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## The IEP and Helpful Tips

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## Being Informed is Key

-IEP – Individualized Education Program

-There have been many new unknowns during the ongoing pandemic and new world. Remember everyone is trying to navigate this the best they can. Be graceful and patient.

-Reach out to your child's case manager and ask any questions you have in order to prepare for an IEP meeting in advance.

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## Being Informed is Key... Covid

-Visit NDE's site designed to provide information regarding the the pandemic and NDE: [www.launchne.com](http://www.launchne.com)

-Request to talk to the school nurse about any concerns you may have about your child returning to school, including masks, cleaning, etc. Then you can bring that information to your meeting.

-The more informed you are, the better you will be able to participate in the IEP meeting and advocate for your child.

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## IEP INDIVIDUALIZED Education Program

- Parents should know their rights and responsibilities

-Parents should be encouraged to be true participants/team members who help develop, review and revise the IEP

-ALL IEP requirements still apply to virtual IEP meetings. All team members must be present for virtual meetings unless excused from the meeting through mutual agreement in writing.



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## IEP... cont.

-If you have any barriers to being involved in the IEP meeting, let them know in advance what those needs are.

-NOTE: In March of 2020, the USDOE advised that if learning is halted for general education students, then districts would have no obligation to provide IEP services to students with special needs.



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## Participants – Still Required

### 007.03 IEP Team Participants

007.03A1 The **parents** of a child with a disability

007.03A2 Not less than **one regular education teacher** of the child

007.03A2a The **regular education teacher** of the child

007.03A3 Not less than **one special education teacher**, or where appropriate, not less than one special education provider of the child;

007.03A4 A **representative of the school district** or approved cooperative

007.03A4a Is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities;

007.03A4b Is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum; and

007.03A4c Is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the school district or approved cooperative;

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## Participants – cont.

007.03A5 An **individual who can interpret** the instructional implications of evaluation results

007.03A6 At the discretion of the parent or the school district - other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, **including related services personnel as appropriate;**

007.03A7 Whenever appropriate, the **child with a disability**

-Remember, a team member may be wearing multiple hats. Ask in advance or look on your meeting notice you received prior to the meeting.

-If you feel someone should be included that isn't, ask the case manager if that person can come. An example could be interpreter, paraprofessional, school nurse, counselor, etc.

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## All Team Members -Still Important-



- Parents are experts on their child and therefore the child's best advocate.

- An IEP meeting should be a collaboration of experts who come together to develop the most effective plan possible to meet needs of child.

- Familiarize yourself with method of meeting in advance. Ask if the IEP will be screen shared if meeting virtually. If you have concerns about meeting virtually, ask! If you need help accessing, reach out. Do this a few days before meeting to avoid any barriers.

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# Needs

- Needs --- Goals --- Placement
- Parents will need to express to their team how their child learns and what options during this pandemic would be appropriate.
- If school goes virtual, does this present new needs? Supports needed?
- Remember, their educational needs don't change during a pandemic, how they are delivered might.



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# FAPE

- **Free appropriate public education or FAPE** means special education and related services that are provided at public expense.
- Key word – appropriate!
- With ever changing placement options since Covid-19 – ask your team - “please help me understand what the options are for my child and walk me through what that looks like.” “How will my child’s FAPE be provided?”
- EVERY student matters. If your child follows general education, but receives resource – what does that look like? What would it look like virtually if that happens again. Ask.

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## Parts of the IEP

- Present level of academic achievement and functional performance – Be sure to discuss any data you may have collected on where they were at when school closed.
- Measurable annual goals including academic and functional goals, designed to meet the child’s needs,
- How progress will be measured and when reports of progress will be issued. Ask what this looks like if school closes and goes virtual.

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## Parts of the IEP

- Special education and related services and supplementary aids and services *(explained on next slides)*
- Explanation of the extent the child will not participate with nondisabled children
- Accommodations *(will they be different virtually)*
- Date services and modifications begin and their frequency, location and duration
  - Pandemic affected location

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## Parts of the IEP... cont.

### -ESY – Extended School Year

\*The purpose of an extended school year is to prevent, or slow severe skill regression caused by an interruption of special education services during extended periods when school is not in session. It is NOT to enhance the present levels of educational performance exhibited by children with disabilities at the end of a regular school year.

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## Parts of the IEP... cont.

- Related Services still should be provided and included in the IEP. Discuss with the team what those will look like both in-school and then be prepared to have a backup plan in the event school is virtual.

003.49 **Related services** means transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education, and includes speech-language pathology and audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, etc.

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## Parts of the IEP... cont.

003.59 **Supplementary aids and services** means, aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings and in extracurricular and non-academic settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.

Supplementary aids and services can be accommodations and modifications to the curriculum or the manner in which that content is presented or a child's progress is measured. But that's not all they are or can be. Supplementary aids and services can also include: direct services and supports to the child, and support and training for staff who work with that child.

