



## ARC GUIDE TO PARENT PARTICIPATION IN THE IEP PROCESS

What is an IEP?

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is an annual written plan that provides documentation for students with disabilities receiving special education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA). The IEP includes special education, related services, supplementary aids and services necessary for the students to meet goals and objectives.

You (Parents) have the right to actively participate in meetings with respect to:

- Identification, evaluation, educational placement of your child
- Provision of Free, Appropriate, Public Education (FAPE) to your child

You:

- Provide critical information regarding the strengths and needs of your child and express your concerns for enhancing the education of your child
- Participate in discussions about your child's:
  - Special education eligibility
  - Special education services
  - Related services
  - Supplemental aids and services
  - How your child will be involved and progress in the general curriculum
  - How your child will participate in state and district-wide assessments
  - What school services the school will provide including by type and amount service

You are an equal partner on your child's IEP team.

- Are the expert on your child
- You are your child's best advocate
- You will be constantly and consistently involved in your child's life
- Have the right to participate in IEP related meeting regarding your child
- Your participation must be meaningful and actively engaged
- School staff members must ensure that you participate

Do IEP team members (school staff) encourage your active participation?

- Do you think you are viewed as an equal member of the team?
- Has there been enough time scheduled for the meeting?

- Who are you sitting by? Think about the seating arrangement - who is sitting by whom, where are you encouraged to sit, what is the size of the table and chairs?
- Is the environment welcoming?
  - Who is sitting next to you?
  - Are you offered coffee/water?
  - What room are you in? It is comfortable? Private?
  - What size area the table and chairs?
  - Who is seating at the head of the table?
  - Do staff members have their own coffee mug and bring it in?
  - Are there other people who are not IEP team members in the room?
- Are staff members talking with you or to you?
- Are staff members using jargon? If so, are they explaining the jargon?
- Are they asking you your opinion? Are they asking if you have questions? Are they asking you questions?
- How are staff members talking to each other?
- Are staff members coming and going throughout the meeting?
- Is someone taking notes?
- Is the meeting a collaborative process?
- How and when are decisions made? Who is making decisions?
  - Consensus? Majority rules? Everyone's input is wanted?
- Are there cultural and language issues that might make you uncomfortable?

The school can't develop, change, or implement the IEP without your consent.

- You must respond on the signature page within 14 calendar days of receiving an Individualized Education Program (IEP). If you do not respond within 14 days and it is not the initial (first) IEP, the IEP will go into effect.
- It is recommended that you respond on the signature page the school has given to you.

#### References:

Arc Guide to IEP <https://arcminnesota.org/resource/arc-guide-to-individualized-education-program-iep/>

Arc guide to PWN <https://arcminnesota.org/resource/arc-guide-to-prior-written-notice/>



Arc Guide to Supplemental Aids and Supports <https://arcminnesota.org/resource/arc-guide-to-prior-written-notice/>

Arc Guide to Related Services in Special Education <https://arcminnesota.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Arc-Guide-to-Related-Services-in-Special-Education.pdf>

**For further information or advocacy services, contact The Arc Minnesota at 952.920.0855 or toll-free at 833.450.1494 or visit [www.arcminnesota.org](http://www.arcminnesota.org).** (Please note: *This document is not legal advice, and should not be construed as such. Thus, no information herein should replace the sound advice of an attorney.*)

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