

IEP team activities in the special education process

Special education is a cyclical process designed to respond to your child’s needs, progress, and struggles. The three main Individualized Education Program (IEP) team activities in the special education process are **evaluating educational needs; developing, reviewing, and revising the IEP;** and **measuring and reporting progress**. These activities are completed in a cycle that repeats itself for as long as your child has an IEP.

Each activity is important on its own, but also helps the IEP team decide what steps to take next in the special education process.

- Evaluating your child’s educational needs makes it possible for the team to develop an initial IEP for your child or make changes to their IEP.
- Once agreed upon, the IEP informs the team about the specific areas of your child’s progress to measure.
- Progress reports signal if your child’s IEP should be revised or if a reevaluation should be conducted.

Sometimes, parents experience the feeling that once their child is determined eligible for an IEP, their job on the IEP team is done. But actually, that’s just the beginning! Your active involvement in **evaluating educational needs; developing, reviewing, and revising the IEP;** and **measuring and reporting progress** strengthens every cycle of your child’s special education process and supports the work of the IEP team to meet your child’s needs appropriately and effectively.

Evaluating educational needs

Evaluating your child’s educational needs activates the cycle of the special education process. Your child’s initial evaluation qualifies them for an IEP. Your child will go through a reevaluation at least once every three years, unless the IEP team agrees that it’s unnecessary. If your child’s educational needs change significantly, you can decide with the team to reevaluate sooner.¹ Reevaluation helps the IEP team identify your child’s continuing need for an IEP and gather information about changes in their needs.²

¹ 34 C.F.R. [§300.303](#)

² 34 C.F.R. [§300.304](#) and [§300.305](#)

You're a member of the evaluation team, just like you're a member of the IEP team. You have input on what assessments are chosen before the evaluation begins and opportunities to share your perspective on your child's needs during the evaluation. After the evaluation is complete, you and the IEP team review the data collected and make collaborative decisions about any changes that should be made to your child's IEP.

Developing, reviewing, and revising the IEP

Developing, reviewing, and revising the IEP guides the cycle of your child's special education process. After writing your child's initial IEP, periodically, and not less than once a year, you will meet with the IEP team to review the IEP and decide together if your child is achieving their annual goals.³ When you meet, your work with the team also includes making appropriate changes to the IEP to address:

- Any lack of progress that your child was expected to make toward their annual goals or in the general education curriculum
- The results from a reevaluation
- Input and information that you provide about your child
- Needs that the team anticipates for your child
- Any other important matters related to your child's IEP⁴

The parent perspective you bring to the first IEP team meeting for your child supports the development of an appropriate initial IEP. Year after year, your active participation at IEP meetings helps the team review your child's IEP and make appropriate changes so that it continues to meet their educational needs.

Measuring and reporting progress

Measuring and reporting progress keeps the cycle of your child's special education process on track throughout the school year. The importance of this IEP team activity is often overlooked and underestimated. The school district is required to include in the IEP a description of how your child's progress toward meeting each of their annual goals will be measured.⁵ This information in the IEP helps you understand who on the team is collecting what kinds of objective data, with what frequency, and in what settings, to measure your child's progress toward achieving their annual goals.

The school district is also required to send you a report on the progress your child is making toward meeting their annual goals at least as often as report cards are sent to all students.⁶ The detailed data in IEP progress reports inform you about the effectiveness of your child's IEP in enabling them to reach their

³ 34 C.F.R. [§300.324](#) (b)(1)(i)

⁴ 34 C.F.R. [§300.324](#) (b)(1)(ii)

⁵ 34 C.F.R. [§300.320](#) (a)(3)(i)

⁶ 34 C.F.R. [§300.320](#) (a)(3)(ii)

goals by the end of the IEP year. If your child meets an annual goal sooner, you might work with the IEP team to write a new goal for your child or decrease their services in that area. If your child struggles to make expected progress on a goal, you might meet with the team to discuss increasing your child's services, making changes to their accommodations, or conducting a reevaluation.

Evaluating educational needs; developing, reviewing, and revising the IEP; and **measuring and reporting progress** are the three main IEP team activities which are repeated in the cycle of the special education process for as long as your child has an IEP. These activities give you opportunities to collaborate with the team, work toward a shared understanding of your child's educational needs, and ensure that your child's IEP is supporting their progress. As the parent on the IEP team, your active involvement in all these activities will strengthen every cycle of your child's special education process, enhance the work of the team to meet your child's needs, and enable your child to achieve their annual goals.

If you have general questions about your child's special education process, contact PACER at (952) 838-9000 or pacer@pacer.org.

This resource is made possible with funding from the Minnesota Department of Education