

IEP Section Workbook

A parent friendly walk through of where decisions appear in an IEP, what each section can look like, and questions to bring to the team.

How to use this workbook

Open your child's current or draft IEP and move through these pages one section at a time. Compare the document with the example, check the questions you want to ask, and write down anything that is missing, vague, inconsistent, or needs discussion. District forms use different headings and page numbers, so focus on the substance rather than the exact label.

Quick audit: Present Level -> Need -> Goal -> Instruction / Service / Support -> Progress Data

Student: _____ IEP meeting date: _____

01. Present Levels

What this section should tell you

Your child's strengths, current academic and functional performance, how disability affects involvement and progress, and a measurable starting point or baseline.

What it may look like

The wording below is an illustration, not required language. Look for individualized information that is specific enough to understand and measure.

Jordan reads 72 correct words per minute on a fifth grade passage with 94% accuracy. Grade level expectation is 120-150 words per minute. Slow, effortful decoding affects completion of independent reading assignments.

Questions I may want to ask

- What data tells us where my child is starting?
- Does this section describe strengths as well as needs?
- How does the disability affect access, participation, or progress?
- Is the baseline measurable enough to compare with future progress?
- Are parent concerns and outside information reflected accurately?

What I see in my child's IEP

Questions / concerns / changes I want the team to discuss

02. Annual Goals

What this section should tell you

The measurable academic or functional outcomes your child is expected to work toward during the IEP year. Goals should connect directly to identified needs and baselines.

What it may look like

The wording below is an illustration, not required language. Look for individualized information that is specific enough to understand and measure.

Given a fifth grade passage, Jordan will read at least 105 correct words per minute with 95% accuracy across three consecutive probes.

Questions I may want to ask

- What exact skill is this goal measuring?
- How does this goal connect to the present level and identified need?
- What will success look like?
- How often will progress be measured and with what tool?
- Is this goal meaningful for my child's long term academic or functional needs?

What I see in my child's IEP

Questions / concerns / changes I want the team to discuss

03. Specially Designed Instruction

What this section should tell you

What will be adapted in content, methodology, or delivery because of your child's unique disability related needs. This is more specific than simply naming a class or service.

What it may look like

The wording below is an illustration, not required language. Look for individualized information that is specific enough to understand and measure.

Explicit, systematic decoding instruction using a structured literacy sequence, with cumulative review, guided practice, and immediate corrective feedback.

Questions I may want to ask

- What is being explicitly taught differently because of this need?
- Who provides the instruction?
- How often and for how long?
- What teaching method or approach will be used?
- How will instruction change if progress is not adequate?

What I see in my child's IEP

Questions / concerns / changes I want the team to discuss

04. Related Services

What this section should tell you

Speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling, transportation, or other supportive services needed for your child to benefit from special education.

What it may look like

The wording below is an illustration, not required language. Look for individualized information that is specific enough to understand and measure.

Occupational therapy: 30 minutes weekly in a small group, beginning 9/1/26, to address school based fine motor and written access needs.

Questions I may want to ask

- What educational need does this service address?
- What are the frequency, duration, location, and start date?
- Is the service individual, group, direct, consultative, or a combination?
- How will the provider measure and communicate progress?
- Is the amount of service based on my child's need rather than scheduling or staffing?

What I see in my child's IEP

Questions / concerns / changes I want the team to discuss

05. Accommodations + Supplementary Aids

What this section should tell you

The supports your child needs to access instruction, participate, communicate, and demonstrate learning. Wording should be specific enough that different staff members would implement the support consistently.

What it may look like

The wording below is an illustration, not required language. Look for individualized information that is specific enough to understand and measure.

Speech to text for written assignments longer than three sentences; visual directions paired with verbal directions; extended time of 50% on classroom tests.

Questions I may want to ask

- What barrier is each accommodation removing?
- In which classes, settings, and activities does it apply?
- Who makes sure it is available?
- Is the wording specific enough that different staff would implement it the same way?
- Does my child actually use these supports successfully?

