

Parent Handbook

Our goal with this Parent Handbook is to share what we, as parents of children with disabilities, wish we had known when our children were considered for special education services. Of course it is impossible to cover every issue and answer every question. But we wanted to speak to you, parent to parent, in the hope it can make the road you will travel a bit smoother.

The Parent Handbook contains a wide variety of material relating to special education including; how the process works, who is who, legal rights, Parent-to-Parent Tips, Parent Connections, resources and more. Some information may be relevant to you now, and other information in the future. Whenever you refer to it, we hope you'll find it of some value.

Preface

The Parent Handbook has been developed to provide information and advice on the special education process based on what experienced parents have themselves found.

The first section, "Getting Started", contains general advice on how to educate and prepare yourself for your role as a parent of a child who has special needs. It is what every parent involved in the special education process should consider regardless of his/her child's particular needs.

The second section on "The Special Education Process" informs you how to navigate the special education system. This section is not meant to give a full and complete explanation of the process, but rather tips for doing the best job and avoiding the pitfalls while advocating for your child. This advice, called "*Parent-to-Parent Tips*", has been collected from the experience and knowledge of many parents and professionals.

The third section is comprised of general information about your rights under the special education laws, student services personnel and terms particular to special education. This information should be used as a reference.

The fourth section, on resources, is an invaluable aid to parents trying to learn about everything from Illinois special education law to the details about a particular disability. The Internet has allowed us to inform ourselves in many areas quickly. It is a wonderful ally.

I. Getting Started

As parents of children with special needs, we all participate in the special education process in uniquely different ways. What we have in common is our desire to do what's best for our children. For most of us, it's our first experience with the special education system. We need to learn everything about our child's special needs and how the special education system can help. Included in this guide is factual and legal information for you to successfully navigate the system and make informed decisions for your child. But, beyond the facts, beyond the legal requirements, there are lessons to be learned from others who have already been there. We've included *Parent-to-Parent Tips* throughout this guide and hope you find them helpful. The following are tips to keep in mind when first getting started.

Know your legal rights.

Knowing your child's legal rights takes you from an observer to an active, knowledgeable participant in your child's education. You cannot effectively advocate for your child if you do not learn the special education laws and understand the special education process. Each district is unique and it is up to you to work with your school to identify the services that your child needs and is entitled to under the law. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) provides a free, basic resource, called *A Parents' Guide: The Educational Rights of Students With Disabilities* and can be obtained by calling (312) 814-8498 (Chicago), (217) 782-5589 (Springfield), or Plainfield District 202 Special Education Department (815) 577-4023. The Family Resource Center on Disabilities (312-939-3513) provides general information and rights training seminars as well as a pamphlet entitled *A Parents' Guide to Special Education Rights*. You can also refer to the "Explanation of Procedural Safeguards" which is distributed to parents by the local school district.

If you are concerned about your child, pursue it.

No one knows your child better than you do. If you feel that something is not right, find the help you need to understand what's going on with

your child. That help may come from a teacher, administrator, speech therapist, diagnostician, psychologist, social worker, pediatrician, or other parent. Talk to them. Listen to what they have to say and weigh it against what you know and feel inside about your child. Not everyone you consult necessarily has the expertise to figure out your child's problem, or determine if there even is a problem. Keep looking.

If you think your child may need special education services, you can start the process by calling the appropriate person in your school, either the principal or the special education administrator. Many schools have formal intervention plans called "Flexible Service Delivery Plans" whereby strategies, support and/or adaptations are provided for the child in the area of difficulty immediately. If the intervention does not lead to significant improvement it may lead to special education eligibility.

It is the school district's responsibility to conduct a full and complete individual evaluation for your child. Work with your district to ensure they understand the specifics of your concerns so that they can use the appropriate assessment tools. Keep in mind this often does not mean formal standardized assessments. If you have outside evaluations, the school district must consider this in their planning. You also have the right to request an independent educational evaluation at public expense when you disagree with the evaluation conducted by the school. Whatever direction you take, pursue it until you feel comfortable and your instinct tells you you're on the right track.

Recognize that you and the school have different roles in your child's life.

Your child may have needs beyond those that the school is required to provide as part of their educational services. The school is only obligated to provide an education that is "appropriate". You and the school have different roles, and therefore different concerns. You need to take a proactive position in your child's entire life, both in and out of school. To that end, many parents have found it beneficial to utilize outside providers and/or services to maximize their child's progress.

