

# Parents and School Partnership in Understanding the IEP Process and Special Education Terminology

Presenters:

Michael Padavic,

Eboney Lofton, Beth Kaplan

and Erika Eckart

Parents/Guardians, Students  
and  
Schools as Partners

# Goal of this Presentation

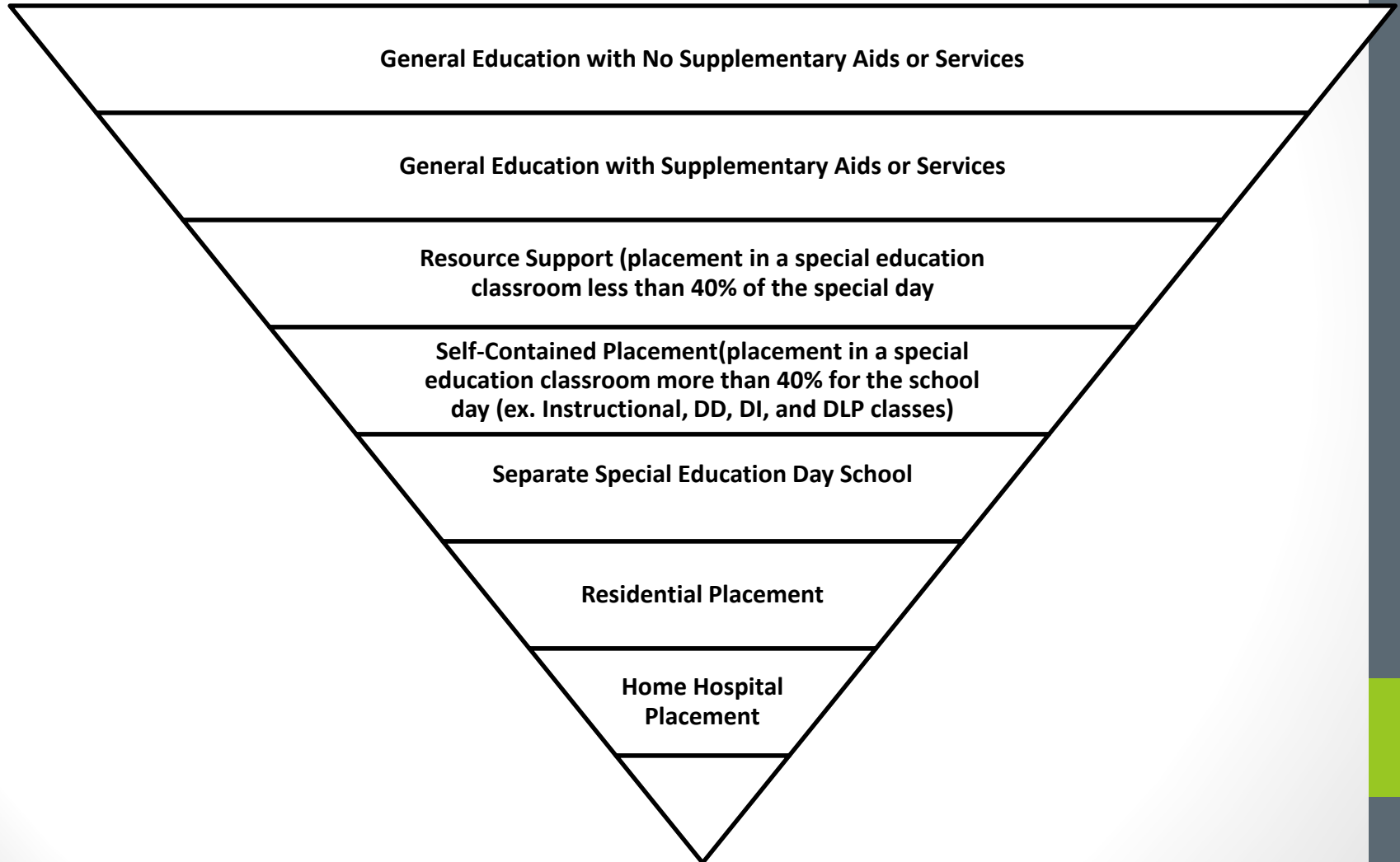
The goal of this presentation is to provide information so that:

- Parents/Guardians will understand the IEP process
- Parents/Guardians will understand Special Education terminology
- Collaboration between family and school personnel will be enhanced; and
- Parents/Guardians and school personnel will participate in special education matters as knowledgeable partners

# What Does the Continuum of Services Do?

- Provides access to the general education curriculum
- Students are more alike than they are different
- Special education is a service and not a place
- Provides a broad range of services addressing the needs of students with disabilities
- Emphasizes instructional strategies and student supports rather than the labeling of students
- Services considered first in the home school in the general education classroom alongside non-disabled peers with appropriate aids and services
- Assures parents full access to procedural and substantive rights and ensures their informed participation in the decision-making process

