Transition
Preparing for the Future

Empower YOUR future: Join YOUR IEP meeting!

In a few short years, you will be out of school. Now is the time to start practicing the skills that you will need for the future and to navigate the rights and responsibilities of adult life. This will give you more control over the choices in your life and it will help the people around you better understand what you think, what you want, and what you need.

Let's start with explaining what an IEP is. This stands for Individualized Education Program and it is simply a plan for how the school will be providing a program to help you in school. The IEP makes certain the school uses your strengths and helps accommodate for your areas of weaknesses. The IEP team meets at least once a year to go over the plan and make changes.



Learning to be your own best advocate will make a big difference in your life!

The IEP meeting is the perfect place to start because everyone at that table is there for you! The team members want you to be successful now and in the future. There are no right or wrong answers and things can be changed. Everyone, regardless of having a disability, has to work to find out what we do best and works. Remember you know yourself the best!

Maryland laws say that you must be invited to the IEP meeting starting at age 14. Why 14? This is when the school team starts making plans to help you transition out of school to college or work. This is more than a meeting to talk about school now, it is to plan for YOUR future so YOU should be there. You can decide how you would like to participate and what types of supports you may need.

Steps to prepare

- Ask your teachers or parents to explain your IEP and the reason for the meetings
- Talk to your parents about your disability
- Write down your answers to some of these questions:
- Have a person-centered planning meeting with your teacher and parents before the IEP meeting
- Practice your role at the meeting with your teacher
- There are many ways to participate: make a presentation or a video or attend for part of the meeting

Questions List

- How do you best understand and learn information?
- How do you best communicate?
- How do you tell people when you need help?
- What are your goals for the future for work, college/training, living, free time, relationship, and dreams
- What is something in class that you do well? What is something that is hard?
- Review your accommodations, are they helpful?

Just like when you were in school, you may need services and supports to reach your goals when you are out of school. This means communicating with other agencies and organizations. If you start practicing now, you will be more prepared for these conversations in the future. Other young adults that have graduated have said that by practicing asking for accommodations and talking with others about their disability, they have found it easier to apply self-advocacy skills in college or on the job.

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