Attending Meetings to Plan Your Child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Before the IEP planning meeting:

- Consider the vision you have for your child for the future as well as for the present year.
- List your child’s strengths, needs, and interests and your major concerns about his or her education.
- Consider how your child’s disability affects his or her education.
- Think about your child’s educational progress. What has been working and what has not?
- Request a written copy of your child’s evaluation results or a meeting with school staff to discuss the evaluation before the IEP meeting. This gives you an opportunity to understand the evaluation before the IEP planning for your child.
- Consider the evaluation results. Do they fit with what you know about your child? Is the evaluation complete and accurate? If you disagree with the school’s evaluation, you may request, in writing, an independent educational evaluation (IEE) at no cost to you. The school must provide the evaluation or show through a due process hearing that its evaluation is appropriate. The results of an IEE must be considered by the team in planning.
- Consider a variety of ways to involve your child in planning his or her IEP, starting at a young age. Self-advocacy skills are important to develop.
- If needed, plan to bring someone with you to the meeting, such as a spouse, relative, friend, or representative from a local disability organization.

Make sure others at the meeting never forget that the meeting is about a real child.

At the IEP planning meeting:

This meeting is very important. You, the school staff, and any other parties attending the meeting will review and discuss information about your child to plan the IEP. It provides an excellent opportunity to ask questions and share important insights about your child, whom you know better than anyone else does. The school needs to know what your child is like at home and in the community, as well as what your child’s interests and activities are.

After the IEP planning meeting:

- Your child’s IEP must be reviewed at least once a year to determine whether the annual goals have been achieved and to revise the IEP if necessary.
- You must be informed regularly about your child’s progress, at least as often as parents who have children without disabilities are informed about the progress their children are making. You will be informed about whether your child is making progress toward meeting the IEP goals, and whether the progress is enough to reach the goals. If your child is not making adequate progress, an IEP meeting should be held to review the IEP and make needed changes.
- You may request an IEP meeting at any time.
Even if you have:
• Uncertain housing
• A temporary address
• No permanent physical address

You are guaranteed enrollment in school by the federal McKinney-Vento Act and California state law if you live:
• In a house or apartment with more than one family due to loss of housing or economic hardship
• With friends or family because you are a runaway or an unaccompanied youth
• In substandard housing (without electricity, water, or heat)
• In a shelter (family, domestic violence, or youth shelter or transitional living program)
• In a motel, hotel, or weekly rate housing
• In an abandoned building, in a car, at a campground, or on the streets

You can enroll in school immediately even without the documents normally required for enrollment, such as:
• Proof of residency
• Immunization records or other required health records
• School records
• Legal guardianship papers

Your child may:
• Participate fully in all school activities and programs for which he/she is eligible.
• Receive transportation to and from the school of origin if you request it.
• Continue to attend the school in which he/she was last enrolled even if you have moved away from that school’s attendance area.
• Qualify automatically for school nutrition programs.

Your responsibilities are to:
• Make sure your child gets to school on time and ready to learn.
• Stay informed of school rules, regulations, and activities.
• Contact the homeless liaison for assistance in removing barriers to your child’s education.
• Attend parent/teacher conferences, Back-to-School Nights, and other school-related activities.

For questions about enrolling in school or for assistance with school enrollment, contact:
• Your local school district homeless liaison:
• Your county homeless liaison:
• Your homeless state coordinator:
  Leanne Wheeler
  State Coordinator
  California Department of Education
  1430 N Street, Suite 6408
  Sacramento, CA 95814
  Phone: 1-866-856-8214

You can ENROLL in school!