# The Placement Continuum



## Special Education Referral Process

The chart shows a basic overview of the special education referral process. It is not designed to show all the steps or the specific details. It shows what happens at the time a child is referred for evaluation and is identified as having a disability, through the development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Placement

- Referral
- Evaluation
- IEP team writes IEP together. This includes
- deciding what services the child needs.
- IEP team decides:
  - 1. does the child have an impairment?
  - 2. does the child need special education?
- IEP team decides on services.
- School implements the IEP and placement.
- IEP team reviews the IEP and placement at
- least annually.
- IEP team does a reevaluation at least every
- three years.

# Parents/Guardians

- Parents/Guardians are key members of the IEP Team. They know their child very well and can talk about their child's strengths and needs as well as their ideas for enhancing their child's education. As a member of the IEP Team, the parents:
- Offer insight into how their child learns, what his or her interests are and other aspects of the child that only a parent can know.
- Listen to what the other team members think their child needs to work on at school and share their suggestions.
- Report on whether the skills the child is learning at school are being used at home.

# Parent to Parent Advice about being an Advocate

- Bring someone to the meeting, reach out for help in advance
- Prepare for the meeting-parent narrative--YOUR OPINION MATTERS
- Read draft goals and comment, examine the results of testing
- Learn the language, but feel free to ask for a translation
- The IEP is one day-regular communication is key, communication notebook, emails
- Assume good intentions, but remember you are your child's strongest advocate
- Come with your concerns and suggestions
- You can disagree
- Collaborate--D97 teachers are interested in what specialists and service providers already know about your child-continue collaboration after IEP day
- Ask to come back to the table when appropriate-know your child's rights!



## What is an IEP?

- Once it is determined that a student meets the criteria to receive special education and related services, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be developed. An IEP is a written statement of the educational program designed to meet the student's needs and is developed by a team. The IEP includes a detailed description of what will be done to give the student the extra help needed. The IEP will change based on the student's needs-it is like a road map showing where the student is and where he or she is going.

## IEP Timelines to Remember

- The IEP meeting must occur within 60 school days from the date of the referral.
- The IEP meeting must occur within 30 days after the team determines that the student is eligible to receive special education and/or related services.
- The IEP must be reviewed at least once a year; however, an IEP meeting can be conveyed at any time to discuss changes or revisions.
- Parents must be informed of their child's progress on IEP goals *at least as often as parents of nondisabled children*.

## UNDERSTANDING THE IEP PROCESS

A minimum of 10 days prior to an IEP meeting, the parent/guardian will receive a notification of conference. The notification lists all the expected participants of the conference, date, time and location of the meeting.

### PEOPLE WHO *MAY* BE PRESENT AT THE IEP MEETING:

- Parent(s) or Guardian(s)
- Student when appropriate
- School Principal
- Special Education Coordinator
- Team Facilitator conducts the meeting and enters information on the computer as the meeting progresses
- General Education teacher
- Special Education teacher who also functions as the Case Manager
- School Psychologist
- Occupational, Physical and/or Speech Therapists
- School Social Worker
- School Nurse
- Others with knowledge or special expertise about the student. The parent or the school may bring other people to the IEP meeting such as service providers, advocates, a friend for support, etc.

## What You Need to Know About Excusal from IEP Attendance

Changes to IDEA in 2004 now make it possible for members of the IEP team to be excused from an IEP meeting. The important thing to remember is that excusal can only occur if the parent and the district agree to excuse the team member from the meeting.

- Team members do NOT have to attend if their area is not discussed IF THE PARENTS AGREE IN WRITING.
- Team members can be excused when the parent and the school agree.
- Team members may be excused if they submit their input in writing to the IEP team (including the parents) before the meeting.

## WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE IEP MEETING:

Each participant in the IEP meeting will present information as it relates to your child's educational needs. This includes test scores, performance levels and goal attainment.

New goals will be discussed to determine the best way to educate your child.

You will discuss your child's needs and your concerns. Your input is very important to the decision-making process.

All decisions about your child's education will be recorded during the IEP meeting. The end result is your child's unique educational plan.

