

Where do you want to start?



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I'm Ready for my IEP Meeting!

Strategy Street

Pay extra attention for these key areas of an IEP

IEP Meeting Day Strategies

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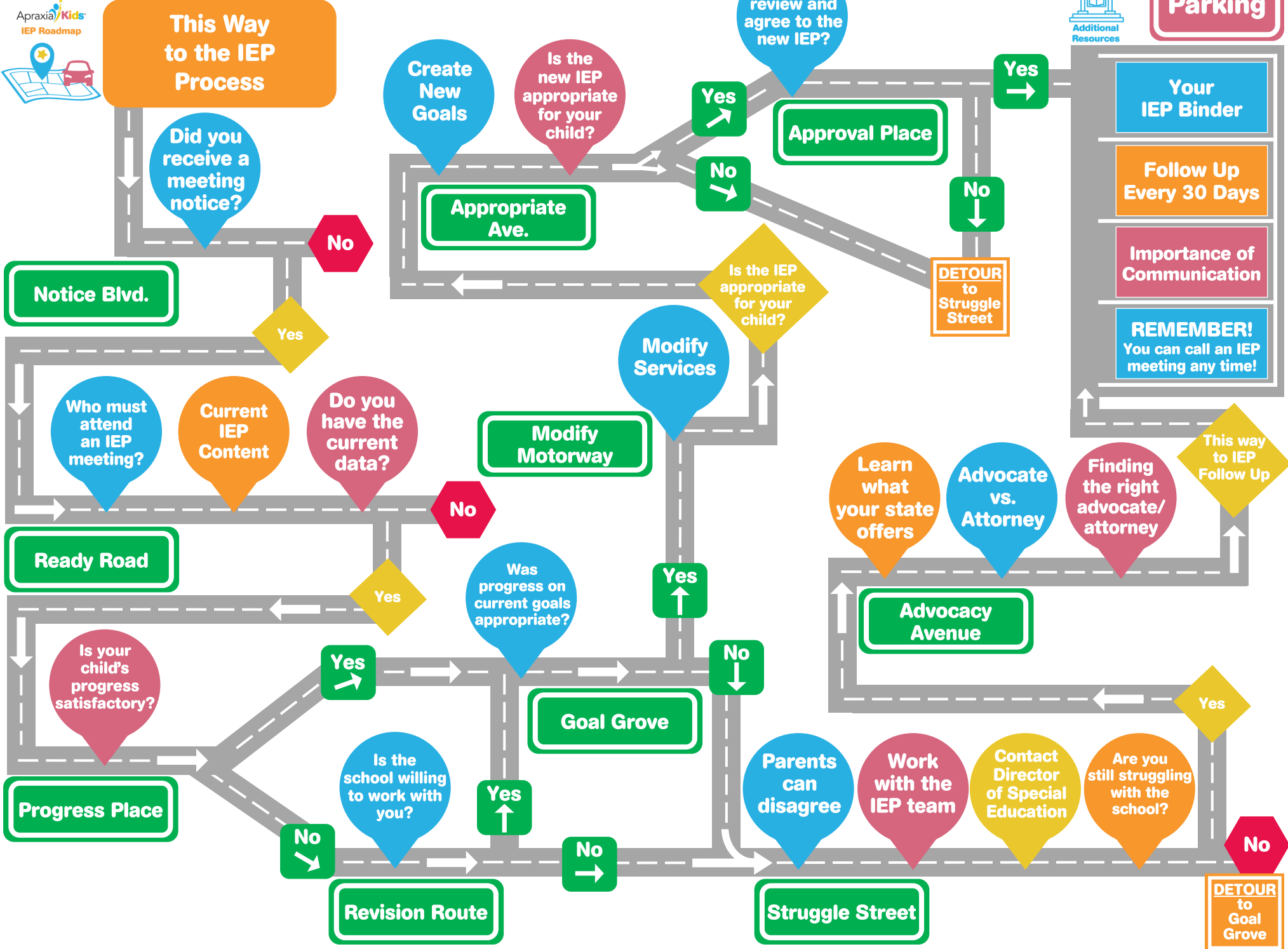
Accommodations

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IEP Roundabout

# Where do you want to start?



Apraxia Kids®  
**IEP Roadmap**



**Where do you want to start?**

**Apraxia Kids developed this exciting resource called the IEP Roadmap! This tool provides detailed information to help you become your child's best advocate and navigate the IEP process, whether it's your first or tenth time.**

**This is a printable version. For the full interactive IEP Roadmap experience, please view this on a computer or smart device in landscape mode.**

**[apraxia-kids.org/iep-roadmap](http://apraxia-kids.org/iep-roadmap)**

**For more information about childhood apraxia of speech (CAS), visit our website at [www.apraxia-kids.org](http://www.apraxia-kids.org)**

## Virtual Instructions

To start using the interactive IEP Roadmap, click on the answer that best fits where you are in your journey. As you navigate, click on the bubbles you find on each page to learn more about each topic and a new window will open up with more detailed information, including downloads and printable items for your use. When you are ready to move on, follow the arrows to your next stop.

## Virtual Navigation Tips

- View this tool on a computer or sideways on your phone/tablet for the best viewing experience.
- The three dots in the bottom right corner of the IEP Roadmap open a navigation menu where you can see the full map.
- The pointer icon in the top right corner shows you the interactive areas of the map.
- If you get lost, click the IEP Roadmap icon in the top right to start over.

## About the IEP Roadmap

Our initial goal was to develop a simple one page resource, or checklist, to help families prepare for an IEP meeting. But our team quickly realized – we can do more – and we did!

This project was developed by a small group of a few Apraxia Kids staff members and some incredibly dedicated volunteers, including parents and professionals from different perspectives across the country. Our goal was to consolidate and explain the IEP process in a more digestible and manageable way for families to navigate. We hope this tool helps you learn what you need to feel empowered to be the best advocate for your apraxia star!

***Disclaimer:** Aligned with our mission, Apraxia Kids does not endorse any one method, program, or approach. This is a tool to help you navigate the IEP process. You should check your state laws and school district rules and guidelines. This IEP Roadmap is not to be construed as legal advice.*

## IEP Roadmap Feedback

Do you know of a tip or resource that helped you navigate special education or the IEP process for your child? Please give us any feedback or additional resources for the IEP Roadmap so that we can continue to update and improve it! You can submit your feedback via a form on our IEP Roadmap webpage, or email us with the information below:

**Email your:** First Name, Last Name, Email Address, and Your Feedback to [community@apraxia-kids.org](mailto:community@apraxia-kids.org).



**PATENT PENDING**



**This Way  
to the IEP  
Fundamentals**

**1st IEP Avenue**

**What is  
an IEP?**

## **What is an IEP?**

An IEP is an Individualized Education Plan that is federally protected by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). An IEP is a plan or program developed for students who are identified as having a disability that negatively impacts their education to ensure a free and appropriate education (FAPE). An IEP is used by school districts to outline all of the services a child will receive in school.

The initial evaluation for special education includes testing for the child in all developmental areas of concern as determined by the parent and the IEP team. Once the parent gives permission for testing, the school district has 60 days to complete the assessment (although some districts give less days) and give the report to the parents. The IEP meeting to review the assessment results and develop the IEP must occur within 30 days after the assessment report date.

Every three years, the school district must complete a re-evaluation (sometimes called a triennial evaluation/review) to determine if eligibility should continue. All areas of concern must be tested. If there are concerns before the 3-year review, anyone on the team can request testing be completed.

### **Not to be confused with an IEE!**

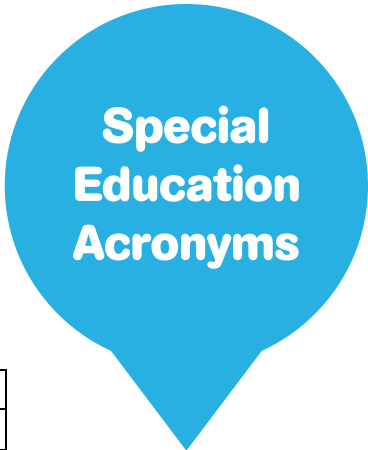
An Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) is an evaluation that is performed by an outside expert when the parent disagrees with the evaluation and recommendations performed by the school district personnel. The parent can request the district set up an IEE. The school must either set up the evaluation or file for Due Process if the parent requests the evaluation. The school is responsible for all costs associated with the evaluation.

