

## IEP <sup>[1]</sup>

### Type of Speech:

[abbreviation](#) <sup>[2]</sup>

### Definition:

Individualized Education Program or Individualized Education Plan.

The [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) <sup>[3]</sup>, IDEA, mandates that each student with a disability who is enrolled in the [Exceptional Children](#) <sup>[4]</sup>'s (EC) program have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The goal of IDEA is to educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment possible. IEPs describe how the school plans to educate each EC student while accommodating the student's disability. IEPs often specify modifications to be provided by teachers.

### Additional Information:

**Procedures and responsibilities.** A student's IEP is written and witnessed by at least one regular education teacher, at least one special education teacher, a Local Education Agency (LEA) representative (often the school's EC facilitator), the student's parent, and sometimes the student. The student must be invited if transition services (e.g., services to ease the transition from school to work) are being discussed. Parents must be included unless they refuse to attend. The LEA schedules and leads the meeting.

IEPs must be reviewed and updated annually. An IEP meeting must be held with thirty days after a student is determined to be eligible for EC services. Each student's eligibility for EC services must be reviewed every three years. Additional assessment may be needed to determine whether the child's current placement and services are still appropriate.

IEPs are confidential documents. One copy of an IEP is kept in the student's EC file and one is given to the parents. If you keep a record of the terms of your students' IEPs, you should store it in a secure location. Keeping a record is a good idea and may be necessary, because many schools require that EC students initial a form to verify that their modifications were provided.

As a teacher, you should have access to the IEPs of all your eligible students. If the IEP specifies services or modifications relevant to your class, you are responsible for providing or permitting those services or modifications. For instance, you may be required to seat a student in the front row or allow tests to be read aloud to the student. You should also be aware of the student's annual and short-term goals and try to help him achieve those goals. (You will not be held accountable if the goals are not achieved.)

**Contents.** An IEP specifies:

- the services the student will receive (e.g., counseling in the guidance office for thirty minutes once a week)
- modifications the student requires for classes or testing (e.g., preferential seating, a word processor, or testing in a separate room)
- whether the student needs alternate assessments (e.g., assessment by portfolio)
- which regular education classes the student will take
- how much of each school day the student will spend with non-disabled peers

Annual goals and shorter term goals are recorded, and a way to measure progress is specified. For instance, a student's annual goal might be to consistently use correct punctuation, while the corresponding benchmark goal might be to use correct punctuation 60 percent of the time. Progress could be measured by assessing his use of punctuation in all writing assignments. IEPs also note how parents will be informed of their children's progress.

IEP forms specify the category under which the student is eligible for special education services. IDEA 2004 delineates thirteen categories of disability: Autism, Behavioral-Emotional Disabilities, Deaf-Blindness, Hearing Impairment, Multiple Disabilities, Mental Disabilities (Educably Mentally Disabled [EMD], Trainably Mentally Disabled [TMD], and Severely/Profoundly Mentally Disabled [S/PMD]), Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Specific Learning Disabilities, Speech/Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, Developmental Delay, and Visual Impairment. IEPs also describe students' strengths, weaknesses, and needs.

### For further explanation:

- Kristi Johnson Smith, author of Learn NC's weblog for new teachers, has designed an [IEP notebook](#) <sup>[5]</sup> to record provision of the modifications students' IEPs require. Her own notebook was particularly useful when a mother protested her son's grade, claiming that his modifications had not been provided.
- More information about IEPs and IEP meetings can be found [IDEA 2004](#) <sup>[6]</sup> from the U.S. Department of Education.

## Links

[1] <https://www.ncpedia.org/glossary/iep> [2] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/parts-speech/abbreviation> [3] <https://www.ncpedia.org/glossary/individuals-with-disabilities-education-act> [4] <https://www.ncpedia.org/glossary/exceptional-children> [5] <https://www.ncpedia.org/media/PDF/2269> [6] <http://idea.ed.gov/>