Put all important communication in writing.

Communicating in writing is a business-like way of keeping an accurate record. It's a good way to clarify quickly any misunderstandings and lets other people on the child's educational

team know what is happening. By communicating in writing you will also start the clock ticking on any response time required of the school. Your communication should be in writing if:

1. You are making any request;
2. You are confirming any change, agreement, disagreement; or
3. You are giving information.

In short, if the information is important enough to remember, then put it in writing and keep a copy.

Learn about available resources.

Read everything you can. A good place to start is to get information on the Internet by contacting organizations for specific disabilities and special education issues. Networking with other parents of children with similar needs and/or joining a support group can also be beneficial.

Make your energy productive.

The life of a parent with a child with special needs is sometimes incredibly difficult and at the same time wonderfully rewarding. Many parents find it helpful to join a group or see a professional for emotional support and guidance. Remember, this is an ongoing process, not a short-term problem to be solved quickly. If you begin to accept what you can not change, you can channel your energy more constructively. Do not expect to be perfect; just do the best you can. One of the most important lessons you will ever teach your children is how you manage the challenges in your life.

II. The Special Education Process

The first thing that parents want to know if they think that their child has special education needs is "what is the special education process" and "what am I supposed to do?" An overview of the process will help you understand how it works.

The steps in the special education process are:

Step One: Referral

Step Two: Evaluation

Step Three: Eligibility conference

Step Four: Individualized Education Program

Step Five: Annual Review

Recognize that the special education process can take a long time. It is measured in school days, every one of which is very precious. Do insist that the school keep the process moving in a timely manner. Do your part to participate as best you can. Your work with the school should be approached with care, thought and in the spirit of co-operation. A sense of humor might also help. Always remember that you are the only one who is with your child year to year, and you are full partners on a team trying to maximize your child's success.

You should always refer to the ISBE A Parents' Guide and the Explanation of Procedural Safeguards to learn about the process and fully understand your and your child's rights. To help you, we are sharing our brief overview and Parent-to-Parent Tips:

Step One: The Referral

A referral is a formal request that your child be evaluated for special education. You or a school professional may make a referral if a disability is suspected. A disability can be any physical or mental problem or condition that significantly affects a child's ability to perform at school. You may make the referral verbally, but it is best to do it in writing, expressing your areas of concern.

- ***If your child is experiencing difficulties in school, consider requesting an intervention plan.*** If you and/or the school have noticed that the child's performance falls below appropriate expectations, the school may suggest interventions instead of a referral for a full and individual evaluation. Interventions are strategies, support and/or adaptations for the child in the area of difficulty. Many schools have formal intervention plans called "Flexible Service Delivery Plans." The district must demonstrate that despite the interventions the child is not making adequate progress. However, if after one marking period your child does not make reasonable progress, then you should consider making a referral.

- ***If at any time you think that your child may have a disability, you should request a referral immediately.*** You should make the request in writing and give your reasons. Suggest areas that you feel need to be examined. By making a referral, you start the special education ball rolling.

- ***If the school agrees to your referral for an evaluation of your child, you will have an opportunity to provide input into the evaluation process.*** When an evaluation is being considered a Domain Review is completed. This determines all the areas that will be evaluated. These domains may include academic achievement, motor abilities, language and communication, intellectual abilities, social/emotional status, health, hearing and vision. It is to your advantage to understand what your school will do and how you can be involved.

Step Two: The Evaluation

An evaluation is the collection of information from formal and informal tests or assessments of the student, and records, observations, and interviews that discuss special learning needs, strengths and interests. The information from the interventions will be critical at this stage. Some of the best information on how the child learns and should be taught comes through the information that is obtained during the interventions. The information is used to make key educational decisions for your child. Once your consent is given, an evaluation by the school district must be completed within 60 school days. This can seem like a very long time when you feel your child needs help but interventions that were put in place previously will continue.

- ***You can request a re-evaluation at any time.*** A child must be re-evaluated every three years by law. If your child has problems that indicate that his/her special education needs and services need to be changed, you can request a re-evaluation at any time. No more than one evaluation can be conducted in a calendar year.

Step Three: The Eligibility Conference

Once the evaluation is completed, you, a group of school professionals, and any person you choose to assist you, will meet to interpret your child's evaluation results. Together you decide if your child has a disability as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). If it is decided that your child has a disability, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be written either at the same meeting or a later one scheduled within 30 school days.