## **THINGS TO CONSIDER:**

### **BEFORE MEETING:**

- **Review your child's progress reports, previous year's IEP, test scores and other important information.**
- **If you have questions/concerns about your child's performance or placement contact your child's teacher when concerns arise.**
- **If appropriate, ask your child about their school experience including, what they enjoy and what frustrates them about school.**
- **Write down issues you would like the team to address. List the issues, questions/concerns you have and possible solutions.**
- **Share outside evaluations with your child's teacher.**

## **THINGS TO CONSIDER: cont.**

### **DURING MEETING:**

- **Listen carefully to team members, ask questions, and take notes when necessary.**
- **Remember you are an equally important member of the IEP team.**
- **Present all information to the team from your previously prepared list.**
- **Maintain a positive attitude and stay focused on your child's needs.**
- **Confirm the best way to contact your child's teachers if a question or concern arises in the future.**

## THINGS TO CONSIDER: cont.

### After Meeting

- Review the completed IEP. Notify your child's case manager within 10 days if the document does not reflect what was discussed in the IEP meeting.
- Add the paperwork to your files.
- Progress reports will be sent home each trimester. Notify your child's teacher with questions or concerns.



## Contents of the IEP

- Present levels of academic and functional performance
- Annual Goals
- Measurements of progress and how progress will be shared
- What special education and related services will be provided
  - how often they will be provided (frequency)
  - How long they will be provided (duration)
  - Where they will be provided (location)
  - Who will provide the services
- How the child will access the general education curriculum
- The modification or supports that will be provided
  - In the classroom
  - To and from school
  - In the school building
  - For school functions(field trips, sports, prom, playground, etc.)
- Assessment information (which assessments will be administered, any accommodations to the assessments)
- A description of any assistive technology, including training, the student or staff may need.
- Special training or support that the student, the parent and school staff need in order to ensure the student is provided FAPE
- A discussion of whether the student needs additional help and support when school is not in session (Extended School Year Service [ESY], and
- Beginning when the child turns 14 1/2, appropriate transition services, including postsecondary services and supports.
- The placement of the child that will implement the IEP.

## Specifics about IEP Components

### Present levels of academic and functional performance

These describe how the student is going in different areas and how the student uses what he/she learned throughout the day. This part of the IEP should describe how the student's disability affects his or her participation in the general education curriculum and how the student performs in academic and nonacademic settings.

### Annual Goals

A goal is something that can be obtained within a school year. Data should form the basis for instruction and the goals should be written to allow access to the general curriculum and other activities during or after school. Goals must be measurable, identify who will be responsible for working on them, and identify how progress will be reported to parents.

### Benchmarks or short-term objectives

Short-term objectives are the steps toward meeting the goals. A short term objective is something that can be attained within a reporting or grading period. Each benchmark or short-term objective should list the steps necessary to achieve the goal by the end of the school year.

### Progress toward goals

The IEP should include information about how the school will measure the student's progress and when reports to the parents will be issued. The measurement should be clear enough so that parents can understand whether their child is being successful or not.

# Specifics about IEP Components cont.

## Special Education and Related Services

These services and supports assist the student to advance toward the annual goals, progress in the general curriculum, participate in extracurricular and nonacademic activities, be educated and participate with all children. The IEP should include any additional training or support needed by the parents, educators, and paraprofessionals.

## Participation in the General Curriculum

The IEP must explain how the child's disability affects her/her participation in the general education setting and other school activities. If a student is removed from any part of the general curriculum, a statement explaining the reason(s) why must be part of the IEP. Adaptations or modifications can be used to support student success in the classroom.

## Statewide Assessment

All children with disabilities must be part of state and district wide assessments with appropriate accommodations, including English language proficiency, where appropriate. The IEP team decides whether the student should be given state and/or district assessments, with or without accommodations; or if the student should take the alternate assessment, Dynamic Learning Measures.

If the IEP team decides that the child should take the alternate assessment ,Dynamic Learning Measures (DLM), the IEP must include:

- An explanation of why the child cannot take the regular test

- The participation criteria has been met by a "Yes" response to the two statements in the DLM Participation Guidelines

- A statement explaining how the student will be assessed.

# Specifics about IEP Components cont.

## Frequency, location, and duration of services

This is the “what, when , where, and for how long: part of the IEP. Each of the services the student needs should be writing into the IEP and indicate: 1) how long or how often each session will last (the number of minutes); 2) where the services will be provided (i.e., general education classroom, a resource room, or another setting such as the community); and 3) when the services will begin and end.

## Transition

For students who will reach the age of 14 ½ during the school year, the IEP must document a statement of transition services needs that focuses on the student’s course of study and goals to address those needs.

## Transfer of rights at age of majority

The rights and responsibilities for special education services that are given to parents will belong (or transfer) to the student at age 18. The district must inform the parents and student of the student’s rights to delegate decision-making to another adult individual. At least one year before turning 18, the parents and the student will receive notices in writing from the school about the change. The district must document that the parents and the student received the notice and were told about the transfer of rights. The school must provide the student with a Delegation of Rights form. The school must use the ISBE form or one that is substantively the same.

