

# Frequently Asked EC Questions



## How can I find out more about my child's differences and needs?

- Exceptional Children's Assistance Center. 1-800-962-6817 or [www.ecacparentcenter.org](http://www.ecacparentcenter.org)
- Family Support Network of Central Carolina 832-6507 or [fsncc@aol.com](mailto:fsncc@aol.com)

## Where can I find local resources and programs to help my child?

- Contact Guilford County Schools Parent EC Liaison at 370-8329 or [antkows@gcsnc.com](mailto:antkows@gcsnc.com).
- Refer to the resource section in this guide.
- Contact the ECPAC at [ECPAC@ncmail.net](mailto:ECPAC@ncmail.net)
- Visit the ECPAC website at [www.gcsnc.net/EC/ec\\_home.htm](http://www.gcsnc.net/EC/ec_home.htm)
- Contact your School PTA EC Advocate [www.guilfordcountyppta.org](http://www.guilfordcountyppta.org)
- Family Support Network 832-6507 or [fsncc@aol.com](mailto:fsncc@aol.com)
- Visit the Family Support Network website at [www.fsncc.org](http://www.fsncc.org)

## What are the Laws Governing EC Services?

- Americans with Disabilities Act (504 plan)
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, (Part B-Ages 3-21, and Part C- Ages Birth-3)
- No Child Left Behind Act
- Family Education Rights and Privacy act
- To learn more:
- [www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com)
- Exceptional Children's Assistance Center
- 1-800-962-6817 or [www.ecacparentcenter.org](http://www.ecacparentcenter.org)



## What is a Section 504?

- Section 504 is a part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- Section 504 is an anti-discrimination law that neither creates new rights for students with disabilities nor supports those rights with federal money.
- If your child is found to have a disability under section 504, he is to be given the aids, equipment, and accommodations that will allow him to enjoy the benefits of the school program.
- There is a 504 coordinator at each school.
- Children who are on a 504 plan do not receive special education instruction but may receive educational accommodations or, possibly, related services.
- One limitation to section 504 is that the accommodations must be reasonable and they must not impose an undue financial or administrative burden upon the educational system.

## What is IDEA 2004?

- The Individual's with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.
- This law governs the way Special Education Services are administered in each state. Key components are Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).
- Part B governs children ages 3-21
- Part C governs children ages Birth-3, Early Intervention.
- The Bill became a Law in December of 2004. Part B Regulations were released in August of 2006. To view a copy on the Regulations go to: <http://www.wrightslaw.com/idea/index.htm>



## How does the No Child Left Behind Act affect children with disabilities?

- **NCLB** now requires that children with disabilities be tested with their peers to determine their abilities at each gateway year.
- Learn about North Carolina's plan to implement NCLB.
- The North Carolina Accountability Plan and results are available on the North Carolina Department of Public Instructions Website. [www.ncpublicschools.org](http://www.ncpublicschools.org)
- North Carolina Department of Public Instruction has a State Performance Plan for Exceptional Children as well. To view this document on line go to:  
<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/ec/policy/policies/spp.pdf>
- (919)807-3300
- Check out your schools report card. Know how the school is performing overall and in each subgroup. You can ask your schools principal or go to [www.gcsnc.org](http://www.gcsnc.org) for results.

## What kind of testing is best for my child under the No Child Left Behind Act?

- New tests are being developed by the NC Department of Public Instruction. For current information [www.ncpublicschools.org](http://www.ncpublicschools.org) or call (919)-807-3300
- The IEP team decides what testing and modifications are appropriate for your child. **This should be stated in the IEP.**
- Be sure the accommodations your child will use when taking NCLB assessments are considered carefully. **Accommodations should not be introduced for the first time during a state assessment.**
- Find out if your child attends a Title I school. Such schools have additional obligations to students and parents . Visit the National Center for Educational Statistics <http://nces.edgov/globallocator/>

## What is a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)?

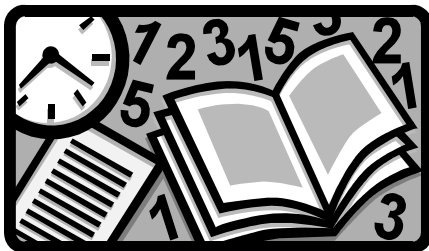
- The individuals with disabilities act (IDEA) requires public schools to provide a free, appropriate public education to all children who have been identified in need of special education.
- The provision of personalized instruction with sufficient therapies or specialized services reasonably calculated to permit a child with disabilities to benefit from special education.



