Educational Continuum

IDEA Section 300.114(a)(2)(i) and Section 300-115(a) tell us: To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are not disabled. Each public agency shall ensure that a continuum of alternative services placement is available.

In addition, the Regulations prohibit the IEP team from denying placement in an age appropriate general education classroom solely because the student requires curriculum modifications.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IA</td>
<td>Instructional Aide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAE</td>
<td>Interim Alternative Educational Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Intellectual Disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDEA</td>
<td>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEE</td>
<td>Independent Educational Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEP</td>
<td>Individualized Education Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFSP</td>
<td>Individualized Family Services Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>IS</td>
<td>Independent Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISA</td>
<td>Individual Services Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPS</td>
<td>Individualized Service Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITP</td>
<td>Individualized Transition Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LICI</td>
<td>Licensed Children's Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>Local Education Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEP</td>
<td>Limited English Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LRE</td>
<td>Least Restrictive Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD</td>
<td>Manifestation Determination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCBA</td>
<td>No Child Left Behind (Act)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFA</td>
<td>Nonpublic Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>Nonpublic School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O&amp;M</td>
<td>Orientation and Mobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAH</td>
<td>Office of Administrative Hearings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCD</td>
<td>Obsessive Compulsive Disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCR</td>
<td>Office for Civil Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODD</td>
<td>Oppositional Defiant Disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHI</td>
<td>Other Health Impairment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OI</td>
<td>Orthopedic Impairment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSSEP</td>
<td>Office of Special Education Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSERS</td>
<td>Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OT</td>
<td>Occupational Therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDD</td>
<td>Pervasive Developmental Disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBIS</td>
<td>Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRIT</td>
<td>Pivotal Response Therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWN</td>
<td>Prior Written Notice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSP</td>
<td>Resource Specialist Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>Response to Intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAA</td>
<td>Specialized Academic Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBAC</td>
<td>Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBE</td>
<td>State Board of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIA</td>
<td>Special Circumstance Instructional Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEA</td>
<td>State Education Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELPA</td>
<td>Special Education Local Plan Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLD</td>
<td>Specific Learning Disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLP</td>
<td>Speech or Language Impairment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SST</td>
<td>Student Study Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAR</td>
<td>Standardized Testing and Reporting (replaced by CAASPP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWD</td>
<td>Students with Disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBI</td>
<td>Traumatic Brain Injury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TACCH</td>
<td>Treatment &amp; Education of Autistic &amp; Related Communication Handicapped Child/ren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USC</td>
<td>United States Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USOE</td>
<td>United States Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VL</td>
<td>Visual Impairment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# ABCs of SPECIAL EDUCATION

This tip sheet is created to assist educational professionals, students, and parents in understanding acronyms specific to special education to facilitate a collaborative and student-focused special education process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>504</td>
<td>Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAC</td>
<td>Alternative Augmentative Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABA</td>
<td>Applied Behavior Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADA</td>
<td>Americans with Disabilities Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADAH</td>
<td>Average Daily Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADD</td>
<td>Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARD</td>
<td>Alternative Dispute Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALJ</td>
<td>Administrative Law Judge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APED</td>
<td>Adapted Physical Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASD</td>
<td>Autism Spectrum Disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASL</td>
<td>American Sign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>Assistive Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCBA</td>
<td>Board Certified Behavior Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIP</td>
<td>Behavioral Intervention Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALPP</td>
<td>California Assessment of Student Performance &amp; Progress (formerly STAR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAS</td>
<td>Community Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHSEE</td>
<td>California High School Exit Examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CART</td>
<td>Communication Access Realtime Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCR</td>
<td>California Code of Regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCS</td>
<td>California Children's Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDE</td>
<td>Common Core State Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDS</td>
<td>California Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDF</td>
<td>Community Day School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFR</td>
<td>Code of Federal Regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHM</td>
<td>County Mental Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHA</td>
<td>Deaf and Hard of Hearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRS</td>
<td>Designated Instruction and Services (now Related Services)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMH</td>
<td>Department of Mental Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOJ</td>
<td>Department of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSM-5</td>
<td>Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th Edition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED</td>
<td>Emotional Disturbance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EHA</td>
<td>Education for All Handicapped Children Act (predecessor to IDEA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English Learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESY</td>
<td>Extended School Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAP</td>
<td>Free Appropriate Public Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBA</td>
<td>Functional Behavioral Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEAP</td>
<td>Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFAP</td>
<td>Family Foundation for Adoption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI</td>
<td>Home/Hospital Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL</td>
<td>Health Impairment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is a summary only and not legal advice. We advise you to consult with legal counsel to determine how this information may apply to your specific facts and circumstances.