### **The Delegation of Rights:**

- May be terminated by the student at any time
- Will Remain in effect for one year
- Must be signed by the student and the designee
- Can be renewed each year

# Specifics about IEP Components cont.

## Extended school year services (ESY)

These are special education and related services that 1) are provided to a student with an IEP beyond the normal school day/year, 2) are stated in the student's IEP, and 3) are provided at no cost to the parents of the student. The decision about what services will be provided should be individually based on the needs of the student. Loss of knowledge/skills or an extraordinarily long time in relearning skills (regression/recoupment) can be part of, but not the only reason for determining ESY. No single factor can determine ESY, and ESY services may not be limited to particular categories of disability. ESY services may not be the same as services provided during the regular school year. The IEP team determines what services are provided during the ESY term. ESY services can be provided in school, at home, or in the community.

## Special Education Terms Commonly Used

- **Accommodations:** Changes in how learning occurs or how a test is administered that does not substantially alter what is learned or what the test measures; includes changes in presentations format, response format, test setting or test timing. Appropriate accommodations are made to provide equal opportunity to demonstrate knowledge.
- **Adaptive physical education:** Alternative physical education for students who cannot participate in the general education population. Involves modifications and/or accommodations to the regular physical education class. The goal is to allow students with special needs to remain in the regular PE class.
- **Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA):** An intervention technique that may be used to teach children with autism. It breaks down skills into very small components, which are then taught systematically. Each skill builds the foundation for the next one.
- **Assistive technology device:** Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability.
- **Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP):** A written plan developed as part of the IEP to address a serious behavioral problem. It is based on a functional behavioral assessment of the student's behavior, describes the interventions to be used, methods of evaluations, and provisions for coordinating with the home. The BIP outlines what the school personnel will do differently to support the needs of the student.
- **Intellectual Disability:** Intellectual disability means significantly below average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

## Special Education Terms Commonly Used cont.

- **Developmental Delay (DD)**: A delay in physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social and emotional development, or adaptive development (may include children from three through nine years of age).
- **Emotional Disability (ED)**: Disability category under IDEA. A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance.
  - An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors
  - An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers
  - Inappropriate types of behaviors or feelings under normal circumstances
  - A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression
  - A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems
- **Extended School Year (ESY)**: A provision for a special education student to receive instruction during ordinary school "vacation" periods. Purpose is to prevent serious regression of previously learned skills that cannot be regained in a reasonable length of time with the intent being to maintain IEP goals and objective, not to introduce new skills. The IEP team determines eligibility for ESY services.
- **Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)**: A process to improve understanding of problem behavior in order to identify what skills need to be taught. The process included observation, interviews, and data collection to identify when, where, and why the behavior is occurring.
- **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**: The written educational program for a student receiving special education and related services with goals and objectives to be attained during a calendar year that is developed and implemented to meet unique educational needs.

## Special Education Terms Commonly Used cont.

- **Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Team:** The group of individuals enumerated who determines the special education and related services to be provided to an eligible student. The IEP team and other qualified professionals are required to participate in meetings when identifying specific assessments, determining eligibility and conducting manifestation reviews.
- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA, IDEA'04, IDEIA):** The federal law mandating that all children with disabilities have available to them a free, appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for employment and independent living and prepare them for further education.
- **Learning disability (LD):** An eligibility category under IDEA. A neurological disorder that affects the brain's ability to receive, process store and respond to information. A person may have difficulties in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, listening and/or speaking.
- **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):** A requirement of IDEA. This provision describes procedures that ensure, to the maximum extent appropriate; students with disabilities are educated with students who are not disabled. The IEP team must determine the LRE for each student based on his or her individual needs.
- **Occupational Therapy (OT):** A special education related service which is usually focused upon the development of a student's fine motor skills and/or the identification of adapted ways of accomplishing activities of daily living when a student's disabilities prevents him/her from doing those tasks in typical ways (e.g. modifying clothing so a person without arms can dress himself/herself).
- **Physical Therapy (PT):** Instructional support and treatment of physical disabilities provided by a trained physical therapist, under a doctor's prescription, that helps the student remediate gross motor skills and improve the use of bones, muscles, joints, and nerves.



## Special Education Terms Commonly Used cont.

- **Related Services:** Related services are supported services needed by a student in order to benefit from special education services. These may include, but are not limited to, speech-language pathology and audiology services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, early identification and assessment, counseling, rehabilitation counseling, orientation and mobility services, school health services, social work services, parent counseling, and training.
- **Speech Therapy:** Process for remediation of speech disorders, such as stuttering, lispings, misarticulation, conducted by a qualified speech-language pathologist on an individualized or small group basis.

# Resources

- Educational Rights and Responsibilities: Understanding Special Education In Illinois
  - [WWW.ISBE.Net](http://WWW.ISBE.Net)
  - District Resources
    - Strengthening Families Program
      - Early Childhood Parent Group
- District Parent/Guardian Advisory Committee



Questions?

Thank You