- ***Consider asking for the conference to be separate from the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting.*** Whether your child is eligible for special education services will be determined at the eligibility conference. Most of the time schools request that these

meetings be held together so that assessment can be directly linked to any changes needed in your child's education. You can ask to have the meetings separated so that you can prepare for each meeting.

- ***Request and read the evaluation report before the conference.*** You need to understand the tests that were performed and the data from the interventions and what they indicate. If necessary meet with the school's professional who did the testing and have him/her explain it to you. Discuss it with your child's outside providers before the conference and consider having them accompany you to the meeting.

- ***If the report indicates that the child has a disability, the disability must impact the child's school performance in order to qualify for special education.*** Not every disability qualifies a child for special education. You should make sure you understand how a child's particular disability impacts his/her education.

- ***Consider whether the special education category selected for your child is the one most appropriate.*** Your child may be eligible for services under more than one special education category. Consider choosing the category, which is the most appropriate "label" for him/her. All of your child's specific needs will be addressed by the IEP regardless of the category under which he/she is eligible.

Step Four: The Individualized Education Program or IEP

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is the cornerstone of special education. It contains a description of your child's unique educational needs and it is a commitment in writing of the resources the school will provide to help them. The IEP is the result of cooperative decision making by parents and school staff in the best interest of the student. A well thought-out, comprehensive IEP will be a road map for the professionals providing services to your child and it will provide you with a means of evaluating your child's progress. Sometimes these meetings can be lengthy and not all service providers need to participate in the entire meeting. It is helpful to allow those service providers to be released from the meeting after their contribution so that other students are not missing service. As parents you are in a unique position to lead and coordinate the IEP process; you know your child best and you are the only ones who interact regularly with both the school staff and the child.

The IEP Meeting

The IEP meeting is where the actual IEP is written. It is developed by a team that includes a school administrator, teachers, appropriate school staff, you, and your child, if appropriate. You may bring along outside consultants such as your child's therapist, tutor, etc. Others may attend the meeting at the discretion of the school and/or parent. School personnel may represent more than one role at the IEP meeting. Refer to the sign-in page for the specifics of your IEP team.

One of the best ways to ensure a successful IEP meeting is to prepare ahead of time. Consider these Parent-to-Parent Tips when preparing for your meeting:

- ***Visit the classroom.*** If it is not too distracting for your child, make an appointment to visit and observe him/her in class. Spend some time just sitting and watching.
- ***Review your child's evaluation in advance.*** The evaluation determines the specific special education programs and services to which your child will be entitled. Before the IEP meeting, you should review and fully understand the evaluation/assessment results. You can request a separate meeting prior to the IEP meeting to thoroughly discuss the evaluation results and implications with the evaluator. Do not hesitate to request a separate meeting if you feel it will be helpful.
- ***Review your child's other records.*** Re-familiarize yourself with any past evaluations, assessments and/or reports. You may also want to review his/her records at the local school office, asking for an explanation of anything you don't understand. If you already have an IEP, be sure to take another look over the existing goals and objectives.
- ***Set your priorities.*** The IEP meeting can be more productive if you prioritize your issues BEFORE the meeting. Try to narrow down the major considerations that you feel are most critical to your child's progress. Having a priority list can help avoid spending too much time on secondary issues and can keep the meeting focused on what's really important for your child.

- ***Make a list of what you want to discuss.*** It is easy to forget a question or concern during the give-and-take of an IEP meeting. A list of questions, ideas, and suggestions developed ahead of time will help you focus your time and energies and ensure you do not forget any important issues.

- ***Request a rough draft of preliminary goals and draft your own.*** By reviewing rough, preliminary goals ahead of time you can think about them in a non-pressured environment as well as discuss them with any private providers. Many individual team members may also be willing to meet with you to develop preliminary goals together. This can go along way in fostering a spirit of collaboration and shared responsibility for your child's success.

- ***Share what you know about your child and his/her disability.*** As the parent, you are the expert on your child. Your knowledge and input are invaluable. Share information about his/her behavior at home, hobbies, interests and the progress you have seen. Include a short list of tasks your child does well and those that are difficult. Also share the expertise of any previous school experience or outside providers. Provide the school with copies of reports or evaluations conducted privately. It is difficult for everyone to be an expert in all areas of special education and the staff may not be knowledgeable about your child's specific disability. Do what ever you can—share articles, suggest books, mention new therapies, bring in private providers—to enhance the team's overall understanding.