What I see in my child's IEP

Questions / concerns / changes I want the team to discuss

06. Assistive Technology

What this section should tell you

Whether your child needs devices or services to access, communicate, learn, write, organize, move, or participate more independently, plus any training or support needed to use the technology.

What it may look like

The wording below is an illustration, not required language. Look for individualized information that is specific enough to understand and measure.

Student will have access to speech to text on a school device for written composition and will receive instruction and practice using the tool across classes.

Questions I may want to ask

- What task is difficult without the tool?
- Was AT considered based on my child's actual barrier?
- Does my child need training or support to use it?
- Will the tool be available wherever the student is expected to perform the task?
- Who will troubleshoot when the technology is unavailable or not working?

What I see in my child's IEP

Questions / concerns / changes I want the team to discuss

07. Assessment Participation

What this section should tell you

How your child participates in state, district, and classroom assessments, including testing accommodations and any alternate assessment decision when applicable.

What it may look like

The wording below is an illustration, not required language. Look for individualized information that is specific enough to understand and measure.

Student receives extended time, a small group setting, and text to speech only on portions of assessments where reading decoding is not the skill being measured.

Questions I may want to ask

- Do testing accommodations match what my child regularly uses during instruction?
- Could an accommodation accidentally change what the test is measuring?
- Are classroom, district, and state testing supports consistent where appropriate?
- If alternate assessment is proposed, what data supports that decision?
- How will my child practice using these accommodations before testing?

What I see in my child's IEP

Questions / concerns / changes I want the team to discuss

08. Least Restrictive Environment + Participation

What this section should tell you

Where services will be delivered and the extent, if any, that your child will not participate with nondisabled peers in academic and nonacademic settings.

What it may look like

The wording below is an illustration, not required language. Look for individualized information that is specific enough to understand and measure.

Jordan receives 45 minutes of specialized reading instruction outside the general education classroom and participates with nondisabled peers for all other academic and nonacademic periods.

Questions I may want to ask

- What supports were considered before removal from the general education setting?
- Why can the identified need not be met satisfactorily there with supplementary aids and services?
- How much of the school day will my child be with nondisabled peers?
- How will placement affect electives, lunch, recess, clubs, and other activities?
- What data supports this placement decision?

What I see in my child's IEP

Questions / concerns / changes I want the team to discuss

09. Progress Monitoring

What this section should tell you

How progress toward each annual goal will be measured and when you will receive periodic reports. The data should let you compare current performance with baseline and the annual target.

What it may look like

The wording below is an illustration, not required language. Look for individualized information that is specific enough to understand and measure.

Reading fluency will be measured every two weeks using curriculum based probes. Progress will be reported to parents every nine weeks with the current score compared with baseline and annual target.

Questions I may want to ask

- What tool will measure this goal?
- How often will data be collected?
- Can I see the actual numbers rather than only 'making progress'?
- What rate of progress is needed to reach the annual goal?
- What will the team do if the data shows progress is not adequate?

What I see in my child's IEP

Questions / concerns / changes I want the team to discuss

10. Secondary Transition

What this section should tell you

When transition requirements apply, this section should connect age appropriate transition assessment, postsecondary goals, transition services and activities, course of study, annual IEP goals, and student input.

What it may look like

The wording below is an illustration, not required language. Look for individualized information that is specific enough to understand and measure.

After graduation, Maya will enroll in a community college certificate program in veterinary assisting. This year she will compare two programs, practice requesting accommodations, and complete a supported campus visit.

Questions I may want to ask

- What does my child want for education, employment, and adult life?
- What age appropriate transition assessment data supports these goals?
- What activities and services will happen this year, and who is responsible?
- Do annual IEP goals build skills needed for the postsecondary goals?
- How is my child's own voice reflected in the transition plan?

What I see in my child's IEP

Questions / concerns / changes I want the team to discuss