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Graphic Bell Curve

Percentile

Standard Score

Standard Deviation

EXTREMELY BELOW AVERAGE
Skills in this area are substantially below most at the same age/grade level

SIGNIFICANTLY BELOW AVERAGE
Skills in this area are significantly lower than most at the same age/grade level

BELOW AVERAGE
Skills in this area are similar to others in the same age/grade level

AVERAGE
Approximately 68% fall into this range

ABOVE AVERAGE
Skills in this area are higher than many others at the same age/grade level

SIGNIFICANTLY ABOVE AVERAGE
Skills in this area are significantly higher than most at the same age/grade level

EXTREMELY ABOVE AVERAGE
Skills in this area are substantially above most at the same age/grade level
Agreements
To Enhance Team Communication

Please:

➢ Silence all Electronic Devices
➢ Honor Time Limits
➢ Follow the Agenda
➢ Communicate Clearly and Listen Actively
➢ Respect Others When They are Talking
➢ Be Aware of Your Own Body Language
➢ Respect the Views of Others
➢ Share Your Views Willingly
➢ Ask and Welcome Questions
➢ Be Open to Ideas and Views Presented

EC 56341.1(h) It is the intent of the Legislature that the individualized education program team meetings be nonadversarial and convened solely for the purpose of making educational decisions for the good of the individual with exceptional needs.
## Active Listening

**Professional Communication Skills**

Your ability to listen actively may be one of the most vital professional skills you can master. Active listening takes energy, concentration, and practice. It demonstrates on a conscious and sub-conscious level that you truly care about the client and are eager to understand what makes them special. Here is a basic outline of active listening techniques.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>To Do This</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENCOURAGING</td>
<td>To convey interest and encourage the other person to keep talking</td>
<td>Don’t agree or disagree; use neutral words; use varying voice intonations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLARIFYING</td>
<td>To help you clarify what is said and to get more information</td>
<td>Ask questions; restate wrong interpretation to force speaker to explain further</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESTATING</td>
<td>To show you are listening and understanding what is being said. To check your meaning and interpretation</td>
<td>Restate basic ideas and facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFLECTING verbal</td>
<td>To show you that you understand how the other person feels</td>
<td>Reflect the speaker’s basic feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARIZING</td>
<td>To review progress, to pull important ideas, facts and feelings together, to establish a basis for further discussion</td>
<td>Restate major ideas expressed including feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VALIDATING</td>
<td>To acknowledge the worthiness of the other person</td>
<td>Acknowledge the value of their issues and feelings. Show appreciation for their efforts and actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUILDING</td>
<td>To help build and continue the discussion. To offer other opinions</td>
<td>Ask questions, offer ideas or suggestions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFLECTING non-verbal</td>
<td>To convey and clarify the speaker’s non-verbal message</td>
<td>Verbalize the speaker’s body language and/or facial expressions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Group memory

Present Levels of Performance
What is it that the student knows, understands, and is able to do?
- Classroom Performance (including progress towards previous goals & objectives)
- Assessment Information

1. Strengths (+) - Based on the student's present levels, what are his/her strength areas?

2. Challenges (-) - Based on the student's present levels, what are his/her challenging areas?

Annual Goals and Benchmarks
What is it we want the student to know, understand, and be able to do in a year?

Special Education Services
- Placement Continuum of Options - In what Least Restrictive Environment can the goals be implemented? (Advantages/Disadvantages to placement options if needed)
- Services - What supplementary aids & services are needed to implement the goals?
- Transition (if applicable)

Parking Lot
Any topics communicated in meeting, which are not part of meeting outcomes. All topics listed to be discussed at later date.

