



Office of Student Services

Supporting students, families, and schools

IEP TOOLKIT

Helping WCSD Families of Children with Disabilities
Become Knowledgeable, Prepared, and Empowered
Partners in the IEP Process

Our Mission:

The Office of Student Services builds strong relationships with students, families, colleagues, and community partners with a focus on transition planning, college readiness skills, and graduation. This is achieved through ongoing communication with all stakeholders, providing resources for a continuum of opportunities for students, and ensuring students have resiliency and a strong voice through advocacy to achieve their highest potential.

Adapted for the Washoe County School District, 2018
Original Document from Gretchen H. Carroll, M.A., 2013

The Jane and Richard Thomas Center for Down Syndrome Division of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics
Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center
Revised May 9, 2018



This toolkit was written for you.



https://youtu.be/LYa6mwU7V_A

The special education system can be confusing, frustrating, and overwhelming. The Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) is the written document that outlines your child's specific educational program. It is common for you to feel insecure and unprepared during your child's IEP meeting. Surrounded by teachers, administrators, and special education personnel, your voice can get lost. This toolkit was written to help you find your voice in IEP meetings. **Family Tip: In each section of the toolkit, you can use your mobile device to scan the QR Code or follow the web link to a video that will provide more information about each topic.**

As family members of a child with special needs, you come to IEP meetings with love for your child and a commitment to his or her education. You also need to come with:

- a strong understanding of the IEP itself
- detailed information about your child's specific needs
- an understanding of appropriate goals

This IEP Toolkit is designed to help you gather the necessary information. Focused preparation is essential to the development of an effective educational plan, and a strong IEP leads to improved educational success for your child. The purpose of the IEP Toolkit is to help parents and caregivers guide conversations during the IEP meeting with all members of the IEP team. The Washoe County School District believes parents should be an integral part of the IEP meeting and feel that their voice is being heard throughout. This document is not an educational record but rather a tool to enhance conversations about a student's academic, behavioral, and social emotional needs. The IEP team will make final decisions about what is included in an IEP.

What is an IEP?



<https://youtu.be/13r-PBD-vo>

Before you begin:

The IEP is driven by your child's specific educational needs. In order to fully understand what those needs are, it is extremely helpful to gather information that answers the question: "What do I know about my child, his skills, and his progress?" To answer that question, gather as much meaningful information as you can about your child. Keep this information in close proximity as you complete the Toolkit as it will guide your planning. You will notice throughout the toolkit that there are QR codes embedded in the document. A QR code can be scanned by your phone or other mobile device to view videos that further explain specific sections in the IEP. There will also be a clickable link below the code if you do not have a QR code reader.

Action Step: Gather these items

- Past IEPs
- Progress Reports
- School Evaluations
- Therapy Reports (Speech, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Behavior)
- Report Cards/State Testing Results
- Work Samples
- Independent Evaluations (private Speech, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, etc. from outside evaluators)
- Medical Information

Even if you are unable to gather a lot of information, continue to move through the Toolkit. Your personal knowledge of your child will still allow you to prepare for a strong IEP meeting.

How to make this toolkit work for you:

The toolkit is structured very much like your child's IEP. To help you prepare for your child's IEP in a purposeful way, important sections of the IEP will be discussed and you will learn helpful ways to prepare for each section. You will have the opportunity to write down specific information to be considered for your child's IEP. Your completed toolkit can then be used as a guide as you engage in your child's IEP meeting, increasing your knowledge, preparedness, and confidence.

The Individualized Education Program (IEP)

WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM (IEP)				
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION			STUDENT ID. FakeAC01	DATE 11/29/2017
PRINT STUDENT'S NAME (LAST)	(FIRST)	(M.I.)	DATE OF BIRTH	GENDER
Student	Amy		10/11/2005	Female
ADDRESS			CITY STATE ZIP PHONE	
CURRENT SCHOOL Academy For Career Education		GRADE LEVEL 7	ZONED SCHOOL	
PRIMARY LANGUAGE	ENGLISH PROFICIENCY SKILLS	FEDERAL PLACEMENT CODE B9	FEDERAL ETHNICITY CODE	
PARENT/GUARDIAN/SURROGATE INFORMATION			(LAST) Student	(FIRST) Mother
HOME PHONE	WORK PHONE	CELL PHONE	EMAIL	
PRIMARY LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME		INTERPRETER OR OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS NEEDED No		
EMERGENCY CONTACT (LAST)	(FIRST)	EMERGENCY CONTACT PHONE		
Student	Student			
EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT				
11/29/2017-7/31/2018 Regular Class 40-79%				
8/1/2018-11/28/2018 Regular Class 40-79%				
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY				
The student has been determined eligible under the following eligibility category(ies): Specific Learning Disability				
INITIATION/DURATION DATES				
Services delineated on the IEP, unless otherwise indicated, will initiate 11/29/2017 and have an anticipated duration through 11/28/2018.				
MEETING INFORMATION				
MEETING DATE:	11/29/2017	The next required annual review will occur on/or before: 11/28/2018		
MEETING TYPE:	IEP Annual Meeting	Current Evaluation Date:		
Meeting Considerations:				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consider assessment waivers.				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consider placement to/from Alternative Education Program.				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other:				
Develop an Annual Plan				
FakeAC01, 11/29/2017 Page 1 of 11				