### What does an IEP Look Like?

An IEP, by definition, is *individualized* for each student, so your child's IEP will look different than another child's IEP. Your child's IEP document must include / consider the following:

1. The eligibility category the IEP team determined best fits your child's disability.
2. The IDEA lists five special factors that your child's IEP team must consider as it develops, reviews, or revises an IEP: behavior, limited English proficiency, Braille and children with blindness or visual impairment, communication needs, and assistive technology.
3. Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP). This is a summary that describes measurable, objective baseline information for each area affected by your child's disability.
4. Academic and functional goals that are achievable within 12 months and are what are called "SMART" (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-oriented, Time-limited)
5. Benchmarks to meet yearly goals. Benchmarks are points of reference that can be used to measure progress.
6. Your child's placement in the "Least Restrictive Environment" (LRE). The goal is to make sure that students who receive special education services are included in the general education classroom as often as possible.
7. Assistive Technology – This includes any item, piece of equipment, or system, whether purchased, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve your child's ability to benefit from their education program.
8. Accommodations are changes of environment, format, or equipment that allows your child to gain access to education content and/or complete assignments. Accommodations don't change what is being taught.
  - What accommodations are being provided
  - In what areas are they implementing them
  - What goals and/or objectives they support
9. Services
  - What direct services are being provided (for example, instruction from a special education teacher)
  - Time
  - Frequency
  - Related Services needed (examples: speech therapy, occupational therapy, counseling, etc.)
  - Amount of time and areas in which the student will be removed from general education
  - Who is responsible for providing the services as well as collecting/reporting data
10. Deliberations are notes taken throughout the IEP meeting to recap everything that was discussed so it can be included in the IEP. Including these notes, or deliberations, in the IEP is not mandated everywhere, so check with your local state laws and school district to see if these will be included in your IEP.

# 1st IEP Avenue



## Special Education Acronyms

Here are the top acronyms you may need to know before your first IEP meeting. Some of these may look different from state to state.

ARD	Admission, Review, Dismissal (local term for IEP team or meeting)
AT	Assistive Technology
BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan
EI	Early Intervention
ER	Evaluation Report
RR	Re-evaluation Report
ESY	Extended School Year
ELL, ESL	English Language Learner or English as a Second Language
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FAPE	Free and Appropriate Public Education
FIE or FIIE	Full Individual Evaluation or Full Individual and Initial Evaluation
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Act
IEE	Independent Educational Evaluation
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
ISP or IFSP	Individual Service Plan or Individual Family Service Plan
NOREP	Notice of Recommended Educational Placement
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
LEA	Local Education Agency (school or school district)
PLAAFP	Present Levels of Academic Achievement & Functional Performance
PWN	Prior Written Notice
PLOP	Present Levels of Performance
MAG	Measurable Annual Goals
SDI	Specially Designed Instruction

### More Definitions

[parent.apraxia-kids.org/education-alphabet-soup-glossary/](http://parent.apraxia-kids.org/education-alphabet-soup-glossary/)

[parent.apraxia-kids.org/glossary-of-terms-for-cas/](http://parent.apraxia-kids.org/glossary-of-terms-for-cas/)

### Eligibility Categories

There are 13 eligibility categories for diagnoses to be included in an IEP. These codes must be based on the child's actual diagnosis. These codes are just a way for schools and districts to manage their funding/hours and do not change a child's diagnosis. A child can fall into more than one category if it applies to them. Codes may vary by state.

ASD or AU	Autism Spectrum Disorder
D-B	Deaf-Blindness
D	Deafness
ED	Emotional Disturbance
HI	Hearing Impairment
ID	Intellectual Disability
MD	Multiple Disabilities
OI or PI	Orthopedic Impairment
OHI	Other Health Impairment
SLD	Specific Learning Disability
SLI or S/L	Speech or Language Impairment <i>*Apraxia Stars are here!</i>
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
VI	Visual Impairment Including Blindness
Non-categorical	Noncategorical codes are used when the child has not yet been given a formal diagnosis or does not yet clearly fall into one of the other categories. "Noncategorical" must have a definitive code by a certain age (varies by state).

## Know Your Rights Lane

## Know Your Child's Rights

### **Know Your Child's Rights**

Your child has a right to receive a **Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** in the **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** through the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**.

That means that eligible students with disabilities are entitled to an education that is provided to them for free by their public school system, in an appropriate way that is stated in their personalized IEP, and alongside their peers in general education as much as possible.

You should know and protect or **"safeguard"** your child's rights in the special education process and school setting so that your child can have a successful school experience and achieve their full potential.

## Know Your Rights Lane

## Procedural Safeguards

### **Procedural Safeguards**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires schools to provide parents of a child with a disability with a document that contains a full written explanation of your rights under IDEA, its regulations, and your state's laws. This document is called a **Notice of Procedural Safeguards** and it includes:

1. **Parent Participation** - You have a legal right to participate in IEP meetings and can call one at any time.
2. **Access to Education Records** - You have the right to see and get an explanation of your child's school records based on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
3. **Confidentiality of Information** - The school must protect your child's confidentiality.
4. **Informed Consent** - The school must inform you and get your consent in writing before it can do certain things, such as evaluating your child or providing special education.
5. **Prior Written Notice (PWN)** - The school must give you written notice before it proposes, or refuses, to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child's special education plan.
6. **Understandable Language** - The school and IEP should use language that is understandable to the general public.
7. **Independent Evaluation** - If you disagree with the school's evaluation, you have a right to get an IEE (Independent Educational Evaluation) at the expense of the school district.
8. **Stay Put** - If the school proposes a change to your child's placement that you don't agree with, you can use "stay put" temporarily to prevent that change. This means that the current IEP placement will be followed until the issue is resolved.
9. **Dispute Resolution** - You have the right to disagree and there are resources to help you and your child's school to resolve your differences.
10. **Timeline(s)** - Parents should be aware that there are federal guidelines for how quickly each stage of every process is to be completed by the school district so they can be held accountable.

## Preparation Parkway

## Prepare for an IEP Meeting

### **Prepare for an IEP Meeting**

*If your IEP is within 48 hours and you feel underprepared or were not made aware of the meeting prior, you should consider rescheduling. Make sure your request to reschedule is in writing.*

#### **Communicate With Your Child:**

- Check on their feelings, needs, issues, and concerns surrounding their school experience
- If age appropriate, discuss the purpose of the meeting with your child
- If appropriate, discuss your child's participation in the IEP meeting
- Find out what your child wants to share with the IEP team and how you can help your child to participate

#### **Communicate with Your Child's School:**

- Be sure you understand your child's current performance and achievement
- Schedule any testing or data collection, if necessary, with any providers who have relevant information to add. Solicit the input of any private providers if they are not able to attend in person.
- Clarify information from recent evaluations, obtain answers to outstanding questions, and understand the connections between your child's evaluation information and the proposed IEP
- Notify the school of any individuals you are planning to invite to the IEP meeting, any agenda items you want to be addressed, and ask what the school staff plans to discuss

#### **Gather and Compile:**

- Recent and all other relevant evaluations for the school year
- Your child's current IEP, and compose your thoughts about your child's progress toward goals, objectives, or benchmarks
- Progress reports or report cards
- A list of your concerns, issues, questions, ideas, and your child's strengths
- Documentation to support your request for any new services
- Correspondence notes with school personnel and outside professionals
- Statements from you child regarding their concerns, questions, issues, and goals
- Use all of these to build your **IEP Binder, which you can learn more about in the "Parking Lot"**

#### **Invite:**

- Professionals who know your child and have information and insights to share with the IEP team regarding any issues or areas of concern
- A friend for moral support
- Other outside professionals serving your child
- An advocate, if needed

#### **Make Sure You Have:**

- A translator if you need one
- Been offered a copy of the parental rights (Procedural Safeguards)

## Preparation Parkway

## What to Bring

### What to Bring With You to an IEP Meeting

- Water
- Pens
- Highlighter
- Tissues
- Notes you compiled ahead of time
- Paper or notebook
- A friend / advocate / SLP / family (whoever you feel will be helpful)
- Copy of IEP
- Current evaluations
- List of items YOU need clarification about or want to discuss
- Any additional data or information that you feel provides insight into your child or their special education needs
- Supporting documents (i.e. why frequent and intense therapy is needed, etc.)
- Audio recorder (if allowed and applicable)
- Packet of information about your child/apraxia
- Your IEP Binder (visit the "Parking Lot" in the IEP Roadmap for tips on putting together your binder)