Action Plan
Detail what needs to be done, who will do it and by what date/time.
Questions to Help Identify Interests

- Can you help me understand your concerns?
- What changes would you like to see happen?
- What would you suggest?
- How is this issue affecting the your child/student?
- How is the issue affecting the family?
- How is the issue affecting one’s work or classroom?
- If we tried your idea what do you think would happen next?
- What is it about that idea that seems most interesting?
- What about the current situation or proposal that concerns you most?
- What is your biggest concern in trying to resolve this issue?
- What would that mean to you or the child/student?
- What would the solution or idea accomplish?
- In what ways is that important to you?
- What would happen if we did not resolve the problem?
- What concerns you most about that idea?
- How have you tried to solve the problem in the past?
- What would you like to do in the future?
- How do you see the team working in the future?
- What would you like your role to be?
Facilitated IEP Meeting Quick Reference Guide

This product compiles frequently referenced educational information related to Facilitated IEPs in a simple, quick, portable format. This information is not intended to be a substitute for applicable federal, state or local laws, policies, and processes.

FACILITATED IEP MEETINGS (FIEP)

Facilitation is a voluntary process that is designed to facilitate communication and problem-solving. An FIEP meeting is when a facilitator assists the IEP team in crafting consensus agreements that lead to individualized educational programs with beneficial outcomes for students with disabilities.

WHO CAN BE THE FACILITATOR?

- A member of the team can facilitate the meeting
- A LEA representative with facilitation skills may be called in to assist the team reach consensus
- A trained, neutral facilitator from SELPA may be asked to assist
- As appropriate, students may be trained to facilitate their own IEP meetings

WHAT DOES A FACILITATOR DO?

- Focuses the IEP team on consensus decision-making to develop an appropriate IEP
- Guides the discussion by keeping the team's focused on the student
- Assists team to resolve conflicts and disagreements that arise during the IEP meeting
- Promotes open communication among all members of the IEP team
- Helps the IEP team develop and ask clarifying questions about issues
- Keeps IEP team members on task with the time allotted for the meeting
- Does not impose a decision on the IEP team
- Maintains impartiality and does not take sides (external facilitator)

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF FIEP?

- Builds and improves relationships between the IEP team members (parents and schools)
- Ensures the IEP meeting is student-focused
- Models effective communication and listening skills
- Clarifies points of agreement and disagreement
- Provides opportunities to resolve conflicts if they arise
- Encourages IEP team members to identify new options to address unresolved problems
- Costs less than more formal proceedings (due-processes with attorney fees)
- Less stressful than formal proceedings
- Supports better follow-through and follow-up
- Roles and responsibilities can be discussed and planned

Adapted from MCOE/SELPA 2015
PREPARING FOR FIEP
- Be familiar with facilitation techniques and strategies
- Facilitate collaboration and communication
- Identify issues and needs
- Address logistic elements (dates, time, place)
- Prepare/receive notice and respond as appropriate
- Gather data on present levels
- Participate in planning meeting if appropriate
- Be willing to discuss options
- Share questions with school staff at least 3 days prior to meeting

PARTICIPATING IN FIEP
- Come to meeting with Expectations for balance, open discussion, and respectful interaction
- Make introductions
- Review agenda, ground rules, and purpose of meeting
- Listen attentively, remain objective
- Participate actively
- Speak in clear, plain language
- Maintain confidentiality
- Focus on student needs based on data
- Utilize interest-based problem-solving strategies
- Follow legal mandates for IEP meetings
- Involve the student as appropriate

AFTER THE FIEP
- Distribute/receive IEP documents as appropriate
- Review consensus decisions
- Monitor Implementation of IEP
- Gather data on progress towards IEP goals
- Reflect on what worked Well and areas of need
- Make notes for future FIEP meetings
- Continue to facilitate Collaboration and Communication
- Debrief as a team

MEDIATION
A facilitated IEP is not the same as mediation. Mediation is used to deal with a broader range of issues in special education than in an IEP meeting. Mediation occurs outside of an IEP meeting when you have already used your ADR structure, and where there is significant disagreement that the parents and the IDEA are unable to resolve, but has not risen to the level of due process.