- ***Talk with your child.*** Ask your child about classes, friends, and activities. Try to determine what is going well or what he/she would like to see changed.

- ***Know all the players ahead of time.*** The parent notification of the conference lists all the individuals invited to attend. Be sure you know all the team members and the role they play in your child's education. Don't hesitate to call any team members you have not met. If you are bringing someone to the meeting (i.e. friend, outside provider, advocate) notify the school ahead of time. If it is an Annual Review and next year's teacher has been determined, ask that he/she attend the meeting. This will provide an early opportunity for the new teacher to learn about your child and you can start to build a relationship with each other.

The IEP Document

The actual IEP document will follow a written format. Key IEP content areas include:

- Present level of educational performance (PLOPS)
- Annual goals and short-term instructional objectives/benchmarks
- Progress toward annual goals and how parents will be informed
- Specific special education, related services, supplementary aids and services and a statement of program modifications or supports for school personnel
- Beginning date, amount, frequency, location and anticipated duration of services and modifications
- Extent of participation in regular education programs
- Placement

During the actual IEP meeting, you may find it helpful to remember these *Parent-to-Parent Tips*:

- ***Bring someone with you.*** Ideally, it is best for both parents to attend IEP meetings. If that is not possible, you may want to have a friend, relative or other person not emotionally involved come to the meeting with you. They can pick up on comments you may have missed and provide important moral support. Private providers can also play an important role at the IEP meetings offering valuable insight as well as specific recommendations for your child.
- ***Greet everyone at the meeting.*** It is always more pleasant for everyone to begin by exchanging greetings and introducing those persons who do not know each other. If there is someone there that you were not notified was attending, you do have the right to postpone the meeting. Conversely, if there is someone absent who should be there, you may ask to have the meeting rescheduled.
- ***Set a positive tone with positive comments.*** Everyone likes to hear positive feedback on the job they are doing. Be sure to compliment the team on what they are doing well and let them know you appreciate their efforts. They are here because they love working with children and want the best for them.
- ***Be flexible.*** Refer to your priority list of issues to determine what things you can give on and what things you can not. When the team sees that you can be flexible about some things, it strengthens your

position on matters that you think, with good reason, should not be compromised. You are dealing with a limited number of hours in the school day and you will want to make the best use of the time.

- ***Speak up if you have questions, or do not understand something.*** Education has a language all its own. If something comes up that is not clear to you, do not hesitate to ask for an explanation. Your questions are not an interruption; they are an important part of the process.

- ***Make sure the IEP, as it is written, reflects what the team agrees to.*** The team may need to have critical portions of the IEP read back during the meeting just to confirm that everyone understands and is in agreement. It is impossible to remember everything that is said at an IEP meeting. You will need to take notes on key agreements reached and areas for follow-up. If it is not in writing and in the IEP, it does not exist.

- ***Capitalize on the team's collective experience.*** Every member of the team—special education teachers, regular ed teachers, therapists, social workers, principal, private providers and parents—everyone brings a unique and valuable perspective to the process. Regardless of his or her role on the team, everyone has the potential to offer an idea or suggestion that might benefit your child.

- ***Understand the support services your child will be receiving.*** Services are delivered in a variety of different ways. How they are provided depends upon the type and severity of your child's disability, the age or grade level, and the curriculum. It is important to understand whether your child is receiving remediation to address the underlying skill deficit or accommodations and/or modifications. A modification reduces the achievement/learning expectation while an accommodation eliminates the barriers to learning, much as glasses help us see. Often a combination of services is the most appropriate. Factors to be considered are 1) whether remediation exists that can improve the child's underlying deficit, 2) whether it is desirable to pull the child out of the regular classroom to receive services and 3) what the priorities are for the child. (Note that the IEP should include a clear description of the services to be provided, the person responsible for providing them, as well as the frequency and duration of the service.)

- ***Discuss the learning environment in which your child is successful.*** Each child responds differently to different learning environments. Some children thrive in a structured classroom, others

in a more informal environment. Whatever your child's learning style, be sure to discuss it especially when determining the type of teacher that would be appropriate for your child in the coming year. Also discuss the environments and settings in which your child has difficulty performing.

