

# Individualized Education Program (IEP) Services



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## What is an IEP?

- Special education and related services for children ages 3-21 under the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)
- Provides direction for your child's school year
- Outlines the following areas related to your child's educational progress:
  1. Disability
  2. Current academic achievement and function
  3. Measurable goals for the school year

## Who can receive special education services?

- A disability alone does not qualify your child for special education services
- Your child's disability must impact educational ability and must fit the criteria for one or more of the following categories:
  - Intellectual disability
  - Hearing impairment (including deafness)
  - Speech or language impairment
  - Visual impairment (including blindness)
  - Emotional distress
  - Physical or orthopedic impairment
  - Autism
  - Traumatic brain injury
  - Multiple disabilities
  - Developmental delay (ages 3-9)
  - Other health impairment (ADHD, Tourette's, HIV, etc.)
  - Specific learning disability
  - Deaf-blindness

## How do you qualify for an IEP?

1. The child's legal guardian should contact the school district's special education coordinator in writing to request an evaluation. If you are uncertain who to contact, reach out to the school principal, assistant principal, or counselor for assistance. The school district will hold a referral meeting with the IEP team (legal guardian, school and school district personnel, an evaluation interpreter, and invited individuals).
2. Consent to your child receiving eligibility testing for special education services as decided by the IEP team during the referral meeting. Your child's school will coordinate and pay for all testing and evaluations. An evaluation can take up to 60 days.
3. Determine your child's eligibility for special education services with the IEP team during the meeting.
4. If your child qualifies for special education services, work with IEP team members to write and implement your child's IEP based on the educational needs of your child. The IEP team should meet yearly to update your child's IEP.

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## **Who is part of the IEP team?**

- The child's legal guardian
- Your child (when appropriate)
- Local Educational Agency (LEA) representative
- Special education teacher or related service provider for your child
- General education teacher for your child
- Individual to read, interpret, and understand evaluation results (often the school district's psychologist or psychometrist)
- Agency representative (when post-secondary goals and transition services are involved)
- Individuals with special knowledge (invited by you or the school)

## **What is your role on the IEP team?**

- Advocate for your child. Speak up about the special education services you feel your child needs.
- Contribute as a valuable member of the IEP team. You are working with, not against, the school to serve your child's best interests.
- Understand how the IEP process works. Ask questions when something is unclear.
- Document all communications and requests during the IEP process. Ask for an updated copy of your child's IEP as changes are made.

## **Resources**

- Understood for All Inc. - IEP roadmap: How kids get special education Step-by-step flowchart of the IEP process [https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048i0q/4znp9r96cgmoHiEvYzVJMP/87a9fd6baf40c20b207e7e36be8824cd/IEP\\_Roadmap\\_Understood.pdf](https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048i0q/4znp9r96cgmoHiEvYzVJMP/87a9fd6baf40c20b207e7e36be8824cd/IEP_Roadmap_Understood.pdf)
- Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program - Special Education in Alabama: A Right, Not a Favor See pg. 96 for Sample Evaluation Request Letter [https://adap.ua.edu/uploads/5/7/8/9/57892141/rnfcomplete\\_book.pdf](https://adap.ua.edu/uploads/5/7/8/9/57892141/rnfcomplete_book.pdf)
- Alabama State Department of Education - Special Education <https://www.alabamaachieves.org/special-education/>