HELPFUL RESOURCES
- Mendocino County SELPA – www.mcoe.us/selpa
- California Department of Education – www.cde.ca.gov
- Office of Administrative Hearings – www.oah.dgs.ca.gov
- CADRE – www.cadre.org
- Local Education Agencies – District Policies and Procedures

Quick Guide, adapted with permission, from the Region 4 Education Service Center, Houston, Texas

Adapted from MCOE/SELPA 2015
10 Tips for Breaking An Impasse

1. **Restate agreements.** Praise group for all the hard work and discussion. "Wow, we got a lot done in this meeting so far!" "I think we've had some great discussions, we agreed to... and we are almost finished..."

2. **Take a short break** (even 10 minutes). Often things look different and people are easier to work with when you reconvene.

3. **Focus on the future.** Remind participants that the past is just that – the past. IEP's are future oriented document. What do we think is needed for tomorrow?

4. **Suggest a trial period** or plan – with a reconvene to see how it’s working.

5. **Brainstorm** – "let’s think outside the box”.

6. **Reality check.** State the facts. That is not an IEP team decision. That goal does not address an area of need.

7. **Refer back to your agenda** – helps prevent members from jumping to the desired outcome without considering all the other things that are part of the process.

8. **Make it visual!** - pro's/cons lists, strengths/needs lists,

9. **Humor** - with caution...

10. **Offer FAPE** – when all else fails the district/LEA has the responsibility to make an offer of Free Appropriate Public Education. Well now that we have had a vigorous discussion, we are now prepared to make an offer of FAPE...
TESTED TIPS FOR IEP MEETINGS
by Marshall Peter
Executive Director/Direction Service, Director/CADRE
mpeter@directionservice.org

What IEP Conveners Can Do (Pre-Meeting)

- Explain crucial nature of parent’s involvement and what will happen at the meeting
- Invite parents to bring anyone they wish
- Explain who will be there from the school and why. Ask the parent(s) if anyone has been left out
- Schedule convenient time and location, and ample time for meeting – very disruptive to have people coming and going
- Establish if parent(s) need help with transportation or childcare
- Invite parents to review relevant documents prior to meeting, encourage classroom visits
- Keep parents advised of progress on an ongoing basis – an IEP meeting is a bad place to spring a surprise

What IEP Conveners Can Do (During Meeting)

- Make parents feel welcome
  - Greet at door
  - Cup of coffee?
  - Same size chairs for everyone
  - Brief pre-meeting chit-chat and acclimatization
- Everyone introduce themselves and explain why they are there
  - Everyone be addressed with the same degree of formality
- Speak in clear, plain language – avoid jargon and discipline-specific terminology
- Have specific materials available that are referred to
- Focus on the child’s individualized needs – not your program, classroom, or resource limitations
- Listen carefully
- Maintain confidentiality – don’t discuss other students
- Don’t hurry
- Be honest and trust that the parent is also
- Be willing to say “I don’t know”
- Involve student for at least a portion of the meeting if they can contribute and always if 18 or over

What IEP Conveners Can Do (Post-Meeting)

- Review and evaluate
  - What worked
  - What didn’t
  - Incorporate into future meetings
  - Consider building meeting tip file for each child – sources of anger, joy etc.
- Send home thank you note
- Write down specific suggestions about things parents can do at home to help
Preparing Parents for an IEP – A Few Suggestions

- Prepare notes about what they want to learn/find out at the meeting
- Prepare notes about what they want their child to learn in school
- Bring a picture of your child if they won’t be attending
- "If this were your child...?" – questioning strategy
- Ask for additional time to consider important decisions if you’re uncomfortable making them on the spot at the meeting or want to get additional input.
- Look for opportunities to express gratitude to teachers and related staff
- Bring someone along as a source of support
- If compromising, define how and when to evaluate if compromise is working
- Try to remain calm
- Saying "I don't know what you mean" is a demonstration of confidence and competence
10 Things Never To Say In An IEP

How many of us have had a perfect summer ruined by finding ourselves knee deep in a special education due process hearing? How many times have we thought we would not even be here if we (or heaven forbid I!) had not said that at the individualized education plan meeting? In individual education plan meetings, educational administrators can almost guarantee a parent appeal by making misleading or unintentional comments by Kimberly Croyle

How many of us have had a perfect summer ruined by finding ourselves knee deep in a special education due process hearing? How many times have we thought we would not even be here if we (or heaven forbid I!) had not said that at the individualized education plan meeting?