IEP Section 1: Student Demographics, Meeting Information, and Special Education Program Eligibility

This page will list information about your student (name, school, date of birth parent information, etc.) and specific information about the student's eligibility for special education services, which includes the specific eligibility category your student qualifies for and when special education services will begin.

Eligibility does not determine Educational Placement. Educational placement is determined by the IEP team when considering the individual needs of the student. The location of the program is determined by the Washoe County School District.

The meeting information for the annual IEP is located on the bottom of the page.



<https://youtu.be/W6Gac5vVWH4>

Family Tip: The meeting place should be scheduled collaboratively at a place and time that is convenient for both you and the school.

Vision Statement (Hopes & Dreams)

The Vision Statement is not specifically in the IEP but can be extremely important information for IEP teams to use when outlining goals, benchmarks, and accommodations and modifications for students. The purpose of this section is to give family members, as well as the individual with a disability, an important opportunity to share their vision for the future and their hopes and dreams for their child. Take a few moments to consider your future desires for your child. If your child is able to discuss this with you, ask your child what he/she hopes to do in the future and incorporate your child’s vision in the Vision Statement planning section. You might even record your child’s response so you can transcribe it for the IEP team. For further information on Transitioning from Pre-k to Graduation and Beyond, the National PTA website can be accessed here: <https://www.pta.org/home/family-resources/Special-Education-Toolkit/Special-Education-From-Pre-K-to-Graduation-and-Beyond>



Action Step: Write your ideas below and share them with the team at your IEP

When shaping your future planning statement, consider:

- your vision for your child’s academic levels
- communication abilities
- behavior
- attention
- independence
- future education
- employment

Vision Statement

Transition Service Needs



If your child is 14 years of age or older, the IEP will include transition services needs which is a description of the services that will be needed to help your child transition from school to postsecondary education, employment, and/or independent living. When completing this section, you should consider college education, work experience, vocational training, etc., as well as your child’s specific interests, talents, skills, and needs.

Present Levels Section



<https://youtu.be/gMRS4Pv9eYs>

The purpose of the Present Levels section is to provide a detailed description of where your child is *today*. This is one of the most important sections of the IEP, as it provides the reference point from which the IEP goals and services are written. You will see information about your child’s strengths, effects of the disability, progress toward previous annual goals and assessment information. There will be information in each section about your child’s current progress and skills as it applies to your child.

There are five areas that will be addressed in this section of the IEP:

- Curriculum and Learning Environment (assessments relating to academic areas including: pre-academic, math, reading, writing, study skills, progress towards goals and objectives, consideration of most recent eligibility)
- Socio-Emotional Behavior (interaction with peers, managing emotions, solving problems)
- Independent Functioning (life skills such as bathroom and hygiene skills, food preparation, laundry, following visual schedules.)
- Health Care (health condition, diagnosis, and/or required medication)
- Communication (speech services if needed)

Reflecting on your knowledge of your child, consider your child’s present levels of performance in the areas listed below. You might consider what you have observed at home and in the classroom, your child’s work samples, and discussions with teachers.

Action Step: Write down your observations, ideas, and concerns.

Make sure you consider tasks your child *can* do as well as tasks your child is struggling with or has not mastered. The goal is to organize and clarify your knowledge about your child so you will be able to help develop strong IEP goals.

Observe your child reading (What do you notice about your child’s reading skills? Do they seem to understand what they read? Do they read fast or slow? Are they able to read common words like: said, when, the. Do they seem to get stuck on certain words?)

Writing (Consider your child’s ability to write letters, spell, write a sentence, communicate their ideas in writing, write paragraphs or stories. What do you notice?)

