



What is an IEP?

School, Family, and Community Engagement Initiative

One of the most important parts of the special education process is creating a plan for your child's education. This plan is called the Individualized Education Program (IEP). An IEP describes the special education instruction, supports, and services that your child will receive, based on his or her individual needs. In Texas, the IEP is developed by an Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee. As a parent/guardian, **you are a very important member of the ARD committee because you bring valuable knowledge about your child to the discussion.**

This document provides a brief overview of the major sections of an IEP and can serve as a checklist for you as you participate in your child's ARD committee meeting.

Sections of an IEP	
Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance	Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) describes your child's current abilities, skills, challenges, and strengths in both academic and functional areas (social skills, daily living skills, behavior). It also describes how your child's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum.
Annual Goals	Measurable annual academic and functional goals are based on your child's unique needs as identified in the PLAAFP. The IEP must describe how your child's progress toward annual goals will be measured and when the progress reports will be provided to you.
Special Education and Related Services	Special education is instruction that is specially designed to meet the unique needs of your eligible child with a disability. Related services are the services that your child needs to benefit from his or her special education services. These services may include, but are not limited to, counseling, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and transportation. Special education and related services are provided at no cost to parents/guardians.
Supplementary Aids and Services	Supplementary aids and services are supports that may help your child learn with other students without disabilities in general education classrooms, other educational settings, and in extracurricular and nonacademic settings. These supports may be equipment or assistive technology such as audiobooks or highlighted notes. Supports may also include training school staff to support your child's needs.
Least Restrictive Environment	Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) describes the extent to which your child will participate in general education classes and extracurricular activities with other students without disabilities as much as appropriate.
State/Districtwide Assessments	State and districtwide assessments section address your child's participation in these tests including any needed testing accommodations or a need for an alternate assessment.
Transition	Transition services address what skills your child needs to learn to be successful in life after graduating from high school. In Texas, transition planning must begin for your child no later than the age of 14.



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Extended School Year Services

The ARD committee must consider whether your child qualifies for **Extended School Year (ESY) services**, which are special education and related services provided outside the regular school year, often in the summer. The need for ESY services is based on whether your child has shown or will likely show that he or she will not be able to keep up in one or more acquired critical skills if ESY services are not provided.

Dates, Frequency, Duration, and Location of Services in the IEP

The IEP must include the dates, frequency, duration, and location of the services to be provided to support your child's progress toward meeting annual goals.

Dates of Services

- ▶ **Dates of services** are the dates that the special education and related services identified in your child's IEP begin.
- ▶ **Tip for success:** Keep an open line of communication with the special education case manager.

Frequency of Services

- ▶ **Frequency of services** is how often special education and related services will be delivered to your child.
- ▶ **Tip for success:** Monitor progress reports to determine if the frequency of services should be reviewed or discussed in an ARD meeting.

Duration of Services

- ▶ **Duration of services** is usually represented in the IEP as the number of service minutes that the service is provided.
- ▶ **Tip for success:** Discuss your child's progress and duration of services with his/her teachers periodically.

Location of Services

- ▶ **Location of services** describes where your child will receive services.
- ▶ **Tip for success:** Remember that the location of services may change in an ARD meeting as additional data becomes available regarding your child's progress.



[Special Education Information Center \(SPEDTEX\)](http://www.spedtex.org)



[Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal \(ARD\) Process](#)