

# FHSR

Foundation for Hearing and Speech Resources

# PARENT RESOURCES



FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT [FHSR.ORG](https://www.fhsr.org)  
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As an educator and cochlear implant recipient, I am passionate about helping students with hearing loss achieve their fullest potential. For some, that means having the extra support of an IEP or 504 plan. Parents play a crucial role in making sure these plans are created and implemented correctly, yet in my 8 years of experience in schools, I found many parents aren't aware of the IEP/504 process and their rights. I've prepared this packet of resources for you to help make navigating your student's IEP or 504 process easier. If you have additional questions or need more help, don't hesitate to reach out!

*Please note: These materials were prepared for IEP/504 plans administered under Illinois State Laws. You may still find some things helpful if you live outside of Illinois, but every state has different laws- make sure to consult with your state and school.*



# IEP Meeting Agenda and Preparation

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## Agenda for an IEP meeting

Although not every meeting will follow an agenda, this is a general plan for an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting. Anyone at the meeting can bring up a topic at any point, but that topic won't be discussed until its assigned time. For example, if a parent brings up placement during present levels or performance, it can be noted that it was brought up but should not be discussed until the placement portion of the meeting.

- Welcome, purpose, and roles of individuals in the meeting
- Introductions
- Parent input and concerns
- Present levels of performance
  - What the student knows, understands, and is able to do
  - Classroom performance (including previous IEP and progress on previous goals, if the meeting is an IEP review)
  - Assessment information
- Annual Goals and Benchmarks
  - What is it we want the student to know, understand, and be able to do in a year?
- Accommodations and modifications
- Testing that the child will participate in
  - Accommodations needed for testing
- Special Education Services
  - Placement
    - What is the least restrictive environment in which the goals can be implemented?
  - Related Services
    - What supplementary aids and services are needed to implement the goals?
- Extended School Year (see below for more information)
- Transportation
- Transition (If applicable)
  - Transition from school to school or, at 14 ½ and older, the transition after high school



## Things to consider when discussing placement and services for your child with hearing loss

- Classroom size
  - How many kids?
  - How many adults?
  - Background noise in the classroom
- Remote Microphone (RM)/Frequency Modulated (FM)/Hearing Assistive Technology (HAT) systems
  - Personal or district provided?
  - Is there a soundfield system?
- Structure of Day
  - Full day
  - Half day
- Services (Are these services pull-out or push-in? For how many minutes?)
  - Teacher of the deaf or hearing itinerant
  - Speech
  - Occupational therapy
  - Physical therapy
- Least Restrictive Environment
  - This is your child’s access to peers who are typically developing and typically hearing. The right to be educated in the “least restrictive environment" (LRE) means that a student who has a disability should have the opportunity to be educated with non-disabled peers, to the greatest extent appropriate.
  - Will the home school or the hearing loss classroom/school be the least restrictive environment for your child?
    - If in their home school, will your child understand the language that their peers use? Will they understand what their teacher is saying? Will their peers be able to understand what they are saying?
    - What is your child’s access to the curriculum in the classroom? What accommodations and modifications are needed?
    - Depending on your child’s language, academic and support that they need, a deaf and hard of hearing classroom or school may be the least restrictive environment that will allow for their success.



## General things to keep in mind about kids with hearing loss

- Many children with hearing loss need to be explicitly taught vocabulary and language.
  - What is your child’s vocabulary level? Is it similar to peers’ in their classroom?
  - Children with hearing loss tend to have a harder time learning language incidentally than their hearing peers.
- Self-Advocacy (age dependent) goals to consider:
  - Changing their batteries on their hearing devices
  - Using simple and complex repair strategies in small and large groups and in new settings, such as the mainstream. These repair strategies include:
    - Identifying communication breakdowns and how to solve them with peers and adults
    - Asking for repetition, clarification, more information, and visuals
    - Ability to describe their hearing loss
    - Using repair strategies with peers and adults (“Can you say that again?”, “It is easier to hear you if you look at me”, “I didn’t hear you, can you say that louder?”)
  - Self-sufficiency with hearing devices and Assistive Listening Devices/Remote Microphone (ALD/RM)
  - Troubleshooting devices with prompting and independently
  - Having an understanding of how to navigate a large group
  - Sitting near teacher or speaker
  - Visually attending to the speaker
  - Raising hand and waiting to be called on
- Social/Emotional goals
  - Working through hard situations and feelings without shutting down or getting quiet
  - Using words to vocalize emotions and what the student needs to make it better
  - Being able to enter unfamiliar situations, actively participate and use repair strategies (small group, large group, sport activities, family parties, after school events)
  - Having a growth mindset, being able to work through things that are hard and know when to ask for help
- Children with hearing loss may have difficulty following multi-step directions and need to be in a setting where they can be given extra time and repetition to be successful. Your child needs to be in a setting where the staff understands their needs and how to assist them.



## Extended School Year (ESY)

- ESY is similar to summer school. There are set instructional minutes with a special education teacher or a teacher of the deaf. ESY helps minimize the amount of time a child does not have education throughout the summer. Every ESY program is different in the amount of time per day and weeks per summer.
- ESY is determined by a variety of factors, which must be examined when considering if a student should receive ESY services. These factors include, but are not limited to:
  - the degree of impairment
  - student's progress
  - regression and recoupment
- For more information, [click here!](#)

## General points about an IEP

- Exercise caution when using the term “best.” It is recommended to use the term “appropriate.” (A school district does not have to provide you with the “best,” they only need to have something “appropriate.”)
- During an initial, 3-year re-evaluation meeting, or annual meeting, make sure to correct any errors you see on reports. Give your corrections to the IEP administrator who gave you the paperwork.