## What is the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)?

- LRE for a student with disabilities is defined by the extent to which the child will be educated with students who do not have disabilities and in the school building nearest to home.
- LRE must always be coupled with what is an appropriate education for each individual child.

## What is an IEP?



- Individualized Education Program or Plan (IEP)
- Document that describes the special education and related services designed to meet the needs of a child with disabilities.
- An IEP is developed jointly by parents and educators, and when appropriate, your child.
- The IEP is developed at one or more meetings.

## Who attends the IEP meeting?

- Representative of the public school system qualified to provide or supervise the provision of Special Education Services.
- Regular Education Teacher & Special Education teacher
- Therapists or Specialists working with your child
- One or both parents
- The Student, when they reach an appropriate age to participate in the IEP process.

## What does an IEP Include?

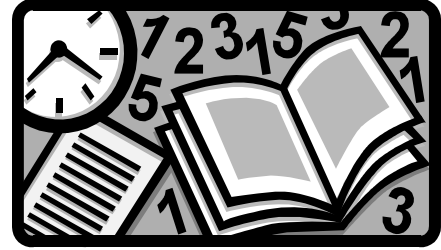
- Description of student, (needs and strengths)
- Goals & Objectives
- Related Services
- Special Education Placement
- Time & Duration of Services
- Evaluation, how progress will be measured and reported
- Modifications and accommodations
- Parent Concerns

## What is an IEP Goal?

- What your child needs to learn to function in his or her school and academic curriculum.
- A well written goal tells you what skills your child will achieve and how they will achieve them.
- Goals should answer who, what, how, where and when.
- Example: Jim will walk up stairs using one foot per step without assistance at home and at school by June first.

## What is an IEP Objective?

- Small skills or accomplishments your child needs to make in order to reach the goal.
- Objective should contain the same five basic parts: who, what, how, where, & when.
- Example: Jim will walk upstairs one foot per step holding the handrail and an adults' hand by March first.
- It is important to make sure that IEP Goals and Objectives are in line with North Carolina Standard Course of Curriculum for each grade. There is a wonderful resource on NC DPI website for parents and teachers. It standardizes goals for each grade level.
- **North Carolina Extended Content Standards, <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/ec/>**



## Who decides what Educational Setting is best for my child?

- The IEP team decides.
- Factors that determine the setting include your child's needs, location to your home, and the least restrictive environment.
- For more information ask staff at NC Department of Public Instruction at (919)807-3300 or [www.ncpublicschools.org](http://www.ncpublicschools.org) or the Division of Exceptional Children.

## What are related services?

- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Speech and Language
- Counseling services
- Transportation

## Am I really an important member of the IEP team?

- Yes! Parents are an important part of the team!
- You and your child will live with the outcomes of their educational experience for the rest of your lives.
- You are one of your child's best and most important advocate.
- You have expertise on your child's background, strengths and needs.

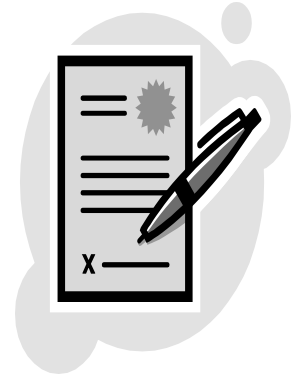


## What if I cannot attend the IEP meeting?

- You can request to reschedule the meeting.
- You can have a phone conference.
- If you find that you will be unable to attend after the meeting has been scheduled, please call the school and let them know as soon as possible.

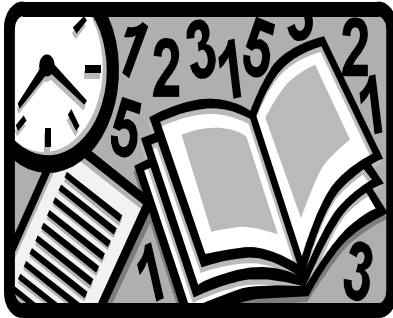
## Does signing the IEP mean I agree with everything?

- No, you may agree or disagree with specific items in the IEP.
- Write a statement and attach it to the IEP or write in the parent concerns box what you disagree with.
- If you decide to change or rethink items included in your child's IEP, remember that *you have the right to call an IEP meeting at any time, regardless of whether your current Plan has expired, to suggest revisions to the document as your child's needs change.*
- Signing the IEP only means you have participated in the process.



## What happens when parents and educators disagree on the IEP?

- Request another IEP meeting, gather more information to support your case, you can consult with or bring in outside professionals or resource material.
- Facilitated IEP Meeting
- Request informal mediation.
- Formal Written Complaints
- Request a due process hearing.



