**IRP vs. IEP: What Parents Need to Know**

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| Feature | **IRP (Individualized Reading Plan)** | **IEP (Individualized Education Program)** |
| Legal Status | Not legally binding; school can change or end it without parent consent. | Legally binding under IDEA (20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.; 34 C.F.R. Part 300); enforceable through due process and parental rights. |
| Who It Serves | General education students who are behind in reading. | Students with disabilities (e.g., dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, SLD, ADHD, autism, etc.). |
| Scope | Reading only; typically focused on short-term interventions. | Comprehensive; includes all areas of need (reading, writing, math, behavior, speech, etc.). |
| Services Provided | General ed interventions (small groups, computer programs, extra reading time). | Specialized instruction, related services, accommodations, and modifications. |
| Instruction | May or may not be evidence-based or delivered by trained specialists. | Must be evidence-based, delivered with fidelity by qualified staff (34 C.F.R. § 300.39; § 300.320). |
| Parent Rights | Parents have little to no input or enforcement power. | Parents have full rights: consent, meetings, due process, “stay put” protections (34 C.F.R. § 300.503, § 300.518). |
| Accountability | Progress monitored, but no guarantee of results or compliance. | Must provide FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education); progress must be meaningful (Endrew F. v. Douglas County, 580 U.S. 386 (2017)). |
| Timeline | Can start quickly; flexible, short-term. | Requires evaluation, eligibility determination, and formal annual reviews (34 C.F.R. § 300.301–300.306). |

**Why Schools Offer IRPs Instead of IEPs**

- Cheaper: No obligation to provide specialized programs or certified staff.
- Fewer Legal Protections: No due process rights for parents.
- Flexibility: Easier for schools to adjust or discontinue.
- Delay Tactic: Sometimes used to postpone or avoid an evaluation for special education, despite Child Find obligations (20 U.S.C. § 1412(a)(3); 34 C.F.R. § 300.111).

**Parent Takeaway**

An IRP can help in the short term, but it does not replace an IEP for a child with dyslexia or another disability. If your child needs structured, evidence-based instruction delivered with fidelity, insist on:
- A comprehensive special education evaluation in all areas of suspected disability (34 C.F.R. § 300.304).
- Proper documentation of the diagnosis (SLD/dyslexia) on the IEP.
- An IEP that guarantees meaningful educational progress, not just access to generic interventions.

**Legal Citations:**

• IDEA: 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.; 34 C.F.R. Part 300
• Child Find: 34 C.F.R. § 300.111
• Evaluations: 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.304–300.306
• Prior Written Notice: 34 C.F.R. § 300.503
• FAPE: 20 U.S.C. § 1412(a)(1); 34 C.F.R. § 300.17
• Endrew F. v. Douglas County, 580 U.S. 386 (2017)