You can download, print, and bring supporting information and resources from Apraxia Kids here:

**Apraxia Kids Parent Portal**  
[parent.apraxia-kids.org](https://parent.apraxia-kids.org)

**Apraxia Kids Brochures & Printables**  
[apraxia-kids.org/brochures-and-printables](https://apraxia-kids.org/brochures-and-printables)

## Preparation Parkway

## Who Attends IEP Meetings

### **Who Attends an IEP Meeting?**

An IEP Team / Meeting consists of:

- Regular Education Teacher (knows the curriculum for your child's grade level)
- Local Education Agency Representative (typically this a principal, vice-principal, special education director or other school district personnel that have the ability to commit to the services on the IEP)
- Parent/(s) (you are the expert on your child and you can also bring whomever you want to bring such as family, friends, etc.)
- Special Education Teacher (they will help create appropriate accommodations, modifications & specially designed instruction)
- Evaluation Interpreter (OT, PT, SLP, School Psychologist, etc. that will explain the evaluations)
- Others as needed who have knowledge about the child

Who else is allowed to attend (or not attend):

- If one of the members noted above asks for permission to be excused from the meeting and the parent approves them not being there, then their attendance is not required.
- You can request a certain teacher(s) attend if you feel their participation is important. The school doesn't have to comply, but they will often work to accommodate the request.
- Additional family members
- A friend of the family
- A health care provider, SLP, OT, learning specialist
- An Advocate  
(You should notify the school out of professional courtesy if you will have an advocate with you.)
- An attorney (You must notify the school if you will have an attorney with you, as they may want their attorney to also be present, and may not move forward with the meeting if their attorney is not present.)
- Anyone else you feel has a relevant or expert role in working with your child
- A teacher's union representative is not allowed to attend



## Preparation Parkway

## Primary Goal of IEP Meeting

### What is the Primary Goal of an IEP Meeting?

The primary goals of an IEP meeting are:

- To review and discuss your child's comprehensive individual evaluation in order to determine their eligibility for special education services.
- To draft an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) if your child is identified as having an eligible disability AND that disability negatively impacts your child's ability to benefit from the public school education program.
- To obtain your informed consent before the school can provide services for the initial IEP.

To address any clarifying questions you may have and state any disagreement, if you were provided with a draft of the IEP ahead of time.

## What are YOUR (parent/guardian) goals and concerns?

### What are YOUR (parent/guardian) goals and concerns?

This is a placeholder for you, as parent/guardian, to remember to share **your** main concerns about your child's development in the educational setting and to present the goals you would like to have included in the IEP. This is your opportunity to make your child's voice heard, so preparation is key. Create a list of everything you want to address in this meeting and make sure that you address everything you want to during the meeting.

**Pay attention  
to these key  
areas of an IEP**

**IEP Roundabout**

**Staff  
Experience  
& Training**

## **Staff Experience & Training**

It is important for school personnel to understand childhood apraxia of speech (CAS) and how they can support your child. The "Staff Experience & Training" section of your IEP is where you can request "education about childhood apraxia of speech" so that school personnel encountering your child will be required to learn more about CAS. This may include classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, special education teachers, classmates, and more. This training should occur at least once per school year. The Apraxia Kids website provides immediate access to a variety of digital and print materials to aid in this education for the school.

Childhood apraxia of speech is a complex speech disability that not all speech-language therapists (SLPs) or other school personnel may be well-versed in. However, SLPs and professionals with a willingness to learn and grow with you are also incredibly valuable.

If your school-based SLP or other personnel needs to further their education on childhood apraxia of speech to provide adequate therapy in school, these Apraxia Kids learning opportunities can be helpful:

### **(These are all clickable hyperlinks)**

[CAS 101: Definitions & Characteristics](#)

[CAS 101: Assessment](#)

[CAS 101: Treatment](#)

[Principles of Motor Learning and Childhood Apraxia of Speech: A \(Hopefully\) Gentle Introduction](#)

[On-Demand Webinar Library](#)

[Virtual Education Series](#)

[School-Based Training](#)

[Lecture Series](#)

[Apraxia Kids National Conference](#)

[Apraxia Kids Intensive Training Boot Camp](#)

### **Education for SLP, Classroom Teacher, and Other Related School Staff**

Apraxia Kids has many resources on their website to share with school staff and students. You can request a "Classroom Kit" to help facilitate advocacy to classmates, select some children's books on apraxia for the students to enjoy, and provide teachers with a short guide on how they can support a child with apraxia.

[Classroom "Be the Voice" Kit](#)

[Classroom Teacher Flyer](#)

[Apraxia Books List](#)

**Pay attention  
to these key  
areas of an IEP**

**IEP Roundabout**

**Goals**

## **Goals**

- Goals must be specific and measurable so everyone knows what is being worked on and when the goal will be achieved.
- Progress towards goals is measured so you can identify when the goal has been achieved.
- They should be created and provided by each service provider (teachers, special educators, and/or therapists).
- It should be clear who is collecting data, what the objective is, by when it is expected to be achieved, where it will be provided (if skills are being targeted in specific situations/locations), why they are important targets, how the data is being collected, as well as how the information is being presented.
- When a goal is achieved, a new one should be set.
- They should be appropriate, meaning they are not too difficult to achieve, or too simple and already mastered.
- Make sure you understand your child's goals and if not, ask the IEP team to help you understand them.

**Pay attention  
to these key  
areas of an IEP**

**IEP Roundabout**

**Services**

## **Services**

Services can include speech/language therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, etc. that help support a child's ability to benefit from and fully participate in the school curriculum. Your child's IEP will describe related services by detailing when, where, how, length of time, and facilitation (one on one, or group setting).

### **Schedule of Services (where, when, how, time, group/1:1, etc.)**

Services are scheduled based on time and frequency. Schools vary greatly in how they prefer to write the schedule for services. For clarity and ease, we recommend showing services written in minutes per week.

### **Appropriate Services for Apraxia**

*Children with significant apraxia of speech often need frequent, intensive, 1:1 speech therapy from a speech-language therapist or very small group therapy in order to benefit from their educational program.*

Speech and language therapy is necessary for children with apraxia of speech to learn to speak clearly and therefore to benefit from their educational program. Frequent and consistent speech therapy can be a vital related service for children with apraxia of speech who receive special education services. Children with apraxia of speech may also require occupational or physical therapy, if the child is evaluated and determined to need the services to participate in their educational program. It is important to remember that it is not a "diagnosis" that determines what services your child should receive. Rather, it is the extent to which their speech difficulty interferes with their ability to benefit from their educational program. We know that many children with apraxia of speech have great difficulty participating in the general curriculum and demonstrating understanding because of their limited speech. For the purposes of their IEP, stay focused on their difficulties. Think about the school day and the opportunities that their non-disabled classmates have to learn merely based on their ability to speak and be understood. All of those moments and opportunities are limited to your child and all of those moments are part of the educational program.

**Pay attention  
to these key  
areas of an IEP**

**IEP Roundabout**

**Modifications**

## **Modifications**

Modifications are changes to the curriculum or requirements in what a student is taught within the curriculum and/or changes in expectations for their learning as compared to their nondisabled classmates. Learning expectations and grading are modified and based specifically on the student's needs and level.

### **Sample Modifications**

- No point deductions for mispronounced words during oral presentations.
- No points deducted for spelling or grammatical issues if the work is written.
- Alternative grading scale options
- Complete different or shorter homework assignments
- Complete an alternate assignment instead of one that requires an oral presentation.
- Be excused from a particular project or assignment such as an oral presentation.
- Give a completion grade and not a grade on appropriateness of assignment due to difficulties with speech/written material.

**Pay attention  
to these key  
areas of an IEP**

## **IEP Roundabout**

## **Accommodations**

### **Accommodations**

Accommodations occur in the general education classroom or school environment (i.e. bathrooms, hallways, cafeteria, playground etc.). They provide the student with tools, technology, visual aids, materials, physical space, a different setting, and additional time to help them access the standard curriculum. Learning expectations and grading are the same as other students.

