

10 Things to Say in an IEP Meeting

and why not...

DO NOT SAY: Let's get started! We have only 30 minutes for each of these IEP meetings and we've already lost 5 minutes getting coffee. We'll have parents stacked up and down the halls if we fall behind schedule.

It's not possible to anticipate the exact amount of time an IEP meeting will require. It is important to take the time necessary to prepare an appropriate IEP that will enhance the student's opportunity to progress toward his or her educational goals. It's what is special about special education.

DO NOT SAY: No, we didn't indicate occupational therapy as a related service. We have only one OT in the entire district and he's booked solid. Maybe next year - or if an OT student moves away.

"The services provided to the child ... address all of the child's identified special education and related service needs." *Section 300.300(3)(1) Each student's individually determined needs dictate services to be provided. The availability of the service may not be a factor.*

DO NOT SAY: No Mrs. Brown, Bob's teachers aren't here. They are too tired from yesterday's meetings and we rotate teachers through these meetings anyway. It's not their day to participate in IEP meetings.

A child's IEP Team must include (1) the parents of the child; (2) at least one of the child's regular education teachers (if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment); (3) at least one special education teacher of the child, or if appropriate, at least one special education provider of the child. *Section 300.344(a)*

DO NOT SAY: No, I don't recommend that Kim attend the IEP meeting. She's only twelve years old

Generally, a child with a disability should attend the IEP meeting if the parent decides that it is appropriate for the child to do so. If possible, the agency and parents should discuss the appropriateness of the child's participation before a decision is made, in order to help the parents determine whether or not the child's attendance would be (1) helpful in developing the IEP or (2) directly benefit the child or both. The agency should inform parents before each IEP meeting- as part of notification under Section 300.345(a)(1)- that they may invite their child to participate. *Source: Appendix A, 64 Federal register, March 12, 1999.*

DO NOT SAY: No I don't recommend that Jill attend this IEP meeting. At 17 years of age, she's too busy with her friends and school activities to be interested in such a meeting.

If a purpose of an IEP meeting for a student with a disability will be the consideration of the student's transition service needs or needed transition services under *Section 333.347(b)(1)(2)*, or both, the public agency must invite the student and, as part of the notification to the parents of the IEP meeting, inform the parents that the agency will invite the student to the IEP meeting. If the student does not attend, the public agency must take other steps to ensure that the student's preferences and interests are still considered. *Section 300.244(b)*

DO NOT SAY: Well, the general education curriculum is for most kids but not for special education students. It's best to provide these students with an alternative curriculum that's easier and that the special education teacher is trained in.

The IEP for each child with a disability (including children who are educated in separate classrooms and schools) must address how the child will be involved and progress in the general curriculum. However, the part B regulations recognize that some students have other educational needs resulting from their disability that also must be met, even though those needs are not directly linked to participation in the general curriculum. *Source: Appendix A, 64 Federal Register,*

DO NOT SAY: Well, since we've established what Kim's disability is- that automatically means she'll be in Mr. Peter's room at least three hours each day. See, scheduling isn't so difficult once you get the hang of it.

"The services and placement needed by each child with a disability to receive FAPE (a free and appropriate public education) must be based on the child's unique needs and not on the child's disability.
Section 300.300(3)(ii)

DO NOT SAY: Welcome Mr. and Mrs. Jones. This won't take much time. We have already written the IEP - all you have to do is sign it.

The IDEA '97 significantly strengthens the role of the parent. Therefore, it is important that parents are provided a full opportunity to express their views and participate fully in the IEP meeting, including the development of the IEP. Agency staff may come to an IEP meeting prepared with evaluation findings and proposed recommendations regarding IEP content, but the agency must make it clear to parents at the outset of the meeting that the services proposed by the agency are only recommendations for review and discussion with the parents. Parents have the right to bring questions, concerns, and recommendations to an IEP meeting as part of a full discussion, of the child's needs and services to be provided to meet those needs before the IEP is finalized.

DO NOT SAY: Thank you for suggesting these modifications for Paul's instruction. We can implement them in his special education classes, but it's really too much to expect his general education teachers to accommodate his needs in their classes.

Every individual involved in providing services to the student should know and understand his or her responsibilities for carrying out the IEP. This will help insure that the student receives the services that have been planned, including the specific modifications and accommodations that the IEP Team has identified as necessary. *Source: A Guide to the Individualized Education Program, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, U.S. Department of Education.*

DO NOT SAY: I can't say for certain that we can provide that service. It's a big commitment. I'll have to check with the Special Education Director and get back to you.

Each public agency may determine which specific staff member will serve as the agency representative in a particular IEP meeting. It is important that the agency representative have the authority to commit agency resources and be able to ensure that whatever services are set out in the IEP will actually be provided. *Source: Appendix A, 64 Federal Register, 3/12/99)*