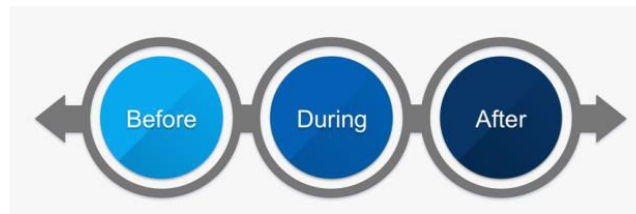




## IEPs During the COVID-19 PANDEMIC

School divisions must make every effort possible to meet required timelines by scheduling and holding your student's IEP meeting online or by phone. Here are some helpful hints for IEP meetings and service delivery.



1. **Before the Meeting:** Get ready for the call. Make sure your device is fully charged. If your first IEP, or yearly IEP meeting, is supposed to take place during this time, make sure the teacher and school have your current email address and phone number.
2. **Your IEP Meeting Will Not Be In Person:** The law and regulations are still in place when developing and reviewing an IEP, evaluating a student, and for eligibility. How schools will meet these requirements will look different. Work with the school to figure out the best way to have the meeting (by phone, by Zoom, etc.) and when they will get the paperwork to you. The school still must hold the meeting at a time that is convenient to you.
3. **What Will Your IEP Meeting Be Like:** The only difference will be the location. The same people should be at the meeting. If you find out that a team member is not present, discuss this with the team and decide if you will allow them to be absent from the meeting and that you have their input on your student. If you agree that they can miss the meeting, you must do it in writing. You should have the same documents in advance of this meeting as you would for an in-person meeting. Prepare as if it were any other meeting. Remember, that even if the school calls it a “planning meeting” or an “interim meeting” if the IEP is going to be changed, it is an IEP meeting.
4. **During the Meeting:** Prepare notes and be ready to talk about your concerns. Have all your paperwork organized and find a quiet place so you can stay focused. Decide what services are most important to your student to prevent him from falling too far behind. Remember a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is still required, but you will want to be reasonable during this time of crisis. **REMEMBER, no changes to an IEP can be made without your consent.** If you do not agree with the changes, you do not have to sign the IEP.

5. **After the Meeting:** Make sure to email a follow up to your student's teacher. Copy the special education coordinator (which may be the principal). State your understanding of everything that was said and agreed to during the meeting. Include your concerns and your contact information in case the teacher needs to discuss something in your email. Don't forget to inform them when you expect to get any IEP paperwork.

### **Tips and Considerations for Your Student's IEP and Services During Covid-19**

**If the school tries to hold a planning meeting to change the IEP** and you are not allowed or able to participate, send a letter (or email) to the school telling them you do not consent to any changes made to the IEP outside of a regular IEP meeting in which you are included and provide input.

If you agree to temporary changes to the IEP, make sure the changes only last while school is closed. **Ask for the pre-COVID 19 IEP to be frozen** so that when school opens, the previous IEP will still be in place. Be sure you put it in writing and tell the school that you want the letter in your student's school record.

**Your student is still entitled to individualized services** based on his/her needs. The school cannot say, for example "no one is getting speech therapy." However, remember with **social distancing** some things, like in-person therapies, will not be possible. **If you don't feel like you have the skills to help provide instruction to your student at home**, make sure that the IEP team knows this so that they plan appropriate instructional strategies that do not rely on you.

**You still have the right to disagree with the services offered or provided.** Tell the school you want your concerns written into the **Prior Written Notice**. If they don't do it, send your concerns in writing after the IEP meeting. Ask that your letter be placed in your student's record. This will preserve your rights later.

**DOCUMENT!** You know the services your student had before COVID 19. Keep track of what he/she receives during the pandemic and track his/her progress and access to materials and instruction. You can ask the school how you can record progress data. By keeping track of progress, the data will be available when school starts so the team can decide if **Extended School Year (ESY) or compensatory (make up) education are needed after the crisis ends.**

If you think your student needs ESY or compensatory education, **you can ask for an IEP meeting to be held as soon as schools reopens**, even if that is during the summer. You can also ask for needed evaluations to be conducted during the summer if school is open. You do not have to wait until the fall.

**Think carefully about saying no** to services the school offers if they are reasonable as it could affect your ability to get ESY or compensatory education when school resumes. The school can say that they tried to provide services, but the parent refused.

Resource: [Take a Deep Breath: IDEA implementation during COVID-19 school closings](#)

WHERE CAN I FIND HELP?

[PEATC](#) or 800-869-6782

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