### **Sample Accommodations for Apraxia**

You know your child and their needs the most intimately so you will be a huge help in determining what accommodations are needed by your child with apraxia. What accommodations would help them? Remember, the term "accommodation" describes a change of environment, curriculum format, or equipment that allows your child to gain access to content and/or complete assigned tasks. Accommodations allow your child to pursue a regular course of study. Your child's accommodations will be specific to them, but here are some accommodations that help other apraxia stars:

- Small groups for areas of concern including reading, writing, etc.
- Talk to text for assignments
- Extra time on tests
- Assistance keeping child on task
- Teacher check-ins in on longer assignments to help keep them on task
- Ability to use a breakout room or quiet space when needed
- Provide a 1:1 paraprofessional for support
- Early release 2x/week for private speech therapy
- Limit interruptions when the student is trying to communicate verbally
- Priority seating near the teacher to lessen the amount of times the student may need to repeat themselves when speaking to the teacher
- Allow for movement breaks to stimulate gross motor skills
- Allow use of adaptability equipment such as pencil grips, fidget tools, graphic organizers, picture prompts (to be used in conjunction with oral prompts), manipulatives for math, etc.
- Teacher will call on the student only when their hand is raised, rather than putting them on the spot
- Having text read out loud for the child, or have access to audiobooks until reading skills improve
- Small group testing where the teacher/paraprofessional/SLP reads the questions/prompts aloud
- Ability to type homework and other assignments if handwriting is a challenge
- Notes from class can be written and provided to the student (by a peer or the teacher)
- Reading/Fluency assessments should not be timed
- Tests given orally can be administered by their SLP
- Reading assessments can be done with their SLP to help facilitate fluency and vocabulary
- Give alternative options for responding orally to reading assessments. Instead of giving a word that rhymes with \_\_\_\_, ask them to point to a picture when given 3 options of a word that rhymes with \_\_\_\_.
- Have AAC device with them at all times for communication
- Does not have to present assignments orally if the child chooses not to
- Don't require the child to read out loud in front of other students
- Break larger assignments and tasks into smaller chunks so they're easier to focus on
- Ability to submit assignments by text or electronically

#### **This is just a sample list.**

The list of possible accommodations is endless as an accommodation should be made based on your child's need and may be very individualized. Remember, an accommodation is a change in environment, format or equipment that helps your child achieve regular education, grade-level material and access to the same opportunities as other students.

**Pay attention  
to these key  
areas of an IEP**

**IEP Roundabout**

**Special  
Factors**

### **Special Factors**

In general, when developing each child's IEP, the IEP team should consider these **four** main things:

1. The child's strengths
2. The parents' concerns for the education of their child
3. The results of the initial or most recent evaluation of the child
4. The academic, developmental, and functional education needs of the child

After addressing these areas, the IEP team should consider if there are any special factors that are causing the student to have issues that "impede their ability to learn, or others to learn, in the educational setting."

There are **five** special factors that need to be taken into consideration:

1. Behavior
2. Limited English Proficiency
3. Blind or Visually Impaired
4. Communications Needs/Deaf or Hard of Hearing
5. Assistive Technology Needs

### **Behavior, LEP/Bilingual, AT, Communication Needs/Deaf/HoH, Blind/Visual Impairment**

The IEP team must determine if any of the following special factors are relevant for the child and, if so, address the factor in the child's IEP.

The [IDEA \(Individuals with Disabilities Education Act\)](#) states:

**(i)** In the case of a child whose behavior impedes the child's learning or that of others, consider the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies, to address that behavior;

**(ii)** In the case of a child with limited English proficiency, consider the language needs of the child as those needs relate to the child's IEP;

**(iii)** In the case of a child who is blind or visually impaired, provide for instruction in Braille and the use of Braille unless the IEP Team determines, after an evaluation of the child's reading and writing skills, needs, and appropriate reading and writing media (including an evaluation of the child's future needs for instruction in Braille or the use of Braille), that instruction in Braille or the use of Braille is not appropriate for the child;

**(iv)** Consider the communication needs of the child, and in the case of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing, consider the child's language and communication needs, opportunities for direct communications with peers and professional personnel in the child's language and communication mode, academic level, and full range of needs, including opportunities for direct instruction in the child's language and communication mode; and

**(v)** Consider whether the child needs assistive technology devices and services."

If any of the above special factors are causing the student to have issues that "impede their ability to learn or others to learn in the educational setting," then special arrangements or accommodations must be made. Or in the case of assistive technology (AT), which includes Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC), give the student better access to their education and better facilitate learning.

## **IEP Meeting Strategies: Collaboration**

It is always best to collaborate with the IEP team as much as possible. A team that works together sharing ideas and common goals will lead to a successful implementation of an IEP. Whenever possible collaboration is recommended.

IEP team collaboration can be promoted by the following:

- Remember that you have a common purpose - your child's education.
- Everyone on the IEP team has a voice and purpose.
- Communicate openly and respectfully.
- Value the team and members.
- Trust the process.
- Practice effective listening skills.
- Use "I" statements when sharing your point of view and listen to others.
- Practice and rehearse what you are going to say prior to the meeting. Rehearsal helps us to relax and be comfortable with our voice and our opinion.

Collaborative strategies to focus on:

- Focus on the problem, not the people.
- Be open to new ideas.
- Ask clarifying questions if you need more information.
- Find common ground.
- Know that it is ok to decide that an issue cannot be solved.
- Pick solutions that both sides agree upon.
- Verbally agree to the next steps



# Strategy Street

## Parent Participation

### **IEP Meeting Strategies: Parent Participation and Professionalism**

As a parent/guardian, you are an equal member of the IEP team (may be called ARD committee or other state-specific term). Make sure to be an ACTIVE team member!

#### **Participation Tips:**

- If you don't understand an acronym, a term, a goal, or anything that is being presented to you, ask for clarification (by law you are entitled to language that is understandable by the general public).  
*- When the school provides written notice, it must use language that's understandable to the general public. The notice must also be in your native language (this includes Braille). Additionally, school staff can sometimes default into terminology and acronyms you may not be familiar with. Make sure to ask for clarification on anything you do not understand.*
- If you don't understand or disagree with why an evaluator is not recommending a service or accommodation after an assessment, express your concerns, ask for more information, and request they reconsider.
- Ask for your opinions, statements, and concerns to be included in the IEP within the written deliberations section at the end.
- If available, ask for the meeting to be recorded.
- If you are not provided with a draft of the IEP/FIE ahead of time for you to review, after they go over the reports and proposed plan, ask to reconvene at a later time so you have time to review and discuss with any specialist or person you feel should have an input.

#### **Professionalism Tips:**

- Try to begin your preparations at least 3 days prior if possible.
- Treat an IEP meetings like a business meeting.
- Be early, at least 15 minutes.
- Dress appropriately.
- Put your phone on silent or turn it off.
- Show that you are prepared for the meeting with your organized notes.
- Don't be afraid to speak up. You're a member of the team.
- They are the experts in their own areas, you are the expert on your child!
- Stay organized, calm, collected, and most importantly, courteous.
- Thank everyone before getting started.
- Don't go first, let the professionals report.
- Don't just answer, pause and then respond.
- Bringing treats never hurts!

#### **Discuss With All Other Team Members:**

- Your child's strengths, needs, and current levels of performance.
- What your child's progress has been in meeting the goals and objectives of their current IEP.
- Accommodations, modifications, and related services needed for your child to benefit from their educational program.
- When and how you and staff members will communicate with your child about their progress.
- How all staff members providing services to your child will have access to the IEP.
- The tasks for which members of the team are responsible (including you and your child).
- When the IEP team will reconvene if additional time is needed.
- Whether there is a need for an Assistive Technology Evaluation.
- Whether there is a need for Extended School Year Services (this is mandatory and MUST be reviewed annually).
- Whether there is a need for Behavioral Intervention.

## Strategy Street

## Negotiation

### **IEP Meeting Strategies: Negotiation**

- Aim high and meet in the middle.
- Make it known that you understand their stance, then provide a rebuttal. For example, "I understand XYZ therapy method has worked for you in the past, but I have researched ZYX method and found that it works well for children working on the "R" sound. What are your thoughts?"
- Set up the next negotiation. Sometimes the negotiation you are in can help you negotiate your next.
- Try their strategy but state that you don't agree. It's ok to make it known you don't agree with the suggested strategy, but put a time limit for evaluation for progress, and if not sufficient, suggest trying your strategy.
- Silence is powerful. Sometimes when being asked what you think, when you don't agree, it can be more powerful to stay silent and let your lack of words express how you feel.