Face it — some IEP meetings are grueling for parents and educators alike, and too often things are said that have unintended consequences or that we really do not mean. Unfortunately, if enough of those incidents occur, it tends to make parents believe we are intentionally misleading them and trying to deny their child a free, appropriate education.

Slips of the tongue can lead to bigger problems, such as due process hearings and complaints to the state education agency, not to mention accusations of discrimination and the legal action that follows. As an education lawyer who has spent plenty of time on special education matters, including a summer or two in due process hearings, I’ve compiled 10 things one should never say during an IEP meeting and why those verbal miscues will earn an invitation to a due process hearing. Alternative ways exist for getting your message across effectively.

• No. 1: “This is what we do for every student.”
You’re probably thinking you have seen students like this, with this same diagnosis, and this is what works. While your heart may be in the right place in wanting to find something that works, your words have it all wrong. Remember, state and federal laws require the IEP be “individualized” not cookie cutter programs.

When you say to parents “We do it for every student,” you revert back to a cookie cutter IEP. Quite simply, the school system’s mandate is to consider the student’s individual and unique abilities in drafting an IEP and failure to do so may result in the denial of a free, appropriate public education.

Instead, say what you really mean — "We have tried this approach before with other students who have had similar abilities and have been very successful. This is why we think it is appropriate for your child.”

• No. 2: “Let’s wait and talk about that some other time.”
What you really mean is you have been in the meeting for hours and have more that you have to get to! Patience, my friend. Although this may be your third IEP meeting of the day, it is the one and only meeting — and certainly the most important — for the parents sitting with you.

If you find yourself replowing the same ground again and again, instead of putting it off for another day, take a soda break or, better yet, try putting the issue aside for later in the meeting and returning to it at the end of the meeting. Remember, timelines for eligibility and developing the IEP must be scrupulously followed and the failure to do so may result in a finding adverse to a school system. Consequences for violating the timelines could include compensatory education, if you’re lucky, or residential placement if you are not.

• No. 3: “They may do that in Perfect School District, but we don’t do that here!”
While it can be extremely frustrating to have a bygone IEP held up as the perfect IEP, take a deep breath and remind yourself that each state and each year is different. Remember that your state may not require the
IEP to be a Cadillac, just a serviceable Chevrolet. Your obligation is to develop an IEP that meets the individual needs of the child, not parrot what has been done in the past.

Take the time to explain to the parents the differences in your state’s regulations and those with which they may be familiar. In addition, explain that the IEP process must be followed each year and that while you cannot just rely on past IEPs, neither can the parents. You’ll be pleasantly surprised how that simple explanation will often make a big difference in their understanding.

• No. 4: “We can’t afford that piece of equipment.”
  What you really mean is that you can’t afford that piece of equipment. Unfortunately, there is no escaping the bright line rule handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court that prohibits a school district from considering cost as a factor in determining whether a piece of equipment needs to be provided to a child with disabilities. Rely on the cost of an item to exclude it from the IEP and you will surely spend a few days with an independent hearing officer in a due process hearing.

  Instead of asking the cost, ask whether the piece of equipment is necessary as a related service? Does it need to be used in all environments, such as the home, or is it something that stays at school? If you find you do need to list a piece of equipment on the IEP, be careful how you list it. If you list the brand name, that is what you need to supply, even if that brand is no longer manufactured or is obsolete.

• No. 5: “We never provide one-on-one aides for students.”
  Although this may have been drilled into your head at numerous training sessions, this should not be part of your IEP meeting lexicon. Instead, ask what the parent is really asking for. If it is constant adult supervision, then say so. If it is someone to provide individual instruction to the student, then consider a change in placement or pull-out services. Throw out the negatives and start telling the parents what you do provide and how you can address the educational needs of their child.

• No. 6: “We cannot hire another nurse just for your child.”
  I know it seems as if this response would be preferable to explaining to the board of education that it now must hire a full-time nurse. If you choose to handle it this way, you won’t be spending your summer by the pool. Instead, you’ll get to spend your time with the school district’s attorney preparing for direct and cross examination.

  While it is often difficult to draw a distinction between nursing services and medical services, that is precisely what you must do. If the student needs nursing services to assist him or her in taking part in the educational process, then that is what must be provided — period.