Math (Does your child notice and make use of patterns (counting or using place value), can they recognize and put numbers in order, are they able to read and make sense of a math problem, can they explain their thinking and/or show it with a model or appropriate strategy, are their answers accurate?)

Language (Consider your child’s ability to gesture/sign/speak, express themselves and their needs. Is their speech understandable? How is their social communication? Are they able to follow directions, answer questions?)

Attention (consider ability to focus and maintain attention, time on task, transitioning from task to task, impulsivity, and distractibility)

Behavior/Social Skills (consider response to teacher direction, following rules, conduct, frustration tolerance, interaction with peers, and solving social problems)

Gross Motor/Fine Motor (consider walking, running, movement up/down stairs, balance, strength, pencil skills, scissor skills, buttoning, and zippering)

Additional Areas of Importance (feeding, toileting skills, use of technology, etc.)

Family Tip: How to use the information you gathered: bring the above notes with you to the IEP meeting. As the team reads and/or discusses the Present Levels of Performance section, share your notes.

If you feel the Present Levels section is not accurate or complete, ask that your information be added. It is important to note that your information may contradict what the school has stated. For example, the school may state, “Sarah is able to make 3-word utterances” when you have observed Sarah to make 5-word utterances. In that case, it is appropriate for you to ask that the school add the statement: “In the home environment, Sarah is able to make 5- word sentences.” In this way, your voice is heard and your specific knowledge of your child’s abilities is reflected in the IEP.

Measurable Annual Goals and Benchmarks/Objectives Section



<https://youtu.be/XP97yU46FEk>

Annual Goals:

The purpose of the Annual Goals section is to create a list of goals that will meet your child’s specific needs. Annual goals set the course for your child’s special education plan.

Family Tip: Goals should be focused, measurable, and encourage independence and learning.

What makes a solid IEP Goal and/or Benchmark?

Annual Goals are designed to identify the larger concrete skill that the student needs to master. This larger skill is rigorous and ensures alignment with either state standards or state alternative standards.

Benchmarks are identified as discrete skills the student needs that will lead to mastery of the larger goal.

Goals must contain a:

- **Behavior** (The action/skill the student is to accomplish)
- **Condition** (How will the student show he or she can meet the goal/benchmark?)
- **Degree** (The degree to how the goal will be measured: trials, percentages)

(ex. When given a 3rd grade reading passage, Johnny will decode the passage with 80% accuracy on 8 out of 10 trials)

WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM (IEP)	
Measurable Annual Goal: Given grade level text instruction and supports, _____ will read to determine what the text says explicitly and cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text with 80% on 4/5 trials.	Evaluation Procedures: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teacher Observation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Graded Work Samples <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Informal Assessment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Performance Demonstration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rubric
Student's progress towards goal will be measured by: Title: Special Education Teacher, General Education Teacher How often: Monthly	
Projected frequency of Progress Reports: Quarterly	
Benchmarks: 1 reading for evidence Given grade level text, instruction and support, _____ will draw evidence from literary or informational text and answer questions using that evidence with 80% accuracy, 4 out of 5 trials. 2 summarizing text Given grade level reading materials, instruction and support, _____ will determine a theme or central idea of the text with 80% accuracy, 4 out of 5 trials.	
Social or Emotional Behavior The strengths of the student: She has no concerns in this area at this time. The effects of the disability: There are no effects of the disability on this area. There are no priority educational needs at this time.	
Independent Functioning The strengths of the student: She has no concerns in this area at this time. The effects of the disability: There are no effects of the disability on this area. There are no priority educational needs at this time.	
Health Care Description of health needs and/or abilities: No health care needs will be addressed in this PLAN	

IEP goals and benchmarks are driven by your child’s specific needs. Needs can be academic, behavioral, social, and functional (basic living skills). **Read through the notes** you took on the Present Levels section of this toolkit. Based on what you wrote about where your child is today, **list** what you believe your child needs in each area. For example, if you noted your son does not understand money, a need might be, “Brian needs to know coins and their values.”

Family Tip: The team will discuss all proposed goals and objectives, including those proposed by the parent to ensure that they are rigorous and attainable.

Literacy/Reading Needs (Does your child need to acquire or improve letter/sound knowledge, sight or common word recognition (and, the, said), reading speed, or comprehension (understanding) of what is read?)

Writing Needs (Does your child need to learn how to copy or form letters, spell words, write a sentence, or write paragraphs or stories?)