### **Addressing Conflict**

Conflict usually occurs when the process is not well understood; the perception is that the school district is against you; or there is a lack of structure or time. IDEA mandates that the parent be an active member of the IEP team and that the creation of the IEP be a result of efforts of both the parents and the school district.

If you have experienced conflict in the past, jot down reasons why you feel the conflict occurred. If you are feeling this way now, it is best to put your feelings on the table. It is difficult for the IEP team to reach agreement and to move from conflict to collaboration unless your feelings are heard. For most of us, sharing personal feelings is not easy, especially when those feelings involve your child.

**I'm Ready  
for my IEP  
Meeting!**



**You are ready to start the "IEP Process"  
portion of the IEP Roadmap**

**This Way to the  
IEP Process**

**Notice Blvd.**

**Did you  
receive a  
meeting  
notice?**

### **Did you Receive Meeting Notice?**

Prior to your child's IEP meeting you should receive a written notice that provides three important things (listed below). You should receive this notice at least 7 days prior to the meeting date, but you should check with your state to see if it requires more notice. Make sure any correspondence about the meeting is in writing (email is best).

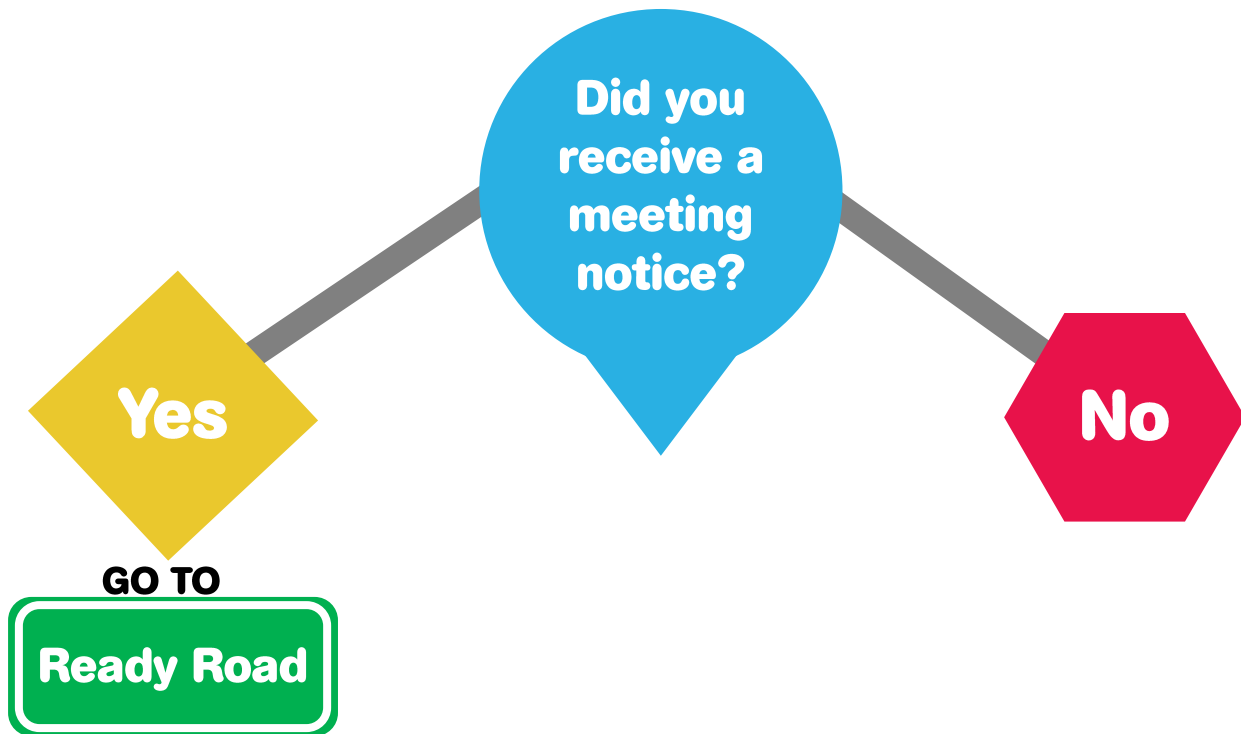
1. The **date** the meeting will occur. This is important as a parent or guardian must be provided the opportunity to attend in order to be in compliance. If you can't attend the proposed date or time, you should contact the school district in writing to let them know that the meeting date doesn't work and ask to reschedule. It can also be helpful to add to your written response that you are eager to participate in your child's IEP meeting. It is best to provide 2 or 3 dates that do work with your schedule to eliminate back and forth scheduling conflicts. Legally, IEP meetings must be scheduled at a mutually agreeable date and time.
2. The **meeting time** will be provided in the notice, as well. If the time is not mutually agreed upon, contact the school district with 2 or 3 alternate times that do work with your schedule. Legally, IEP meetings must be scheduled at a mutually agreeable date and time.
3. The notice will also contain a list of people who will be in **attendance** for the IEP meeting. Usually next to the person's name it will list their role in the meeting. An IEP meeting must have these 5 people attend the meeting:
  - A parent or guardian.
  - Your child's special education teacher (usually the IEP case manager).
  - Your child's general education teacher.
  - An administrator who is able to agree to services provided and the resources necessary.
  - If there has been an evaluation or reevaluation, an expert who is able to understand evaluations present, and answer questions pertaining to them (for example, SLP or OT).

Make sure you feel anyone who might be vital to determining your child's placement is going to be in attendance. If not, request in writing for that person to be included in the meeting. You can also bring with you anyone that you consider helpful to support you during the meeting (for example, your child's pediatrician or a friend).

If you chose not to attend the IEP meeting, the school can hold the meeting without you. Thus, it is important to tell the school in writing if you cannot attend at a scheduled day/time and need them to reschedule the meeting. If you do nothing, the school can move forward without you.

**This Way to the  
IEP Process**

**Notice Blvd.**



**NO! I did not receive meeting notice.**

If you do not receive the IEP Meeting notice within 7 days of the meeting, you should request to receive it in writing at least 7 days before the meeting. This allows planning time for you to arrange your schedule to attend. Email can be a quick and efficient way to receive this notice. Putting the written notice in your student's backpack is not the most reliable. If you receive it within the 7 days prior to the meeting, it is up to you to decide to attend the meeting or request that it be rescheduled.

On the next page is a letter template that you can personalize.

# **NO! I did not receive meeting notice.**

Your Name  
Your Street Address  
Your City, State, Zip

Date

Staff Name (if known, otherwise use title only)  
Title/Director of Special Education/Program Coordinator  
School District  
School Street Address  
School City, State, Zip

Dear Name (if known, otherwise use title only),

I am writing with regards to my child's IEP meeting regarding the program for my student, Child's First and Last Name, (DOB: 00-00-0000). So that I can arrange my schedule to attend this important meeting, I would like to request that I receive written notification at least 7 days prior to the meeting through email at \_\_\_\_\_. I would also like to ensure that I am prepared for the meeting and would like to request the following item(s) for review prior to the meeting:

- My child's most updated progress / evaluations / report cards
- My child's most updated data for the current goals set forth
- Any other documents you wish to review in the IEP meeting
- My child's present levels
- Any district wide or statewide assessments

I have attached documentation from *(list any outside providers who provided letters or reports and highlight any specific recommendations from those attached documents)*.

I appreciate your help on behalf of my student, Child's Name. If you have any questions, please call me at (telephone number) or email me at (email address).

Sincerely,  
Your Name

CC: (Names and titles of anyone else you give copies to)

## Ready Road

## Who must attend the IEP meeting?

### Who MUST attend an IEP meeting? (IEP Team)

- A parent or guardian of the student (The parent must be invited to attend and reasonable efforts made to get them to attend. But, if the parent does not respond to an invitation they can proceed without the parent.)
- A minimum of one of the student's general education teachers
- A minimum of one of the students special education teachers or service providers
- A school district representative who has the power to approve services and resources (LEA) (Often the school principal)
- An individual who either conducted the assessments of the student or is qualified to interpret them
- The student when appropriate

If one of the members noted above asks for permission to be excused from the meeting and the parent approves them not being there, then their attendance is not required.

If you notice that someone indicated above is not listed or excused, you can request in writing that they attend. Below is a sample letter you can personalize and send to the school district requesting the attendance of missing individuals.

