



Reviewing IEPs Through a Parent Lens

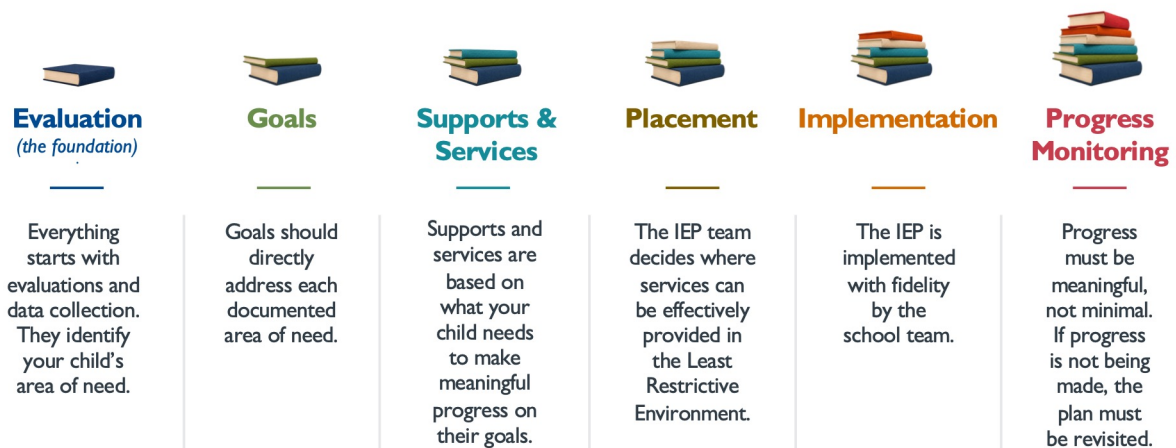
From Needs to Progress

Review the IEP using the same process the team used to develop it.

An IEP is not a collection of separate pages. It is a plan that should tell a logical story. Each part of the IEP should build on the part before it. As you review the IEP, remember the IEP Process:

The IEP Process: From Needs to Progress

A Logical Sequence That Builds Success



Step 1: Start with needs

The Present Levels should clearly identify your child's strengths and educational needs. Ask yourself:

- ☐ Do the Present Levels accurately describe my child?
- ☐ Are educational needs clearly identified?
- ☐ Are any important educational needs missing?
- ☐ Are my concerns reflected?
- ☐ Is important information missing?
- ☐ **What questions do I have?**



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Step 2: Do the goals match the needs?

Don't ask: Are there goals?

Instead ask:

- ☐ **Does every identified need have a goal?**
- ☐ Can I identify a goal for each educational need?
- ☐ Are the goals measurable?
- ☐ Do the goals address what matters most?
- ☐ Are there needs without goals?
- ☐ **What questions do I have?**

Step 3: Do the supports & services match the goals?

Ask yourself:

- ☐ Is there a service to support every goal?
- ☐ Does every service support at least one goal?
- ☐ Do I understand why each service is being provided?
- ☐ Do the accommodations support my child's needs?
- ☐ Is anything missing?
- ☐ **What questions do I have?**

Step 4: Does the placement make sense?

- ☐ Do I understand why this placement was recommended?
- ☐ Is this placement where my child's unique IEP can be most appropriately and effectively implemented?
- ☐ Has the district considered the full continuum of placement options in making this recommendation?
- ☐ Do I agree with the recommendation?
- ☐ **What questions do I have?**



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Review for accuracy & completeness

Accuracy:

- ☐ Does the IEP accurately reflect what was discussed?
- ☐ Are services listed correctly?
- ☐ Are accommodations accurate?
- ☐ Are dates correct?
- ☐ Is the basic information correct?
- ☐ Were all agreed-upon changes included in the final IEP?

Parent Participation:

- ☐ Are my concerns documented?
- ☐ If I disagreed, is that reflected?
- ☐ Was Prior Written Notice provided when appropriate?

Key Takeaway

Every educational need should have a purpose.

Every goal should address a need.

Every service should support a goal.

Every placement decision should support implementation of the plan.



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The Required Components of an IEP

A Parent's Checklist

The IDEA requires every IEP to include specific components. Use this checklist to confirm that each required component is present and to identify questions for your IEP team.

☐ Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)

Does the IEP clearly describe your child's

- Current strengths
- Educational needs
- Academic and functional performance
- How the disability affects involvement and progress in the general education curriculum

☐ Measurable Annual Goals

- Is there a goal for each identified educational need?
- Are the goals measurable?
- Can progress be reasonably monitored?

☐ Progress Monitoring

- Does the IEP explain how progress will be measured?
- Does it state how often progress will be reported?

☐ Special Education, Related Services, Supplementary Aids & Services

- Are the services clearly described?
- Do the services support the identified goals?
- Are accommodations and supports included when needed?

☐ Participation with Nondisabled Peers (Least Restrictive Environment)

- Does the IEP explain the extent to which your child will participate with nondisabled peers?
- If your child will be removed from the general education setting, is the reason explained?



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The Required Components of an IEP

☐ Participation in State and District Assessments

- Does the IEP explain how your child will participate in state and district assessments?
- Are any testing accommodations identified?

☐ Educational Placement

- Do you understand the recommended placement?
- Does the placement support implementation of the IEP?

☐ Transition Services (Beginning no later than age 14 in Nevada)

- Are measurable postsecondary goals included?
- Are transition services and activities identified?
- Does the plan prepare your child for life after high school?

Remember

An IEP is more than a collection of required components.

Each identified need should be addressed by one or more measurable goals. Each goal should be supported by appropriate services, and those services should help determine the educational placement.

If you cannot follow that story, write down your questions.



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When you disagree with the proposed IEP

In Nevada, a parent's signature is not required for a school district to implement a revised IEP after the initial IEP has been developed. If you disagree with the proposed IEP, simply declining to sign it does not prevent the district from implementing it.

If you believe your child's current educational placement should remain in effect while the disagreement is resolved, it is important to understand your procedural options before leaving the meeting.

Understanding "Stay Put"

Under IDEA, "stay put" generally means a student remains in their current educational placement while a dispute is being resolved.

In Nevada, if you want to prevent implementation of a proposed IEP by invoking stay put, you must request due process.

An Advocate's Perspective

Filing for due process is a significant decision.

Based on my experience, there are two situations where I most often recommend that parents discuss due process with an attorney:

- A proposed change in educational placement that the parent believes is inappropriate.
- A proposal to exit a student from special education eligibility.

These situations can have immediate and significant consequences for a child's educational program.

Most disagreements can be resolved through thoughtful questions, collaborative problem-solving, and continued discussion with the IEP team. Understanding stay put is important because it helps parents make informed decisions when disagreements involve significant changes to their child's educational program.



Remember

You can agree to all, some, or none of an IEP. Document any disagreements you have in writing.