Math Needs (Does your child need to learn basic math concepts (counting, number recognition, make use of patterns, adding, subtracting, money, time) or how to solve math reasoning problems?)

Language/Communication Needs (Does your child need to improve pronunciation, clarity, vocabulary, grammar, social communication, or the ability to understand and follow directions?)

Attention Needs (Does your child need to increase his focus, attention, time on task, or ability to transition from task to task?)

Behavior/Social Skills Needs (Does your child need to improve his ability to follow teacher direction, follow rules, demonstrate good conduct, manage frustration, or interact with peers?)

Motor/Physical/Functional Needs (Does your child need to improve fine motor skills – pencil skills, zipper/buttoning skills or gross motor skills - balance, strength?)

Additional Needs (Does your child need to learn how to use a communication device, learn to sign, or learn vocational skills?)

How to use the information you gathered:

Bring the above notes with you to the IEP meeting. As the team reads and/or discusses the Goals and Benchmarks and Short-Term Objectives section, check to see that the needs you have listed have been discussed by the team.

Family Tip: If your listed needs *have not been discussed in the IEP meeting*, ask the team to consider those needs during this time.

Measuring Student Progress Section

The purpose of this section is to explain both how progress will be measured and when you will be provided with the progress report. In other words, how will you know if your child is (or is not) achieving his or her goals?

In the IEP meeting, review the Student Progress section. Schools will often list “observation” and “work samples” to indicate how progress will be measured. Informal assessments such as teacher generated quizzes and tests, rubrics, etc. will also be collected as evidence to show progress. You are legally entitled to receive periodic reports on progress on the same timeline that non-disabled peers receive progress reports.

Family Tip: The IEP will describe the method by which the progress toward the annual goals will be measured and when periodic reports on the progress of the student will be provided. The parent of a child who is 3,4, or 5 years of age must be given an opportunity to participate in a review of the progress of the pupil not less than once every 6 months.

Least Restrictive Environment Section



<https://youtu.be/6QlYFlySztQ>

The purpose of this section is to explain the extent, if any, to which your child will participate with nondisabled children in the regular classroom and in school activities. It also addresses the important question: Where will my child's IEP goals be carried out? Will your child receive services within the regular education setting, within a special education classroom, or in a combination of the two?

Key Idea for Parents to Know: Least Restrictive Environment According to special education law, placement decisions must be made according to the Least Restrictive Environment requirements. This means that, *to the maximum extent appropriate*, children with disabilities must be educated with children who do not have disabilities.

Family Tip: As a parent, you are a key player in the placement decision. You have the legal right to be a part of the IEP team which determines your child's educational placement.

Examples of Possible Placements:

- Full-time participation in the regular education classroom with consultative support.
- Majority participation in the regular education classroom with pull-out intervention for therapies (i.e. speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, etc.).
- Majority participation in the regular education classroom with pull-out therapies and pull-out special education intervention (i.e. pull-out speech therapy and instruction in resource or special education room to work on IEP goals).
- Majority participation within the special education setting (i.e. majority of day in resource room or self-contained classroom with inclusive participation in "specials" such as art, music, physical education, lunch, recess).
- Full-time participation in the special education classroom and adapted "specials."

Additional IEP Sections:

Participation in State and District Tests

The IEP will likely state the type of state and district tests your child will receive during the year. The three most common testing options are:

1. Your child will take the regular state and district tests with **no accommodations**.
2. Your child will take the regular state and district tests, yet your child will be given **Designated Supports** (additional access features such as adaptive seating, color overlay, text-to-speech, scribe, sound amplification, etc.).
3. Your child will take the regular state and district tests, yet your child **will be given district/state approved accommodations** (calculator, multiplication table, large print test booklet, etc.)
4. Your child **will not take the regular state and district tests** but will take an "alternative test" that the team determines to be more appropriate given your child's disabilities.

Family Tip: More information can be found on our district website:

<https://www.washoeschools.net/Page/3568>

Specially Designed Services and Related Services Section



<https://youtu.be/KqnOMWlgj2g>

The purpose of this section is to list the special education services and the related services that will be provided to your child. In other words, which services does your child require so that he can attain his annual goals and progress in the general curriculum?

Services will include specially designed instruction, and designated supports when appropriate that can include **related services** (i.e. speech therapy, occupational therapy), **assistive technology** (devices that help student to communicate).

This section also indicates what services will be provided, when the services will start, how long

the services will be provided, and the frequency in which your child will receive the services.