All resource materials from FHSR are intended only as guides and are NOT to be understood as legal advice. For specific legal advice, please consult an attorney.  
These materials were prepared for residents of Illinois.



## Accommodations and Recommendations for Students with Hearing Loss

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Listed below are some accommodations and recommendations that can be implemented in your child's classroom. This list is not inclusive of all the possible accommodations and recommendations that can be added to your child's Individualized Education Plan or 504 plan.

- Assistive technology (Additional technology that can be added to your child's hearing devices or the classroom)
  - FM/RM/HAT/ALD system
    - Personal microphone
    - Classroom microphone
    - Soundfield system
- Preferential seating
  - A place in the classroom where the student can see the speaker's mouth and hear the speaker clearly
  - Away from classroom distractions and noises such as a fan or a heater
- Modified classroom acoustics to minimize the amount of reverberation or echo in the room. These also help with absorbing additional background noise:
  - Rugs
  - Acoustic tiles on windows or ceilings
  - Pads on bottom of chairs
- Access to visual accommodations:
  - Speaker
  - Board
  - Captions
- Closed captions
- Repetition of directions or important information
- Repetition of questions or statements from other students
- Supplemental print materials:
  - Visual aids
  - Pictures when learning new concepts
  - Written directions
- Daily check of student's listening devices and assistive listening system
- Pre-teach, preview and rehearse new vocabulary and concepts
- Gain student's attention prior to speaking

More accommodations can be found [here](#).

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## Parent Rights

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As a parent, you have many responsibilities and rights. Some of these may include:

### Education

- Your child is entitled to a free, appropriate public education (FAPE), meaning an education provided at no cost to you that meets the unique educational needs of your child.
- You should be notified in writing whenever the school wishes to evaluate your child for potential special education needs, wants to change your child's educational placement, or refuses your request for an evaluation or a change in placement.
- You may have your child educated in the least restrictive school setting possible. The school should make every effort to develop an educational program that will provide your child with the services and support needed in order to be taught with children who do not have disabilities.
- You should be kept informed about your child's progress at least as often as parents of children who do not have disabilities.

### Child Records

- You have the right to access your child's education records at any time.
  - You may review all of your child's records and obtain copies of these records, but the school may charge you a reasonable fee for making copies. Only you, as parents, and those persons directly involved in the education of your child will be given access to personal records.
  - If you feel that any of the information in your child's records is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the privacy or other rights of your child, you may request that the information be changed. If the school refuses your request, you have the right to request a hearing to challenge the questionable information in your child's records; you may also file a complaint with your state education agency.

### Meetings

- You have the right to call a meeting to discuss concerns with your child's teachers and team.
- You should be given draft paperwork 3 days before an IEP meeting.
- You must be fully informed by the school about all of the rights provided to you and your child under the law.
- You may participate in the development of your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or, in the case of a child younger than four years old, the development of an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- The IEP and IFSP are written statements of the educational program designed to meet your child's unique needs. The school must make every possible effort to notify you of the IEP meeting and to arrange the meeting at a time and place that is convenient for both you and the school.
- You may participate in all IEP team decisions, including placement.
- You may request an IEP meeting at any time during the school year.





## Evaluation

- You may request an evaluation in writing if you think your child needs special education or related services.
- You may request a reevaluation if you think your child's current educational placement is no longer appropriate. The school must reevaluate your child at least every three years, but your child's educational program must be reviewed at least once during each calendar year through the IEP.
- You should be asked by your school to provide "informed consent" (meaning you understand and agree in writing to the evaluation and educational program decisions for your child). Your consent is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time.
- You may obtain an independent evaluation if you disagree with the outcome of the school's evaluation. This needs to be agreed upon by the school district for them to pay for the evaluation.

## Right to Mediation

- When a disagreement arises, parents are free to seek voluntary and impartial mediation to help find a mutually agreed-upon solution regarding the child's special education IEP.

## Due Process

- You may request a due process hearing or voluntary mediation to resolve differences with the school that can't be resolved informally. Make your request in writing, date your request, and keep a copy for your records.

More rights:

[ISBE parent guide of Educational Rights and Responsibilities.](#)

[ISBE parent guide of Educational Rights and Responsibilities](#)

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## 504 Plans

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A child with hearing loss may be eligible for a 504 plan, named for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. A 504 plan is a legal document that provides accommodations and support to a student to allow them to learn with their peers of the same age in the general education classroom. A 504 plan “levels the playing field” for a child through the use of assistive technology and accommodations. A student cannot have an IEP and a 504 plan at the same time.

- There are no specific laws governing how a 504 plan is to be implemented, so every school may implement them differently. However, each plan should include the following:
  - Accommodations (changes in the classroom such as extra time, preferential seating, and assistive technology)
  - Modifications (changes to the materials)
  - Services
  - Person Responsible for implementing plan
- All of these accommodations and modifications need to be reasonable and give the child equal access.
- Parents should be included in the 504 meeting and plan.
- A child on a 504 plan does not have goals like an IEP.
- 504 plans should be reviewed every year. Some schools review these plans every 2-3 years.
- Parents of a student with a 504 plan have less rights than a child on an IEP.
- If a parent disagrees with the 504 plan, they can ask for mediation from the state.
- If your child does not have an 504 plan or IEP and you believe they need services, you may contact your school and ask for a special education evaluation. When you request this evaluation, make sure to do it in writing (email or letter).
- If your child has an IEP and is doing well with fewer services and goals, the district may propose to move your child to a 504 plan. When considering this change, make sure to think about all of your child’s needs and whether they would be successful under the new plan.

For more information [click here](#).

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