
- ✎ Get copies of all reports available
- ✎ Review your child's school records
- ✎ Write out your input or questions before meeting.
- ✎ Invite someone to attend the meeting with you. You may feel overwhelmed by a room full of professionals, having someone with you can help you feel more at ease.

Case Conference meetings are typically held in-person at a school building but may also be held by telephone or virtually.

### At the Case Conference:

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- ✎ Write down the names and positions of all those who are present, that way you will be able to address them by name during the meeting when you have questions.
- ✎ Listen with an open mind. Write down questions you may want to ask later.
- ✎ The IEP meeting will typically begin with a report of your child's present level of educational functioning, strengths, and weaknesses. Your input is important.
- ✎ Ask questions when you don't understand. You have a right to understand what is being said. If you don't understand a word or phrase, please feel free to ask.
- ✎ You can make an audio recording of the meeting after you notify the school staff that you plan to record.
- ✎ You will receive a copy of the IEP, either at the meeting or shortly after.

### If you Disagree:

- ✎ If you cannot come to an agreement, request another meeting. Do not feel pressured to make a decision on the spot.
- ✎ A Facilitated Case Conference can be arranged.
- ✎ The law does not require that you sign the IEP if you do not agree. You can simply sign but write beside your name that you attended but do not approve the IEP.
- ✎ If agreement cannot be reached concerning the IEP or special education services, either you or the school may request Mediation or a Due Process Hearing; parents/guardians may also file a complaint with the Office of Exceptional Children.
- ✎ The IEP may be revised at any time.

Questions? Contact any of the offices below for assistance:

#### **IDOE, Office of Exceptional Children**

IGCN 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, 100 N Senate  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204  
317-232-0570  
Website: [www.in.gov](http://www.in.gov)  
General Email:  
specialeducation@doe.in.gov

#### **IN\*SOURCE**

701 North Niles Ave.  
South Bend, Indiana 46617  
800-332-4433  
Website: [insource.org](http://insource.org)  
General Email: [insource@insource.org](mailto:insource@insource.org)

#### **Cooperative School Services**

1389 Saint Gaspar Drive  
Rensselaer, IN 47978  
(219) 866-8540 or (800) 832-3394  
Website: [cooperativeschoolservices.org](http://cooperativeschoolservices.org)  
General Email:  
[mail@cooperativeschoolservices.org](mailto:mail@cooperativeschoolservices.org)