

Education Planning

An Individual Education Program (IEP) is a written agreement between the parents and the school about what the child needs and what will be done to address those needs. It is a concise and useable document which summarizes the plan for the student's educational program and must include the following:

- The student's present levels of academic performance
- Annual goals for the student
- Short-term instructional objectives related to the annual goals
- The special education and related services that will be provided and the extent to which the child will participate in regular education programs.
- Plans for starting the services and the anticipated duration of services.
- Appropriate plans for evaluating, at least, annually, whether the goals and objectives are being achieved
- Transition planning for older students

Once designed and implemented the plan should be continuously evaluated and modified as necessary. Parents should play an important role in the development, implementation and monitoring of the individual plan along with teacher, district support staff and outside agencies to ensure:

- It formalizes planning decisions and processes, paralleling assessment with programming.
- It provides teachers, parents and students with a record of the educational program for an individual student with special needs, and serves as the basis for reporting the students progress.
- It serves as a tool for tracking individual student learning in terms of agreed-upon goals and objectives
- It documents the relationship between any support services being provided and the student's education planning.

TIPS

- **S**pecific – The information contained in the IEP should be specific, not general. For EX: It's not enough to say the child has a reading problem but What kind of reading problem do they have. Is it decoding or comprehension etc.
- **M**asurable – the goals and objectives should be measurable. This would require pre and post test measures to gauge progress.
- **A**ctive – IEP uses active language and directs the activities. For EX: Ms. Smith will work with Johnny for 20 minutes twice a week in the resource room on his spelling list.
- **R**elevant and **R**ealistic – The goals are relevant to the child's needs (don't place him/her in Gr. 10 math class if only has Gr. 5 math skills just because that's the grade he is in) and realistically set (not too high or too low). The goal for the student just described should be to teach consumer math skills, balancing cheque book, calculating %'s on sale items, etc

- **Time Limited** – The IEP needs to set distinct time-lines for accomplishing each goal. Reporting towards the progress on IEP goals should take place at regular reporting times. It is totally inappropriate to wait until June to find out if the IEP was effective. Each goal should be accompanied by a time-line – some short, others longer. As goals are achieved, new ones are written. First goal: Johnny can count to ten by the end of October. Next: Johnny can count to 20 by winter vacation, etc