



A PARENTS'/GUARDIANS' GUIDE TO AN Individualized Education Program (IEP) Development/Review Team Meeting

Once a student is found eligible for special education services, the next step is the development of a student's IEP. An IEP is an individualized plan and program of services to address a student's needs. It contains annual goals and objectives that school staff members use to measure a student's progress, as well as details regarding whether a student is pursuing a Maryland High School Diploma or Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion. The initial IEP must be developed within 30 days of the student's initial evaluation meeting. Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) may not provide special education services until the parent/guardian gives initial consent. In Maryland, consent is only required for the initial IEP. In addition to the requirement to obtain written parental consent for the provision of initial special education and related services, Senate Bill 710, effective July 1, 2017, amended Section 8-405, Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, to include the following additional requirements for written parental consent:

An individualized education program team shall obtain written consent from a parent if the team proposes to:

1. Enroll the child in an alternative education program that does not issue or provide credits toward a Maryland High School Diploma (alternative education framework/curriculum or alternative learning outcomes);
2. Identify the child for the Alternative Education Assessment aligned with the state's alternative curriculum; or
3. Include restraint or seclusion in the Individualized Education Program to address the child's behavior.

These recommendations are made based upon the individual needs of the student and may not be applicable for every student. At least once a year, the IEP team is required to meet to review a student's IEP and determine whether a student is making progress toward achieving their annual goals. At this time, the team also will discuss any revisions to the IEP, if appropriate. Although the IEP team is required to meet only once a year, the parent/guardian or the school team may request to hold another IEP team meeting at any time.

Composition of the IEP Team:

- Parents/Guardians.
- General education teacher(s) of your child, if your child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment.
 - » If your child does not have a general education teacher, or is younger than school age, the general educator may be an individual qualified to teach a student of your child's age.
- Special education teacher.
- An IEP team meeting chairperson who is—
 - » qualified to provide or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities, and
 - » knowledgeable about the general curriculum and about the availability of resources in MCPS.
- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results.
- Other individuals, at your discretion or the school's, who have knowledge or special expertise regarding your child, including related-service personnel, as appropriate.
- Your child, if appropriate.

Each IEP team also may include the following:

- A representative of the Montgomery County Infants and Toddlers Program (MCITP), if your child was previously served by MCITP.
- Beginning no later than the first IEP to be in effect when a student turns 14 years old, a representative of any participating agency to discuss transition planning (postsecondary goals and activities), with your permission.
- An interpreter for you, if you request one.

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Step 1

Introductions and Purpose(s) of the Meeting:

- IEP team participants introduce themselves. The chairperson explains the purpose of the meeting, which is to develop/review your child's IEP.

Step 2

Development of the IEP:

- At least five business days before the scheduled IEP team meeting, unless there is an extenuating circumstance, you must be provided with an accessible copy of any assessment, report, data, chart, or any other document the IEP team plans to discuss at the meeting.
- The IEP will be developed or reviewed in a step-by-step process. Your child's strengths and needs, and the accommodations, modifications, and services your child needs, will be discussed. (See *What an IEP Must Contain* for detailed information about the components of the IEP.)
- Be prepared to discuss your child's strengths and educational needs.

Step 3

Summary of IEP Team Decisions/Prior Written Notice:

- MCPS must provide written notice that explains the school system's proposal or refusal to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of your child or the provision of a free appropriate public education to your child.
- Any requests made by you that were not agreed to by MCPS members of the IEP team will be documented in this summary.
- You will be provided with verbal and written information about access to habilitative services as follows:
 - » At your child's initial IEP team meeting.
 - » At least once a year at your child's annual review meeting.
 - » On the approval or denial of your request for a related service to enable your child to benefit from special education services.

Step 4

Follow-up:

- The completed IEP documents will be kept in a confidential school file. No later than five business days after the IEP meeting, school personnel will provide you with a copy of the completed paperwork, including the prior written notice, from the IEP team meeting.