

Families Reimagining Inclusive Lives- FRIL

Questions and Answers about Your Child's Transitions through the Lifespan



What is the difference between an IEP and a 504 plan?

- An Individualized Education Program (IEP) provides specialized instruction. A 504 plan provides accommodations.
- The 504 plan focuses on **how** the student is learning, but IEP focuses on **what** the student is learning.
- Each state receives additional funding for eligible students with IEPs but does not receive additional funding for 504 plans.

How do I know if my child is eligible for an IEP?

A student needs to have one or more of the 13 listed disabilities identified on the Office of Dispute Resolutions web page [Who Is Eligible for Special Education](#)?

How do I know if my child is eligible for a 504 plan?

A student with any disability is eligible for a 504 plan.

Are both an IEP and a 504 plan under the same law?

No, a 504 plan is required because of the Rehabilitation Act—a civil law, and an IEP is required because of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)—an education law.

Does the 504 plan and IEP have anything in common?

Yes, both must have consent from the parent/guardian and are of no cost to the parent/guardian. Additionally, both work to meet the needs of the person receiving the plan.

Why does Inclusion matter?

Inclusion is a universal right! The meaning of inclusion is a person with a disability has the same rights, access, and choices as everyone else in the community.

What transition strategies benefit my child from Early Intervention (EI) to high school?

- No matter what the transition is, schedule visiting days so you and your child can become familiar with the facility and identify needs for support.
 - Whether it is a visit to the school or even an IEP meeting, introduce your child and share their strengths with a focus on the positives.
 - While utilizing these strategies, communicating concerns to the IEP team will always benefit your child during any transition.
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Why Is inclusion in the classroom Important?

Research shows that a student with a disability, their peers/classmates, teachers/staff, and their family all benefit from classroom inclusion of students with disabilities. (["PADDC Inclusive Education Position Paper"](#))

What is a good way to introduce my child to faculty and the IEP Team?

Using a one-page "student snapshot" is an effective way to introduce your child to the team and easily and succinctly communicate information about your child to school staff.

What should I put in my child's Student Snapshot?

Consider including:

- Current photos
- Strengths/challenges
- What your child is motivated by/discouraged by
- Any other relevant information you and your child think the staff should know

Is self-advocacy important?

Yes!

- Self-advocacy can build a student's confidence and self-esteem as they develop skills like problem solving and public speaking.
- Being a self-advocate may help a child gain access to resources that can help them achieve goals and improve their life.

What rights do I have as a parent?

- Parents who speak a language other than English have a **right** for translation and interpretation services.
- No matter if it is an IEP meeting, a report card conference, an orientation, etc., a parent may request language translation services from the special education team.
- It is the responsibility of the school to provide translation of special education information upon request from the parents (IEP, 504 plans, Evaluations).

Can a student lead an IEP Meeting?

Yes!

- When a student leads an IEP meeting it is a great way of getting them involved in their education and allows them to practice lifelong skills in a safe environment.
- Active involvement in IEP meetings, for example with transition planning, will help the student prepare for life after high school, such as employment, higher education, and independent living.

10. What are the requirements for transition in the IEP?

- In Pennsylvania, when a student turns 14, the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) must include a transition plan.
- Whenever transition is being discussed, the school is required to invite the student to the IEP meeting.
- An IEP must be updated each year, however, it can be updated more frequently on an as-needed basis.

What is Person Centered Planning?

- Person Centered Planning helps amplify the voice of the person and identifies how to find or develop support and discover what it takes to live the lives they want to live.
- With a good support system Person Centered Planning will help someone focus on current situations and stages of life
- This is a stepping stone to look ahead to expand life experiences that will move them towards an inclusive, productive life in the future.

What is a key factor for a successful transition?

- Literature shows that parents' expectations are the key factor in a successful transition, as noted in the VCU (Virginia Commonwealth University) Center on Transition Innovations publication "[Expectations of Families with Young Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities for Postsecondary Education](#)" (PDF).

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