Special Instructional Factors

The law requires that the IEP team consider “special factors” when creating the IEP. Although these factors may not pertain to your specific child, the team will need to consider:

1. Behavior: If your child’s behavior interferes with his or her learning, the team must consider interventions and strategies that will address the behavior issues. If your child is exhibiting behavior that interferes with his or her learning or the learning of other students, the team may provide positive behavioral strategies, supports and interventions to address that behavior.
2. Limited Proficiency in English: Does the student have limited English language skills? If so, they should be addressed within the IEP as those needs relate to the student’s IEP.
3. Visual Impairment: If your child is blind or visually impaired, the IEP must provide appropriate supports.
4. Hearing Impairment: If your child has a hearing impairment, the IEP must address how your child’s communication will be supported.
5. Assistive Technology: The IEP team must consider whether your child needs assistive technology and, if so, what required technology will be included on the IEP.

WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PLAN

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

PEN	SERVICE NAME	SERVICE LOCATION (e.g., ESE Class or General Ed Class)	DURATION* Start Date - End Date	FREQUENCY (e.g., 30 minutes Weekly)
Self-Advocacy Skills	Instruction in Self Advocacy	SE Class	2/14/2019 - 7/31/2019	250 minutes Weekly
Communication Skills	Specialized Instruction in Math	GE Class	2/14/2019 - 7/31/2019	240 minutes Weekly
Self-Advocacy Skills	Instruction in Self Advocacy	SE Class	8/1/2019 - 7/31/2020	250 minutes Weekly
Communication Skills	Specialized Instruction in Math	GE Class	8/1/2019 - 7/31/2020	240 minutes Weekly
*Subject to School Board Calendar				

SUPPLEMENTARY AIDS AND SERVICES

PEN	SERVICE NAME	SERVICE LOCATION (e.g., ESE Class or General Ed Class)	DURATION* Start Date - End Date	FREQUENCY (e.g., 30 minutes Weekly)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None needed at this time.				
*Subject to School Board Calendar				

RELATED SERVICES

PEN	SERVICE NAME	SERVICE LOCATION (e.g., ESE Class or General Ed Class)	DURATION* Start - End	FREQUENCY (e.g., 30 minutes Monthly)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None needed at this time.				
*Subject to School Board Calendar				

Final Thoughts



<https://youtu.be/qOjKDfliGKg>

It is true that the IEP process can be confusing and at times overwhelming, however, you have important, relevant information to share. You are an equal participant in the development of your child's IEP, and your voice needs to be heard. The Washoe County School District strives to make every effort to work together with families in the best interests of the students they serve.

Additional Tips and Strategies for Successful IEP Meetings:

Ask the school to provide you with a draft of your child's IEP one week prior to the formal meeting. Some parts of the IEP will not be complete. They are left blank intentionally as the draft is a proposal and it is the IEP team who makes the final decisions.

Action Step: Final Prep for the IEP Meeting

- Compare the school's draft with your own ideas after you complete the IEP Toolkit.
- Make notes directly on the IEP draft, preparing your thoughts in each of the important IEP sections.
- Find out the time allotted for the IEP meeting so you know how much time you have.
- Also, be prepared to ask for a follow-up meeting in writing if you were not able to accomplish all of your goals.
- Bring support to the meeting. This can include a spouse or partner, a friend, relative, teacher, or advocate. You might ask the support person to take detailed notes for you to provide you with an informal written record of the meeting.
- Just as you need to make your voice heard, listen respectfully and be open to the thoughts, concerns, and ideas of the others members of the team.

If You Do Not Agree with the IEP:

Families and educational teams should work collaboratively to create an IEP that is accepted by all parties. If, however, you feel you cannot accept the IEP as written, you do not have to sign it. You can write your objections clearly on the IEP itself, creating a written record of your specific concerns. It is also recommended that you write and date a follow-up letter to the school stating your specific concerns and asking for another IEP meeting to modify the IEP.

Family Tip: If you cannot come to a consensus/acceptable agreement about the IEP, your copy of the Special Education Rights of Parents and Children contains all the information needed for next steps in case you disagree. For an online copy go to:

<https://www.washoeschools.net/cms/lib/NV01912265/Centricity/Domain/76/Special%20Education%20Rights.pdf>

Options include filing a complaint with the district and/or state department of education, mediation with an impartial third party, or a formal due process hearing. Information about due process is also available on your state board of education website at: <http://www.doe.nv.gov/>