• No. 7: “We’ve spent too much time on this already, let’s move on.”
  Face it, sometimes you are not going to be able to agree. While the development of the IEP is supposed to be a collaborative process where, ideally, the team reaches consensus on each and every item contained in the IEP, sometimes that is not going to happen.

  When it becomes clear consensus will not be reached, remember that a decision still needs to be made. Instead of being argumentative, explain to the parents it appears the team is unable to reach agreement and that, as the administrator, it is your responsibility under the law to make the final decision, and then do it.

  Do not forget to provide the parents with their procedural safeguards and prior written notice.

• No. 8: “We don’t think that is appropriate, but if you want it, we’ll put it in the IEP.”
  This comment by a school district administrator is a natural consequence of not making the decision required in No. 7. Too often we add items to the IEP we know are inappropriate in order to appease the parents.
When faced with this temptation, remember the first rule in school law — nice guys and gals finish last. You have an obligation to the child to develop an appropriate IEP that will provide educational benefit to him or her, not to appease the parents, as appealing as that may be during a tense moment. If it is on the IEP, anyone (including the due process hearing examiner) who looks at it will have no legal basis to ignore your peace offering and will expect it to be implemented.

**No. 9: “That behavior has nothing to do with your child’s disability. We don’t need to address it in the IEP.”**

At this point, you are probably thinking that working in the personnel department cannot be all that bad. Relax and remember you need to view the child as an individual, not just through the lens of his or her disability.

Failing to assess how the child behaves, regardless of his or her disability, will almost always result in a skewed picture of that child. It is only through good observation and management of these behaviors that you can gauge whether the child is obtaining meaningful benefit from the IEP. Failure to consider this simple proposition may lead to inappropriate placement and will surely cause undue stress in any classroom.

**No. 10: “I cannot authorize that. We’ll have to get approval from the board of education.”**

Oh ye of little faith! It’s not so bad. While it may be difficult for the school board to understand, it has no say in whether anything on the IEP stays or goes. Simply put, it is the IEP committee’s job to determine what is and what is not appropriate and, if it is appropriate, the school system is obligated to provide it.

As a result, you must keep the IEP process collaborative as problems mount when dissension arises as to what is or is not appropriate. Although everyone on the team does not need to agree, each at least needs to buy in to support the decision of the team.

Above all else, the key to making special education work is developing an open and honest line of communication with the parents of a special education student. What you say and how you say it can make all of the difference.

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ACTION PLAN

What will happen?  Who will complete?  When will it be completed?
IEP Meeting Agenda

Start Up
- Welcome, purpose
- Introductions
- Outcomes & agenda overview
- Time Limits

Present Levels of Performance
What is it that knows, understands, and is able to do?
- Assessment Information
- Classroom Performance (including progress towards previous goals & objectives)

Eligibility
Is eligible for special education services?

Annual Goals and Benchmarks
What is it we want to know, understand, and be able to do in one year?

Special Education Services
In what Least Restrictive Environment can the goals be implemented?
- Placement and Service Supports- What placement and supplementary aids & services are needed to implement the goals?
- Accommodations

Closing
- Confirm agreements, complete paperwork, get signatures
- Review action plan items, as developed
Outcomes for IEP

By the end of the meeting, we will have:

1. An understanding of Family concerns/questions:
   - Accommodations, Supports and Services
   - Homework Organization Plan, Completed Work Turned In
   - School Enjoyment, Positive Behavioral Strategies

2. An IEP team understanding and consensus of:
   - Present levels
   - Eligibility
   - Goals
   - Placement/Services/Accommodations
   - Training and Support for Plan Implementation
   - Action Plan Items
   - ***Communication Plan Between School and Home
Communication Agreements
for IEP Meeting

☐ Communicate clearly and listen carefully
☐ Respect the views of others
☐ Share your thoughts willingly
☐ Ask and welcome questions for clarification
☐ Be open to the ideas and views presented
☐ Honor time limits and stay on task

EC 56341.1(h) It is the intent of the Legislature that the individualized education program team meetings be non-adversarial and convened solely for the purpose of making educational decisions for the good of the individual with exceptional needs.