- ***Know that your child's placement is determined by goals, not the other way around.*** The team first must determine the goals based on the child's needs and then that drives the placement.
- ***Establish an effective form of communication between school and home.*** Parents and schools working together lead to greater benefits for your child. Whether it's a daily notebook, email, weekly phone calls or a monthly note home, reach an agreement on what types of communication will take place and include it in the IEP.
- ***Focus on the problem, not the person.*** If you have disagreements or concerns, be clear and specific as to what those issues are and how they are adversely affecting your child. Be constructive with your comments and avoid making accusations. Use child-focused language, e.g. "Drew works best when..."
- ***Ask about related services.*** Given the complexity of many IEP meetings, it is easy to overlook other services that might benefit your child. For example, your child may qualify for an extended school year, transportation or may be entitled to assistive technology or other specialized equipment. Be sure it is discussed and considered at the meeting if you think it is appropriate for your child.
- ***Do not feel pressure to end the meeting.*** If you are running out of time but do not feel all the issues have been adequately addressed, ask to reconvene the meeting for another date and time.
- ***Your signature on the IEP form does not indicate your agreement to the IEP.*** It only is a record of your attendance. The only time your signature indicates your consent on the IEP is on the initial or very first IEP document.

After the IEP Meeting

The IEP document is referred to year round and provides guidance for the professionals in the schools who work with your child. Once the IEP has been agreed upon consider the following *Parent-to-Parent Tips*:

- ***Review the completed IEP.*** Make sure the completed document reflects what you agreed to in the meeting. Review your notes. Be sure you understand your role in your child's education and what the school plans to do. If appropriate, discuss the IEP with your child.

- ***Put it in writing.*** Many agreements are reached that are not necessarily written into the formal IEP. Sending a written note to the meeting's participants to confirm what was agreed upon is essential. Documenting what has been said or done is easier than trying to reconstruct the information later and avoids misunderstandings. Compliments and expressions of appreciation should also be put in writing, including copies to the appropriate supervisors.

- ***Maintain communication with the school.*** The basis of any positive relationship is good communication and this is no different with the parent/school relationship. Talk to your child's teacher and other members of the team. Read the progress notes you receive. Attend all parent-teacher conferences and annual reviews. Keep the lines of communication open by sharing both the good and the not so good about your child.

- ***Review your child's IEP every grading period.*** You will be receiving progress reports on your child's IEP goals' coinciding with your school's grading periods. Consider if the plan is working as intended, if your child is happy and progress is being made. The IEP is not set in stone for an entire school year exempt from any changes or modifications. If changes need to be discussed, ask for a team meeting. If the change is not major the IEP can be changed through an amendment.

- ***Schedule regular check in meetings.*** There are two conference days a year plus the annual review. If in the interim concerns arise ask for a meeting. It is not always necessary that the entire team attend; just those directly affected. If your child is entering a new program or has a new teacher, ask when an observation or meeting would be appropriate.

- ***Plan home activities that reinforce what your child is learning at school.*** His/her teacher and other special education staff will be happy to suggest home activities that will help your child make progress.

- ***Pursue issues you feel strongly about.*** If you strongly disagree with the team's decisions about your child, you have the right to pursue it further. Follow-up in writing with your special education administrator reiterating your concerns. If you are still dissatisfied, contact the Director of Special Education. Be sure to save this type of action for major issues of critical concern for your child.
- ***Network with other parents.*** Other parents are a great source of information, advice and support. Ask them about their experiences and how they faced particular challenges.
- ***Contact special connections.*** Special Connections provides parent mentors to help parents of special needs student orient to a new school district and provide support for transitions through the development of ongoing collaborative relationships. They also provide assistance for a parent new to special education. To contact Special Connections call (815) 577-4317 and provide the information requested.
- ***Give yourself a break.*** Parenting a child with special needs can be extremely difficult and emotionally draining. Be sure to take care of yourself and allow time for rest and rejuvenation. Do something nice for yourself!

Step Five: The Annual Review

As your child is continually monitored and the IEP kept up-to-date, new goals and needs may become apparent. The IEP may be reviewed at any time, but it must be reviewed at least annually. If you or any school personnel are concerned about the current relevance of the IEP, it is vital that you address these concerns promptly. It is important to keep the communication lines with your child's teacher and school staff open. As you move through the IEP process, you and the school staff will fine-tune the IEP to your child's specific needs.

Note:

Sometimes even with the best intentions, school districts and parents do not always agree. You may file a challenge with the state education agency and request mediation or a hearing if you feel that the school has not adequately addressed your child's needs. There are many complex legal issues involved with the IEP process. For more information, consult the ISBE A Parents' Guide or contact the Illinois State Board of Education at (312) 814-5560.

