



# TIP SHEET

## Preparing for a Special Education IEP Meeting

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed for every child eligible for special education. This plan contains a statement of a child's present level in terms of performance, educational needs, goals, levels of service, and measurable outcomes. An IEP meeting can be held after a formal assessment; if a child demonstrates a lack of progress; or if a parent or teacher requests a meeting to develop/review/revise a child's current IEP.

Here are some suggestions to make the most of this important planning session:

**Prepare supplemental materials.** Gather reports or other documentation for the school district to consider at the IEP meeting and provide to the district one week in advance. Ask members of your "team" for their opinion of your child's progress/needs. Consider: Where is your child now, in terms of progress/goals? What current goals would you like your child to continue to work on? Where do you want your child to be one year from now?

**Write the school district.** Request all assessments, progress reports, and proposed goals in advance of the meeting.

**Have a basic understanding of key terms.** Some common IEP terms include: Present Level of Performance - summary of strengths/needs Objectives – skills a child needs to develop/achieve specific IEP goal(s) Benchmarks – the mastery level a child is expected to meet.

**Plan who to bring.** Determine if there is another person – such as a current service provider – who you'd like to have at the IEP meeting. You may consider contacting a lawyer or advocate if you need assistance/support beyond the IEP team.

**Evaluate goals.** Determine if baselines are accurate, objective and meaningful; if areas of need are addressed; and if goals are objective, measurable and appropriate.

**Document.** Note the date, time, who said what, and what was said in the meeting.

**Potential Placements.** The team will determine which learning environment will allow the IEP to be best implemented. Observe initial sessions to ensure the placement is a good fit for your child.

**Carefully review the IEP.** Make sure to read the complete IEP, and ensure that all of your questions have been asked and answered about the IEP.