**-Ask your team, what does all this look like for this year in-person, virtually, or if placement is homebound services.**

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## Parts of the IEP... cont.

### **WHAT ARE ACCOMMODATIONS?**

Accommodations are practices and procedures in the areas of 1) presentation, 2) response, and 3) setting/timing/scheduling that provide equitable access during instruction and assessments for students with disabilities.

Accommodations are intended to reduce or even eliminate the effects of a student's disability; **they do not reduce learning expectations**. The use of accommodations should not begin and end in school. Students who use accommodations will generally need them at home, in the community, and, as they get older, in postsecondary education and/or the work place.

**It will be very important to ask what accommodations listed on IEP will look like virtually if school closes. How will all IEP team members/teachers understand how.**

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## Parts of the IEP... cont.

- Transition planning beginning no later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 14, or younger if deemed appropriate by the team
- *-A pandemic shouldn't have halted planning it just may change how it was delivered. Continue to discuss and make these important plans.*
- *-At PTI, we have a transition specialist that families can call.*

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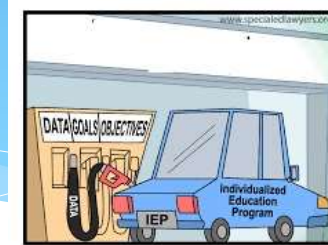
## Goals

- School professionals may come to meeting with a draft document and parents can also bring their own ideas of possible goals, supports and services. Send it ahead of time.
- *- Goal setting must help your child achieve BOTH academic and functional outcomes*
- *- Parents can help prioritize goals according to their relative importance to their child.*
- *-When setting goals, always remember – Where's the Data? What baseline are we working from? (MDT? Progress Reports?)*

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# Data

- Special education services should be based on data, not opinion
- One of the most useful questions a parent can ask when they have concerns about recommendations, is “where is the data?”
- Parents can present outside data and ask them to compare and consider the information. They have to at least consider the information.



Data Fuels IEPs

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# Data... cont.

- So, how will data be collected if school closes? Ask the team for data collection sheets if school goes virtual. Ask if any data collection could take place over virtual meeting spaces.
- Bring data or information you have about where your child is at from any type closure. Discuss it.
- Document any services not provided. Compensatory services is a real discussion.

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## Questions to Find Answers

- Parents have information about their child that can help school personnel, likewise, schools have information and professional perspectives that help parents understand their child's program. Ask questions!

- *-Would you tell me more about \_\_\_?, Could you share the data to support \_\_?, Could you share the research on the effectiveness of that method?...*

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## Tips for the Meeting

- Be positive and leave "old baggage" outside.

- Start the meeting with an expression of appreciation setting positive ground rules

- Focus on teamwork and collaboration

- *- Use "I" statements, not "you" statements. It is not what you say, but how you say it.*



- ***-Always end the meeting on a positive note***

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## Tips for the Meeting

- This is a stressful time for everyone. Many are finding a new normal. These are interesting and new times and being flexible and willing to be a team player is going to help. We are all humans. Be Kind.
- Write down concerns prior to meeting – and then write down responses in meeting on sheet
- Send a recap of discussion in an email to team and keep for your records.
- Masks is a hot topic. Bring your ideas about this and be ready to discuss and be open to what will be necessary to keep everyone safe. Have any accommodations put into that section of IEP!
- Before the meeting ends, ask how and when a copy of the IEP will be sent to you.

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## Record Keeping

- Compensatory Services is something we have been asked a lot about in the last two years. I think it is important to go straight to the professionals regarding this. You can find great information from the State's Launch Nebraska site on this topic.
- Inform yourself on this, and then bring your questions to your IEP team. It will be the IEP team that determines this.

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## Record Keeping

- Parents need to save important records in an organized way to use for special education program planning and to keep track of their child's progress.
- We have documenting sheets on our website. These can help you track goal data and also what services are being provided in the event of a closure. Use them. Two of these forms are designed when school is virtual – to help you! You can track where your student is at, how they are doing, and what services they are or may not be getting.

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## Parental Rights

<https://www.education.ne.gov/sped/parent-information/>

Family Guide to Special Education in Nebraska. A LOT of great documents to help.

- Parent IEP Input Form
- IEP Meeting Parent Checklist

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# Nebraska's Person-Centered Planning Initiative

- \* The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DD) has selected Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) as the framework for implementing person-centered planning in Nebraska

DD Website Information: <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/DD-Person-Centered-Planning.aspx>

- \* CtLC Website: [www.lifecoursetools.com](http://www.lifecoursetools.com)
- \* Free planning resources
- \* Can be adapted and used during high school transition planning and student-led IEPs

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## Questions?

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Thank you for your attendance..

Have a great day!

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