

The IEP Meeting Prep Checklist

Walk in informed, organized, and ready to participate as an equal and active member of your child's IEP team.

The goal isn't to go into the meeting prepared for conflict — it's to go in prepared to understand your child's needs, share meaningful input, ask informed questions, and work with the team toward solutions.

2 weeks before the meeting

- ☐ **Request a draft copy of the IEP that will be presented at the meeting.** Reviewing the draft in advance gives you time to understand the proposed goals, services, accommodations, supports, and placement; identify questions or concerns; and come to the meeting prepared to discuss them.
- ☐ **Complete your parent input before the meeting.** Clearly document your child's strengths, needs, concerns, progress, priorities, and what you believe your child needs to be successful. Providing this information in advance gives the team an opportunity to consider your perspective as it develops the IEP.
- ☐ **If the school does not provide a parent-input form, create your own.** Send your written input to the IEP case manager before the meeting and explain that you are providing it as parent input for consideration as part of the IEP process. Sharing your input in advance demonstrates that you are being proactive and collaborative and gives the team an opportunity to review your concerns before the meeting.
- ☐ **Review your child's current IEP.** Mark anything you don't understand, agree with, or believe needs to be addressed.
- ☐ **Review previous goals and progress.** What was mastered? What wasn't? What does the data show about why?
- ☐ **Review current performance.** Look at grades, assessments, work samples, attendance, behavior data, and other information that may help explain how your child is doing.
- ☐ **Start a list of concerns and questions.** Write them down as they come to you rather than trying to remember everything at the meeting.

1 week before

- ☐ **Choose your top 3 priorities.** What does your child most need from this meeting?
- ☐ **Bring evidence.** For each major concern, identify a specific example, work sample, evaluation, observation, or data point.
- ☐ **Identify what you are asking the team to consider.** Is it additional assessment, specially designed instruction, a related service, behavioral support, an accommodation, a modification, or another strategy?
- ☐ **Prepare your questions.** Focus on what your child needs, what the data shows, and how the team will know whether the plan is working.
- ☐ **Review your parental rights and procedural safeguards.** Know the protections and options available to you.

- ☐ **Invite a support person, if helpful.** Consider someone who knows your child well and understands how their disability affects their education. They can provide another perspective, listen carefully, take notes, and help you stay focused on your priorities during the meeting.

The day before

- ☐ **Organize your documents.** Keep your IEP, evaluations, reports, progress data, parent input, notes, and questions together.
- ☐ **Make a one-page priority sheet.** List your top concerns, key evidence, and requests.
- ☐ **Confirm the meeting logistics.** Know the time, location, attendees, and whether you will attend in person or virtually.
- ☐ **Get some rest.** You'll participate more effectively when you are prepared and steady.

At the meeting

- ☐ **Remember: you are part of the team.** Parents, teachers, and administrators should work together with the student's needs at the center.
- ☐ **Share your priorities early.** Make sure the team understands your biggest concerns before decisions are made.
- ☐ **Ask that your parent input be considered as the team develops the IEP.**
- ☐ **Ask what the data shows.** What information supports the proposed services, accommodations, goals — or the decision not to provide them?
- ☐ **For every goal, ask how progress will be measured.** What will be measured, how often, and how will you know your child is making meaningful progress?
- ☐ **Ask what additional information is needed.** If there is disagreement about a service, support, or evaluation, ask what data or information would help the team reconsider.
- ☐ **Focus on solutions.** Bring your concerns forward with practical ideas for instruction, related services, behavioral supports, accommodations, or other strategies.
- ☐ **Ask for Prior Written Notice (PWN)** when the school proposes or refuses to initiate or change identification, evaluation, educational placement, or the provision of a free appropriate public education.
- ☐ **Understand what your signature means.** The consent form must be signed before any services may begin. That is a separate document from the IEP. On an IEP after the first one, your signature is usually a record that you were at the meeting and got a copy. It does not mean you agree with every part. Your child's first IEP is different. Before services can start, the school must have your written consent — and at the first IEP, that signature means you agree to the services starting. So read what is printed above each signature line, and ask the school which line is which before you sign. There is often more than one. You do not have to sign anything to get your copy of the IEP. The school owes you one at no cost either way. If you have concerns, communicate them clearly and document them through the IEP process. Refusing to sign can sometimes create unnecessary tension or make it appear that you are unwilling to participate. A collaborative approach allows you to remain an active member of the team while clearly expressing areas where you have questions or disagreement.
- ☐ **Take time to review before agreeing to changes.** Ask questions, request clarification, and make sure you understand what is being proposed and why.

After the meeting

- ☐ **Review the finalized IEP carefully.** Make sure it accurately reflects what was discussed and agreed upon.
- ☐ **Follow up in writing.** Send a brief email confirming your understanding of decisions, next steps, and responsibilities.
- ☐ **Keep everything together.** Maintain a single digital folder for IEP documents, evaluations, progress reports, correspondence, parent input, and meeting notes, and keep a binder of the hard-copy documents that are provided.
- ☐ **Calendar the next important dates.** Include progress-report dates, evaluation dates, review meetings, and follow-ups.
- ☐ **Monitor progress.** An IEP is not a document you simply sign and put away. Stay engaged, review progress data, and communicate with the team when concerns arise.

5 questions worth asking at every meeting

1. How is my child progressing toward each goal, and what data shows that progress?
2. What data supports the services, accommodations, or supports being proposed — or not proposed?
3. What does my child need to access instruction, participate in the general education environment, and make meaningful progress?
4. How and when will we know whether this plan is working?
5. If we have different perspectives, what options or safeguards are available to help us work toward the best solution for my child?

Want to feel truly prepared for your next meeting?

Go beyond the checklist.

A checklist can help you get organized. Same Team helps you get truly prepared.

Go beyond knowing what to bring to the meeting. Understand what your child may need, what the data means, what questions to ask, what supports and services to consider, and how to approach the team with practical solutions.

With expert-built tools, plain-language guidance, a 24/7 assistant, and an IEP Review that checks your IEP against the federal requirements on your device, Same Team helps turn preparation into confident, informed participation. The IEP Review is not a review by a person. Dr. Long's personal review of your documents is part of Premium.

Don't attend your child's next IEP meeting armed only with a list of questions. Walk in understanding your child's needs, prepared to help the team identify the supports, services, and strategies that will best meet those needs, and ready to contribute meaningful solutions. When parents, teachers, and administrators come together with a shared understanding and a shared commitment to the child, the entire team is stronger — and the student has the greatest opportunity for success.

Because getting a child what they need should not require sacrificing the relationship between the people who support them.

Getting children the services they need. Growing the partnership between home and school. Moving forward together.

That is Same Team. And that is how students win.

Get started at [SameTeamEducationalResources.com](https://www.SameTeamEducationalResources.com) — two plans are open today.

This checklist provides educational information and is not legal advice. Every student, school, and situation is different.