



NAETISL

National Association of
Educational Translators and
Interpreters of Spoken Languages



MODDC

Missouri
Developmental
Disabilities Council

UNDERSTANDING THE IEP:

A Parent Guide

Funding for the Supporting Language Access in Schools Project in Missouri provided by the Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council, was supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$1,361,246 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.



naetisl@gmail.com



www.naetisl.org

NAETISL



Follow us



MODDC



moddc@moddcouncil.org



www.moddcouncil.org





Understanding the IEP: *A Parent Guide*

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a legal document developed for students who qualify for special education. It outlines the supports and services a student needs to succeed in school based on what the team decides at the IEP meeting.

Here's a breakdown of each part of the IEP and what it means for your child.

Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

- Describes how your child is currently doing in school, academically and in areas like social skills, behavior, and communication.
- May include test scores, teacher observations, and progress updates.

Why it matters:

It sets the foundation for the rest of the IEP—services and goals must be based on your child's current strengths and needs.

Annual Goals

- A list of specific learning targets the IEP team includes on the IEP each year.
- Goals must be measurable and tailored to your child's needs.





Example:

“By the end of the school year, Alex will improve reading fluency to 90 words per minute on grade-level text with 95% accuracy.”

Special Education and Related Services

- Lists what specialized instruction and related services (e.g., speech therapy or occupational therapy) your child will receive.
- States how often and where services will take place (e.g., in a general education classroom or a resource room).

Accommodations and Modifications

These are adjustments needed by your child to improve learning:

- Accommodations change how a student learns (e.g., extended time, breaks, preferred seating)
- Modifications change what a student is expected to learn (e.g., shorter assignments, different curriculum)

This section informs all teachers about the changes they need to make in their classrooms for your child.

Participation in General Education

- States much time your child will spend in general and special education settings is listed on the IEP.
- Explains why your child might be removed from the general education classroom is also included.

Service Delivery Schedule

Provides the details of services to be delivered:





- Frequency (e.g., 3x per week)
- Duration (e.g., 30 minutes per session)
- Location (e.g., general ed classroom, therapy room)
- Start/end dates for services

Participation in State and District Testing

- States if your child will take state or district assessments with or without accommodations or take an alternate assessment.
- Explains the accommodation needed.

Progress Reporting

Includes how and when progress will be reported, such as report cards, IEP updates, or conferences.

Transition Planning

- Included for students age 16 or younger
- Outlines goals and services to help students move from school to post-school life (college, jobs, independent living)
- Includes input from the student

IEP Team Members

The team usually includes:

- You (the parent or guardian)
- General education teacher
- Special education teacher
- School administrator
- Evaluation specialist (e.g., school psychologist)
- Your child (especially for transition planning)





Tips for parents who need language access

- Request interpreter services at your child's school or the school's district office before the IEP meeting.
- Request a copy of the IEP translated into your language.

Tips for ALL parents*

- Ask questions during IEP meetings.
- Request a copy of the IEP to review at home.
- You can request changes or call a meeting anytime.
- You can refuse to consent to the IEP.
- Your voice matters—you're a key member of the team!

*See the information brief on Understanding Parent Rights.