On the next page is a letter template that you can personalize.

# Someone is missing from the IEP Team meeting.

Your Name  
Your Street Address  
Your City, State, Zip

Date

Staff Name (if known, otherwise use title only)  
Title/Director of Special Education/Program Coordinator  
School District  
School Street Address  
School City, State, Zip

Dear Name (if known, otherwise use title only),

I am writing with regards to my child's upcoming IEP meeting regarding the program for my student, Child's First and Last Name, (DOB: 00-00-0000). I would like to request that the following individuals attend the meeting:

Name, Title  
Name, Title

I appreciate your help on behalf of my student, Child's Name. If you have any questions, please call me at (telephone number) or email me at (email address).

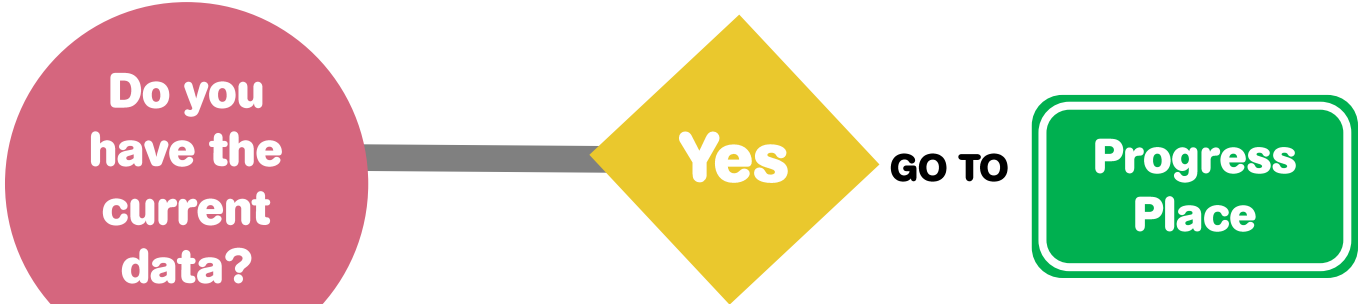
Sincerely,  
Your Name  
CC: (Names and titles of anyone else you give copies to)

**Ready Road**

**Current IEP Content**

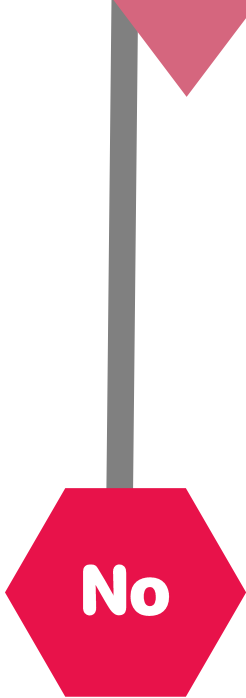
**Current IEP Content**

Review your most recent IEP as it will provide you with the current goals and services. Understand what they are, if they are still appropriate, and how you feel your child is progressing towards those goals since that will be up for discussion at the meeting.



**Do you have the most current data?**

The most recent data, including all reports showing data collected on all current goals since the last IEP meeting, as well as any new evaluation reports, should be provided to the parent prior to the meeting so that they can be reviewed.



**NO! I do not have the most current data.**

If you do not have the most current data, it is highly recommended that you request it prior to meeting with the IEP team. This will allow yourself time to review and research any questions you may have. Not seeing this information until you are in a meeting will put you on the spot to review in such a short time frame which will put you at a disadvantage. Here is a sample request letter you can personalize and submit to request current data.

On the next page is a letter template that you can personalize.



# **NO! I do not have the most current data!**

Your Name  
Your Street Address  
Your City, State, Zip

Date

Staff Name (if known, otherwise use title only)  
Title/Director of Special Education/Program Coordinator  
School District  
School Street Address  
School City, State, Zip

Dear Name (if known, otherwise use title only),

I am writing with regards to my child's upcoming IEP meeting regarding the program for my student, Child's First and Last Name, (DOB: 00-00-0000). I would like to ensure that I am prepared for the meeting and would like to request the following item(s) for review prior to the meeting:

- My child's most updated progress / evaluations / report cards
- My child's most updated data for the current goals set forth
- Any other documents you wish to review in the IEP meeting
- My child's present levels
- Any district wide or statewide assessments

I have attached documentation from *(list any outside providers who provided letters or reports and highlight any specific recommendations from those attached documents)*.

I appreciate your help on behalf of my student, Child's Name. If you have any questions, please call me at (telephone number) or email me at (email address).

Sincerely,  
Your Name  
CC: (Names and titles of anyone else you give copies to)

# Progress Place

Is your child's progress satisfactory?

## Is your child's progress satisfactory?

How do you measure if progress is satisfactory? How do I know if my child is making progress?

The IDEA law at 34 CFR 300.320 (a)(3) requires that every IEP include a description of:  
How the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured, and when periodic reports on the progress the child is making toward meeting the annual goals (such as through the use of quarterly or other periodic reports, concurrent with the issuance of report cards) will be provided.

A goal should be created using the "SMART" criteria - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-oriented, Time-limited. When the IEP team uses this format to create student goals, measuring progress is much simpler.

It is important to have the data collected to determine where the student is prior to beginning working towards the goal to establish a baseline. If a child's baseline is that they can correctly say the vowel "o" sound correctly in CVC words with consonant sounds in their repertoire 30% of the time prior to working on the goal, then the end goal might be appropriately set at 90%. Benchmarks can be set up that identify smaller steps to meeting that 90% goal such as producing the "o" vowel sound in CV syllables such as "go" or "bow" or producing the "o" vowel sound correctly in CVC words with consonants in their repertoire 50% of the time. Progress can easily be measured at any given time to determine how much, if any, progress has been made towards the goal.

You must look at progress in both the micro and macro setting as you may have multiple goals and some goals will show more progress than others. It is important to look at each goal individually but also to look at the overall growth the student has made or not. Benchmarking is the key to determine if advancements have been made; goal targets are used to determine if a goal is achieved successfully.

## Is your child's progress satisfactory?



**GO TO**

**Goal Grove**



**GO TO**

**Revision Route**

# Revision Route

Is the school willing to work with you?

## Is the school willing to work with you?

There are many steps you can take to ensure the school provides the correct IEP services and accommodations for your child. Sometimes you have to remember to hold the school accountable. Hopefully you have a school district that is showing effort to work towards your concerns and showing a concern for your child's education plan. If you do not feel the school has your child's best interest and is showing they are no longer looking to make changes to set up the child for success it may be in your best interest to review your options moving forward.

## Is the school willing to work with you?



**GO TO**

**Goal Grove**



**GO TO**

**Struggle Street**

# Goal Grove

Was progress on current goals appropriate?

## Are your child's current goals appropriate?

Goals should be achievable, not too easy, and not too hard. They should represent the short- and long-term objectives. You should be able to look at the past goals and see where your child has mastered that skill with a certain percentage of accuracy according to the provider. If you do not feel that your child is progressing appropriately, examine the goals. Always remember to make sure your goals are measurable.

A goal should be created using the "SMART" criteria:  
*Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Relevant, and Timely.*  
When this format is used to create student goals, measuring progress is much simpler.

**S** - Should clearly describe what is the skill the child is learning or developing, so everyone knows what is being worked on.

**M** - Always remember to make sure the progress of your goals are measurable through data.

**A** - Goals should be achievable, not too easy, and not too hard, starting from the child's present levels (PLAAFP) of the child.

**R** - Unique and individualized to your child's specific needs, as appropriate.

**T** - They should represent the short-term and long-term objectives. You should be able to look at the past goals and see where your child has mastered that skill with a certain percentage of accuracy according to the provider.

If you do not feel that your child is progressing appropriately, you should examine if the goals meet the above criteria or if you need to work with your IEP team and create new ones.

## Was progress on current goals appropriate?



**GO TO**

**Modify Motorway**



**GO TO**

**Struggle Street**



**Modify  
Motorway**



**Modify  
Services**

## **Modify Services**

Make sure that the services your child is receiving are appropriate and discuss adding/removing any as needed.

Services can include speech/language therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, etc. that help support a child's ability to benefit from and fully participate in the school curriculum. Your child's IEP will describe related services by detailing when, where, how, length of time, and facilitation (1:1 or group). Services are scheduled based on time and frequency. Schools vary greatly in how they prefer to write the schedule for services. For clarity and ease, we recommend showing services written in minutes per week.

