

# Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

## Get to Know Your IEP Team!

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If your child receives special education services at school, there can be many members of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team working together to help your child. Have you ever wondered why these professionals/specialists are on the team and what their responsibilities are? Whether the IEP team has four or fourteen members, each is there for the same purpose – to support your child and see them progress and succeed at school! The following list briefly explains the role of IEP team members (according to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – IDEA) and his or her responsibilities regarding your child:

- **Parent(s)** – YOU are the most important member(s) of the team! It is your right to be actively involved in developing your child’s IEP. You know your child better than anyone else and want the best for him/her. Your input is invaluable, so come prepared with any questions or concerns you would like to address at the meeting.



- **Regular education teacher** – This teacher knows the general education curriculum. Your child may be in the general education class and pulled out for support (e.g., academic help, speech, etc.) or may only spend a small portion of the school day with this teacher, depending on the child’s needs.



- **Public agency representative** – “Public agency” most often refers to the school system. This representative may be a school principal, vice-principal, or an administrator from the district level. He/ she is a qualified teacher, understands the curriculum, and has the authority to approve school resources for your child.



- **Special education teacher** – This teacher may work with your child on academic subjects such as math, reading, and/or writing in a separate setting from the general education classroom. This teacher also can advise how to make modifications and/or accommodations the curriculum and/or testing, provide supplementary aids and services, and individualize instruction to meet your child’s needs.



- **Individual(s) qualified to interpret evaluation results** – If you are meeting after an evaluation of your child, there may be test scores, percentiles, totals, etc. that need to be explained to you. Individual(s) qualified to do this might include the special education teacher, school psychologist, or other specialty service provider.



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• **Other individual(s) who have knowledge or special expertise regarding your child** – These individuals are invited by either the parent or the school. For example, you (the parent) may invite a relative or professional who knows your child well, or the school may invite related services professionals who work with your child, including a(n):



- **School Psychologist:** collects and analyzes data and administers assessments to provide information about your student's ability to learn.
- **Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP):** works to prevent, evaluate, diagnose, and treat your child's communication disorder (can be speech, language, social communication, and/or augmentative and alternative communication).
- **Occupational Therapist (OT):** helps your child improve fine motor skills in order to participate in school activities (e.g., handwriting, cutting, buttoning and zipping clothes, etc.).
- **Physical Therapist (PT):** focuses on functional mobility and helps your child to have safe access and participation in activities and routines at school.
- **Adapted Physical Education (APE) Teacher:** modifies your child's P.E. curriculum in order to help develop his/her physical and motor skills (e.g., throwing, catching, walking, running, etc.).
- **Other professionals/specialists:** including but not limited to an interpreter, counselor, school nurse, social worker, hearing specialist, and vision specialist as needed.

• **The child with a disability (when appropriate)** – Your child is not a required member of the team (until the age of 16), but he/she is welcome to attend! Some parents prefer to have the child included in the meeting so the child can be aware of and understand the expectations proposed on the IEP. However, some parents choose to not include the child in the meetings so that conversations among the team regarding the child can be more candid. When your child turns 16 years old, he/she will become a required team member and will be able to advocate for himself/ herself and help to develop a transition plan.



Your child's IEP team may or may not consist of all of these members, but each team member has a specific purpose and goal – to help your child succeed.



Resources:

"Physical Therapy in School Settings," American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), accessed September 12, 2016, [https://www.apta.org/uploadedFiles/APTAorg/Advocacy/Federal/Legislative\\_Issues/IDEA\\_ESEA/PhysicalTherapyintheSchoolSystem.pdf](https://www.apta.org/uploadedFiles/APTAorg/Advocacy/Federal/Legislative_Issues/IDEA_ESEA/PhysicalTherapyintheSchoolSystem.pdf).

"Speech-Language Pathologists," American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), accessed September 12, 2016, <http://www.asha.org/Students/Speech-Language-Pathologists/>.

"The IEP Team," Center for Parent Information and Resources, accessed September 12, 2016, <http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/iep-team/>.

"What is Adapted Physical Education," Adapted Physical Education National Standards (APENS), accessed September 12, 2016, <http://www.apens.org/whatisape.html>.

"What Parents Need to Know About School-Based Occupational Therapy," The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. (AOTA), accessed September 12, 2016, <http://www.aota.org/about-occupational-therapy/professionals/cy/articles/school-consumer.aspx>.

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