III. General Special Education Information

1. Your Key Rights Under the Special Education Laws

Federal and state laws guarantee certain rights to children, parents of children being considered for placement in a special education program and parents of children enrolled in special education. You should consult the "Explanation of Procedural Safeguards" that districts provide to parents and "The Parents' Guide: The Educational Rights of Students with Disabilities" issued by the Illinois State Board of Education. The following is a summary of some of these important rights:

- **The right to request to have your child evaluated for special education needs.** You should make your request, or "referral", in writing. Your school district has ten days to respond to your request. If it agrees to an evaluation, the school district has sixty school days (at least 3 months) to complete the evaluation and hold a conference on eligibility. If it does not agree with the referral, the school district must notify you in writing. You may then request a due process hearing.
- **The right to written consent to a full evaluation of your child's needs or reevaluation by the school district.** Your written consent is necessary whether the evaluation was requested by you or by the school district. A child receiving special education and related services must be reevaluated every three years or more frequently. If you disagree with the results from your school district, you have the right to make a written request for an independent educational evaluation (IEE) by a qualified professional at the school district's expense. If the school district's evaluation is determined to be incomplete, inappropriate, or insufficient, the school may be required to pay for the independent evaluation
- **The right to consent to your child's initial placement in a special education program.** After the initial placement, any significant changes in your child's placement are determined by an IEP meeting.
- **The right to see your child's records, including test results, grades, staff reports, and all other information about his/her**

education. Parents do not have the right to copies of the protocols. You can request copies be sent to qualified professionals.

- **The right to privacy.** The only people who may see your child's records without your permission or prior notice are the child's teacher and other local, state, and federal education or civil rights officials who require access to student records for educational or administrative purposes. Law enforcement or medical officials who must take emergency action on behalf of your child or others may have access to student records, and records may be released without parental consent in response to a court order or subpoena.

- **The right to have your child attend, to the maximum extent appropriate and with accommodations and modifications, classes with other students who are not special education students, i.e., the "least restrictive environment."** Placement considerations must always consider first the "least restrictive environment" (LRE), which is the regular education classroom the child would attend in the child's home school. Only if that does not meet the child's needs, can a more restrictive environment be considered. Your child also has the right to an equal opportunity to participate in nonacademic services and extracurricular activities with supplementary aids and services.

- **The right to participate in your child's eligibility and Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings and to help develop the IEP.**

- **The right to have someone, at your own expense, assist and represent you at meetings about your child's special education program.** You may invite another parent, a parent advocate, your child's private educational psychologist or other outside provider, an attorney, a teacher, a friend, etc.

- **The right to disagree with the school's decisions about your child's special education program.** The law has established a due process hearing system to address parent objections to their child's special education program. Prior to a due process hearing, parents are encouraged to agree to mediation through the Illinois State Board of Education to informally help both parties resolve the disagreement.

The law also requires that certain participants must be included in the IEP meeting:

- You, the **parents**, if you choose to attend. Ideally, both parents should attend the meeting.
- **Other individuals requested by you, such as private providers.** You may wish to invite persons who you think have knowledge or expertise regarding your child, such as an educational psychologist, tutor, or therapist. You may also wish to have a friend or relative or some other person not emotionally involved to lend moral support. They may also pick up on comments you may have missed.
- A **regular education teacher** if your child is or may be participating in regular education. This person should be the one who is, or may be, responsible for implementing your child's IEP. If your child does not have a regular education teacher, but is expected to receive at least some regular education, a regular education teacher of his or her grade level should be included.
- A **special education teacher** or, if appropriate, a **special education provider**. This should be the person who is or may be responsible for implementing your child's IEP.
- A **representative of the local school district**, other than the teacher, who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction, is knowledgeable about the general curriculum, is knowledgeable about the availability of resources, and has the authority to commit services.
- An **individual who can interpret the instructional implications of the evaluation (e.g. school psychologist).**
- Your **child**, when appropriate or requested by you.
- **Other individuals invited by the school district.**

In addition, **other participants** are required, if appropriate:

- If behavior is an issue, a person knowledgeable about positive behavioral strategies.

- If your or your child's ability to hear or communicate in English is an issue, a bilingual specialist or interpreter.
- If transition services are needed, a representative of any agency likely to provide the services.
- Participation is encouraged by early intervention providers.
- If placement in a day or residential facility is possible, a representative of a non-public special education facility.

If key participants are unable to attend, you may request that the IEP be rescheduled.

