



## What Should the IEP contain?

### A Parent's Checklist for Reviewing the IEP Document

By Connie B. Fanselow

**1. A statement of the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP), including:**

- how the student's disability affects his or her involvement in the general education curriculum (or, if the child is of preschool age, his or her participation in appropriate activities).
- for students with disabilities who take alternative assessments, a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives

This section of the IEP now includes what you may have known previously as the "Student and Family Vision." This is the place to record the strengths, interests, and preferences of the student, and to note the parents' concerns for enhancing their child's education. It should bring together the information about the student's progress, needs, and expectations for the future that will drive the development of IEP goals and the coordination of appropriate services. Parental and student input are vital to making the PLAAFP meaningful and effective.

If the student is of transition age (age 14 or older in Iowa), this section must also address the student and family's goals and expectations for living, learning, and working after high school. This "Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance" section should reflect where the student is educationally and what is needed to help the student reach his or her desired after-high school goals.

**2. A statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals that are designed to:**

- enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum, and
- meet the child's educational needs that result from a disability.

Concentrate on the word MEASURABLE - How will you and the other members of the IEP team be able to tell how much progress your child is making? The goals should make that clear.

**3. A description of how the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured and when progress reports (report cards or other periodic reports) will be provided to parents**

Parents of students with IEPs must receive progress reports at least as often as parents of general education students. The child's IEP team may determine that progress reports are needed more often, and if so, what form those reports should take.

**4. A statement of Special Education and Related Services and supplementary aids and services that are to be provided to the student and a statement of any program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the student to:**

- make appropriate progress toward attaining annual goals,
- be involved in and make progress in the general curriculum,
- participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities, and
- be educated and participate in activities with other children, both with and without disabilities.

This statement should describe the modifications, services, and aids that are specific to your child and it may also include things like specialized training needed by a teacher or associate to provide for your child's disability-related needs.

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**5. An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the student will not participate in regular classes and activities with non-disabled children**

If your child is going to spend time in a special education classroom or otherwise be removed from the general education classroom where students without disabilities are instructed, the reasons must be fully explained. Children with disabilities should be included in all activities - including lunch, recess, P.E., music, art, and after-school activities - with their non-disabled peers unless there are specific reasons why they cannot participate.

**6. A statement of any accommodations that are necessary for the student to participate appropriately in state- and district-wide assessments to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the student**

- If the IEP team determines that the student should take an alternative assessment instead, a statement of why the student cannot participate in the regular assessment, and the particular alternate assessment that is appropriate

If your child is not going to participate in state- or district-wide testing and assessments on the same basis as other students, any accommodations needed should be identified or the reasons for not participating must be fully explained.

**7. The projected date for services and modifications to begin and the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of those services and modifications**

The services, modifications, and supports for a student are those that he or she requires in order to meet the goals written into the IEP.

This should be the plan for delivering services, modifications, and supports:

- What services, modifications, and supports will be provided?
- Who will provide them?
- When will they start?
- Where will they be provided?
- How often will they be provided?
- How long will they be provided?

**8. A transition planning component (if applicable).**

In Iowa, transition planning should begin not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student turns 14, or sooner if determined appropriate by the IEP team, and must be updated annually. A student's transition plan should include:

- Appropriate measurable post-secondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, independent living skills, when appropriate,
- A description of the transition services (including the courses of study) needed for the student to reach his or her post-secondary goals,
- And, beginning no later than one year before the student reaches the age of majority (age 18 in Iowa), a statement that the student has been informed of his or her rights under the IDEA that will transfer to the student on reaching legal adulthood.

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