## What is Mediation?

- A process for resolving conflicts between two or more parties using a trained, impartial person to help solve the problem.
- It is structured but far less formal than a due process hearing or court proceeding.
- Focus is on resolving a problem and moving forward rather than revisiting past wrongs or actions.

## What is Due Process?

- The purpose of a due process hearing is to allow an impartial third party, the hearing officer, to examine the issue upon which you and the school system disagree and to settle the dispute by making an unbiased decision.
- The hearing officer makes the decision.
- Due process should be a last resort, most conflicts can be resolved within the IEP meetings.

## What if my child is younger than 3 years old and I suspect an educational or behavior problem?

- Contact the Children's Developmental Services Agency (CDSA). They will evaluate your child and determine if services are needed. Early Intervention services are administered through this agency in Guilford County. **1-336-334-5601**
- If your child is not meeting developmental milestones (a list of these milestones are in this reference guide), please talk to your pediatrician and request an evaluation at the CDSA.

## What is the difference between an IEP and an IFSP?

- If a child qualifies for Early Intervention Services, then an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) will be developed.
- An Individualized Education Plan is developed for children ages 3-21.

## What is a Transition Plan?

- A written plan to prepare children with disabilities for the next steps after high school. Transition planning usually
- begins around age 14.
- Schools are to provide, according to IDEA, a coordinated set of activities based individual students needs, preferences, and interests.
- This may include: college, vocational training, employment, continuing education, adult services, independent living and community participation.



## What is Occupational Course of Study?

- A North Carolina diploma tract for students with mild to moderate intellectual impairment.
  - The curriculum is functional and “hands-on,” with the focus being employment in the competitive work force.
- Requirement for a diploma include:
- 300 hours of school-based training,
  - 240 hours of community-based training, and
  - 360 hours of competitive paid employment.

## How does the school determine which students are eligible to participate in the OCS?

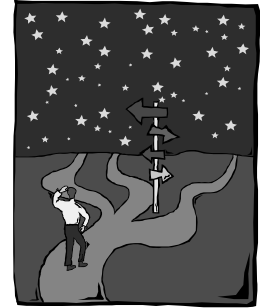
- An OCS candidate must be a student who has been identified with special needs and placed in special education. Eligibility for participation in the OCS is determined by the IEP team, which includes the student and parents, a regular education teacher, an OCS teacher, and the LEA.
- BEST PRACTICE is for the school’s EC Program Administrator to serve as the LEA. The EC Program Administrator is to review the OCS Recommendation Form prior to the IEP meeting.
- A student should be considered for participation in the OCS only if the IEP team determines that the North Carolina Standard Course of Study is inappropriate for the student, even with the use of modifications, adaptations, and supplemental aids and services.

## When should the IEP team consider a student for OCS?

- The IEP team should make that determination at the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade so that the student starts his/ her 9<sup>th</sup> grade year in the OCS. However, qualified students may enter the OCS curriculum at any point during their high school years provided that they can meet the requirements before aging out of special education services.
- Special education teachers and counselors need to begin informing parents about the four courses of study as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> grade.
- **Start asking your child’s teacher as early as 6th grade about this diploma option.**

## When will my child exit EC services?

- The IEP team determines the need for continued services.
- Your child's needs and ability to function in school should be considered.
- Evaluations, testing, teacher, parent, and therapist input should all be considered when deciding to exit your child from services.



## Who do I contact if I have concerns or questions?

- Start with your child's teacher or special ed. teacher.
- You can also talk to the principal at your child's school.
- If the concern is not resolved, contact the EC program administrator for your school.
- Contact the Guilford County School Exceptional Children's Parent Liaison or your school's EC PTA Parent Advocate.

## What are some tips from other Parents?

- Attend IEP meetings
- Learn how exceptional children's services work, **Join ECPAC!**
- Focus on the positive qualities / interests of your child.
- Get help for his/her needs
- Talk with other parents in similar situations
- Write down questions or concerns.
- Learn and use resources.
- Be an informed consumer, monitor your child's education.
- Make classroom visits, volunteer
- Communicate with your child's teachers
- Learn about current teaching methods and therapy interventions that may benefit your child.
- Join a parent group.
- Attend workshops and presentations.
- Speak with your child's teacher as soon as problems or concerns arise, don't wait.
- Acknowledge teachers and staffs efforts and a job well done.
- Advocate at the national, state and local level for students with disabilities by writing letters, sending email, or joining a parent group such as your PTA.
- Share what you have learned with others.

## Source of Information

- Negotiating The Special Education Maze, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. A guide for parents and teachers
- Winifred Anderson, Stephen Chitwood, Deidre Hayden