**GO TO**



**Appropriate Ave.**

## Struggle Street

Parents  
can  
disagree

### Parents Can Disagree With and Not Sign the IEP

- Some state regulations include a provision for parents to sign the IEP to indicate their consent in writing. This may happen at the end of an IEP meeting or after you have been given a copy for your review and signature. However, many states do not require a parent or guardian to sign an IEP that is not the initial IEP because the federal law and regulations do not require this.
- When you give consent, it means that you understand and agree in writing for the school to carry out the activity for which your consent is sought. It is important that you understand that the consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time before the activity takes place.
- If your child's progress is not satisfactory and the school is not willing to make revisions and work with you in order for your child to achieve their goals set out in their IEP, you are entitled by law to disagree.
- You can record your disagreement by not providing consent (not signing the IEP) or by having the ARD/IEP committee include a written statement of the basis for the disagreement.
- Check your state's Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal or IEP Process to learn what your state requires in order to properly record your disagreement.

All IEP's have a summary section which should provide a recap of what was discussed in the IEP meeting, what was agreed to, and what was disagreed on. This page should act as a short summary and provide a good picture of what occurred. Although this section is narrated by the school district, it is important for this section to provide an accurate version from all sides. Make sure that if you as a parent disagreed or your suggestions were not taken into the decision-making process, that they are noted here. If they are not noted, email the IEP case manager and ask for an addendum to be made and provide the exact wording you would like added. For example, "parent believes individual speech therapy is needed, and district declined and is going to provide speech in a small group setting."

#### **If Agreement Has Not Been Reached**

- Remember that you do not have to sign and agree to anything at this meeting.
- Ask to schedule another meeting.
- Ask any questions that you need to so that you understand why an agreement was not reached.
- Request "prior written notice." This is a written document that details what the school is proposing or refusing to do, why, and what information it used to reach the decision.

If the parent disagrees with the school district's assessment findings or recommendations, then they can request an IEE. An Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) is an evaluation that is performed by an outside expert when the parent disagrees with the evaluation and recommendations performed by the school district personnel. The parent can request the district set up an IEE. The expert must not be employed by the school district who is responsible for providing a public education of the child to be tested. The school must either set up the evaluation or file for due process if the parent requests the evaluation. The school is responsible for all costs associated with the evaluation.

### **Continue to work with the team to receive the help your child needs.**

It is always best to collaborate with the IEP team as much as possible. A team that works together sharing ideas and common goals will lead to a successful implementation of an IEP. Whenever possible collaboration is recommended. However, sometimes it's more challenging to get both sides on the same page and find a resolution. Here are some tips and suggestions to help you continue working with the IEP team to see if a mutual solution can be reached.

#### **Collaboration**

- Remember that you have a common purpose - your child's education.
- Everyone on the IEP team has a voice and purpose.
- Communicate openly and respectfully.
- Value the team and members.
- Trust the process.
- Practice effective listening skills.
- Use "I" statements when sharing your point of view and listen to others.
- Practice and rehearse what you are going to say prior to the meeting. Rehearsal helps us to relax and be comfortable with our voice and our opinion.
- Focus on the problem, not the people.
- Be open to new ideas.
- Ask clarifying questions if you need more information.
- Find common ground.
- Know that it is ok to decide that an issue cannot be solved.
- Pick solutions that both sides agree upon.
- Verbally agree to the next steps.

#### **Negotiation**

- Aim high and meet in the middle.
- Make it known that you understand their stance, then provide a rebuttal. For example, "I understand XYZ therapy method has worked for you in the past, but I have researched ZYX method and found that it works well for children working on the "R" sound. What are your thoughts?"
- Set up the next negotiation. Sometimes the negotiation you are in can help you negotiate your next one.
- Try their strategy but state that you don't agree. It's ok to make it known you don't agree with the suggested strategy, but put a time limit for evaluation for progress, and if not sufficient, suggest trying your strategy.
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If you have experienced conflict in the past, jot down reasons why you feel the conflict occurred. If you are feeling this way now, it is best to put your feelings on the table. It is difficult for the IEP team to reach agreement and to move from conflict to collaboration unless your feelings are heard. For most of us, sharing personal feelings is not easy, especially when those feelings involve your child.



### **Continue to work with the team (continued)**

#### **Parent Participation**

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Make sure to be an ACTIVE team member!

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#### **Discuss With All Other Team Members**

- Your child's strengths, needs, and current levels of performance.
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**Struggle Street**



**Contact  
Director of  
Special  
Education**

**Contact the Director of Special Education for your School District**

Sometimes when you feel the IEP team is not “hearing” you or taking your input seriously enough, you need to take a different approach. Every case is different and needs to be treated as such. As parents/ caregivers, if the IEP team is not valuing your input, you have a couple of options. You are always allowed to obtain an advocate (free or paid) or hire an attorney to help you navigate the process. You also have the option to contact a superior to the IEP team. This superior might be the Director of Special Education or Superintendent (all school districts are structured differently). Oftentimes, contacting and setting up a meeting with them directly can provide an alternative approach when the IEP team is not proving to be effective. Although there is no protection provided by law that requires them to work with you, being diplomatic in the approach can provide the district with an option to avoid a legal battle, as well.

# Struggle Street

Are you still struggling with the school?

## If you're still struggling with the school...

If you find yourself still struggling to come to an agreement with the school on what should be included in the IEP, don't worry, you are not alone! Although it would be preferred to be on the same page, there are many times this does not occur. If you can first identify the point of disagreement (is it the type of therapy, time, everything, etc.), this will help you to determine which direction you need to take. Depending on the disagreement and distance apart, sometimes it is necessary to have an advocate or an attorney that can represent your child as they understand the laws in a deeper context. Do your research by asking people in your community who they have used or heard of, use social media, set up appointments to meet, and discuss your case and their approach.

The likely next step would be Due Process, which is a procedural safeguard for parents to use. It is the legal process of disagreement. If you progress to Due Process with an attorney or advocate, they will walk you through the process.

## Are you still struggling with the school?



**GO TO**

**Advocacy Avenue**



**GO TO**

**Goal Grove**

## Advocacy Avenue

Learn what  
your state  
offers

### **Learn What Your State Offers**

If conventional IEP meetings are not working, the federal laws that provide protections to families have options. You will need to review your state specific laws, as well. This is often a good time to involve an advocate or attorney who will be more suited to providing individual recommendations. States often allow for mediation that can provide an agreeable solution for both parents and school districts with a professional mediator to help facilitate. If all else fails, you can file for due process and have a hearing officer hear the merits of the case and provide a ruling per the law. Due Process is a procedural safeguard for parents to use, which is the legal process of disagreement. It is VERY important for parents to keep accurate, up-to-date documentation of the IEP; your agreements and disagreements, and written evidence that supports your point of view that the IEP is not appropriate for your child's special education needs. If you choose to go to a due process hearing, the hearing officer will review your documentation and the school's documentation to make their decision.

## Advocacy Avenue

## Advocate vs. Attorney

### Should you consider an advocate or lawyer?

Both are *optional* ways to continue working with the school if you need more assistance. Here's an overview of the difference between an advocate and an attorney, and how they both can support you.

### Advocate

- Provides more guidance than representation
- Typically costs less than an attorney, or even free of charge
- No credentials are needed, anyone can call themselves an advocate
- Able to participate in IEP meetings but not always allowed in Due Process

### Both

- Negotiate with the school on your behalf
- Write (or help you write) letters to the school on your behalf
- Review IEP or 504 plans
- Attend IEP or 504 meetings
- Give you information on your rights
- Provide advice on strategy
- Recommend specialists, evaluators, and providers

### Attorney

- Provides professional legal representation
- Can be rather expensive with no guarantee
- Licensed
- Experienced
- Can provide legal representation throughout the IEP process and Due Process

## Finding the Right Advocate or Attorney for You

### How to find the right advocate or attorney:

- Ask other parents in the school district
- If you are working with or know learning disability specialists, ask them
- Ask school district personnel—the district is required to maintain a list of special education attorneys and other advocacy resources for parents
- Contact your state special education advisory commission. IDEA requires each state to have a special education commission, composed of educators and parents, which advises the state about special education. The commissioners should have numerous special education contacts.
- Contact your state department of education and ask for referrals
- Contact a nearby Parent Training and Information Center (PTI)
- Contact a local disability rights advocacy organization
- Contact a low-cost or free legal clinic, such as legal aid—while most offices focus on common civil issues (such as domestic disputes or evictions), some offices do special education work for low-income people

### What to consider when choosing the right advocate or attorney:

- Years of experience
- Specific experience with special education and learning disabilities
- Experience with your particular legal issue (such as a due process hearing)
- Knowledge of special education law and the [IEP process](#) (or [Section 504 complaints](#), if relevant)
- Experience with your school district
- Meet with more than one person, as general style is important—is the attorney confrontational or cooperative (for example, does the attorney like mediation or think it's a waste of time?)
- References (you may ask for references when you first call)
- Fees and their structure of payments
- What do they feel is the strength of your case
- Ask for them to explain the process
- Evaluate your documents and potential witnesses
- Tell you if additional supportive material is needed
- Estimate the cost of hiring an attorney for due process or beyond
- Estimate how long your case may take
- Provide insights into school district personnel, particularly if the attorney has worked with the district before
- Consider the cost vs. benefit of hiring the attorney to represent you versus using the attorney as an adviser.



Continue to



Parking



**Appropriate  
Avenue**



**Create  
New  
Goals**

## **Create New Goals Based on Present Levels**

Terms to know:

PLOP - Present Level of Performance

PLAAFP - Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

PLEP - Florida acronym

“Present Levels” detail where the child is currently functioning academically in all areas, and comprehensively describe a child’s abilities, performance, strengths, and needs so that the IEP team can develop appropriate goals and educational placement. Placement should be based on objective observations and/or test data and written by the school personnel who are working with the child or who tested the child.

Parents can participate in writing the “Present Levels” by sharing any relevant information such as strengths, weaknesses, test results, diagnoses, parental input, etc. At a minimum, the parents should review this section of the IEP documentation for accuracy so that appropriate goals, objectives, and educational placement can be written. The more comprehensive they are, the more solid recommendations will be.

**Appropriate Avenue**

**Is the new IEP appropriate for your child?**

**Is the IEP appropriate for your child?**

When evaluating the services, modifications, and accommodations being provided in the IEP, it is important that they represent *your* child's needs. Your IEP should be individualized and specific to your child. Revisit the "IEP Roundabout" page in the IEP Fundamentals part of this IEP Roadmap if you need more information and ideas on appropriate services and accommodations.

**Is the new IEP appropriate for your child?**



**GO TO**

**Approval Place**



**GO TO**

**Struggle Street**

# Approval Place

Did you review and agree to the new IEP?

## Did you review and agree to the new IEP?

The federal special education laws and regulations do not require a child’s parent or guardian to sign the IEP. Parents or guardians are required to give informed consent before the school can provide services in the initial IEP, but not subsequent IEPs.

- Some state regulations include a provision for parents to sign the IEP to indicate their consent. Many states do not, because the federal law and regulations do not require this.
- Other states require written consent to implement IEPs on a year-to-year basis.

Check your state special education regulations to learn what your state requires. Remember, you will find your state regulations on the website for [your state Department of Education](#).

## Did you review and agree to the new IEP?



**GO TO**

**Parking**



**GO TO**

**Struggle Street**



## **Your IEP Binder**

Being prepared for your next IEP meeting relies on your ability to stay organized from your most recent and past meetings. Keeping an organized IEP binder will allow you to be more prepared and to better track progression over a given time period. It will also convey professionalism to the IEP team that you will not allow things to fall through the cracks. Lastly, if you ever need to hire an advocate or attorney it will be their greatest tool to reviewing your case.

You can organize your IEP binder any way you feel that is helpful to you. There is no wrong way, as long as you are organizing and reviewing the content prior to the IEP meetings. Here is a recommendation on how to organize a binder.

- Use a 3 ring hole punched binder
- Use tab dividers (including folders in each section)
  1. **Communication**
    - This section should include all correspondence with the school including all mail, email, written correspondence, and notes of verbal discussions.
    - It is also helpful if you have a directory of people who are involved in your child's education and IEP meetings with contact information.
  2. **Evaluations**
    - Requests for evaluation
    - Consent to evaluate
    - Evaluations and recommendations
  3. **IEP Meetings**
    - A copy of your rights as you will be offered this each meeting, and you can easily show you are prepared and have them.
    - Prior written notice (written notice provided by school of any proposed changes)
    - IEP, with your notes
  4. **Report Cards/Progress Reports**
    - The federal Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) requires the parent/guardian to receive updates on progression of IEP goals. Any progress reports should be filed here.
    - Report Cards
  5. **Sample Work**
    - Use this section to store classroom work that shows progress or concerns. This section should be updated monthly to accurately keep track of a child's progression or lack of.
  6. **Behavior**
    - Include a copy of the school's code of conduct
    - If your child has a Behavior Intervention Plan
    - Document any behavior issues, discipline, etc.
- Organize your binder chronologically
- It is best to organize your binder with the most recent in the front of each section and progressing to the earlier years in the back. This will prove to be the easiest to navigate when looking for information.
- In the front of the binder, it is recommended to have a checklist that will serve as your index and organization guide. [Understood.org provides a free downloadable guide.](https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/child-learning-disorders/individualized-education-program-iep/creating-an-iep-binder)

# Parking

**Follow Up Every 30 Days**

## Follow Up Every 30 Days to Ensure the IEP is Being Followed

Parents should stay on top of the IEP to make sure that it is being followed and oversee that progress is being made regularly. Check in with the school/IEP Team each month for progress reports or other updates to help you stay informed. The earlier you can identify any current or potential problems, the quicker you can address them with the IEP Team.

Track your IEP Goals throughout the year with an IEP Goal Tracker like the sample below:

Goal	Present Level of Performance (PLOP)	Benchmarks & Small Steps	Observations & Questions for School
Child will correctly say the vowel "o" sound correctly in CVC words 90% of the time.	Recent data shows that the child currently says the vowel "o" sound correctly in CVC words 30% of the time.	Produce the "o" vowel sound in CV syllables such as "go" or "bow" or produce the "o" vowel sound correctly in CVC words with consonants 50% of the time.	Why is this sound more difficult than others?  What can I do at home to help improve this skill?

**Importance of Communication**

## The Importance of Communication

You are likely going to have a long, ongoing relationship with your child's school and IEP Team so it's important to maintain open and positive lines of communication. Consider volunteering with the school to give back and be present with the school you're working with. If your school-based SLP provides you with at-home speech practice homework, continue that work at home with your apraxia star. Under the IDEA law it is required schools provide parents with proper training to provide appropriate home practice.

**REMEMBER! You can call an IEP meeting any time!**

## REMEMBER! You can call an IEP meeting any time!

As a parent, you have rights that are provided through what are known as "Procedural Safeguards" that fall under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). The federal regulations for IDEA 2004 include a section (Subpart E) called Procedural Safeguards. Under these protections you have the right to call for an IEP meeting anytime you feel it is necessary. These same safeguards also provide you the right to fully participate in the IEP meeting.

Also, make sure to take time to decompress and process after an IEP meeting! Those days can be long, exhausting, and emotionally draining!

# Parking

You made it to the end! Now you have all the information you need to help create a strong IEP. Revisit the Apraxia Kids IEP Roadmap as often as needed. We hope you feel empowered to be your child's best advocate!

## **Additional Resources**

Want to keep learning? Check out these additional resources and supports!

### **Apraxia Kids Resources**

[Lecture Series](#)

[National Conference](#)

[Parent Portal](#)

[Resource Guides](#)

[Virtual Education Series](#)

[Webinar Portal](#)

### **Apraxia Kids Supports**

[Facebook Support Groups](#)

[Find Hope, Give Hope](#)

[SLP Directory](#)

[Walk for Apraxia](#)

### **Apraxia Kids Webinars**

["Advocating for Your Child"](#) by Sarah Bald, PsyD

["Talking Advocacy with Four Parents"](#) by Lou LaVecchia, Gary Fernando, Jeff Mills, and Michelle Leigh

["Creating IEP Goals for Children with CAS and Other Communication Needs"](#) by Sue Caspari, MA, CCC-SLP

["What's in Your IEP?"](#) by Nicole Newman, MEd and Lynn Carahaly, MA, CCC-SLP

### **Other Websites**

[Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)

[Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#)

[US Department of Education](#)



Apraxia Kids  
IEP Roadmap

