



WELCOME !!

Please Fill Out the Attendance Form

Parent Involvement in Special Education: Overview of Your Rights



Engaging Parents of Students with Disabilities is a partnership between the New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (NJOSPE) and SPAN Parent Advocacy Network.

Who Is SPAN?

SPAN PROVIDES:

- TRAINING
- TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
- INFORMATION
- SUPPORT



...to parents who have children birth through 26, including children who have special needs or are at risk.

SPAN ASSISTS PARENTS TO:

- Communicate more effectively
- Increase knowledge
- Participate in decision-making
- Be informed about their child's disability/special health care needs
- Meet other parents



**TOGETHER!
Families Can Make A Difference**

- Improve Special Education Programs & Services**
- Improve Student Outcomes**

Assistance is available for schools and districts and for parents and parent leaders to enhance family engagement to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

Workshop Objectives

As a result of this workshop, participants will:



- Have increased knowledge of the special education process
- Learn strategies to foster parent involvement in the special education process

Basic Rights of IDEA



- Provision of a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE)
- Development of an individualized education program (IEP)

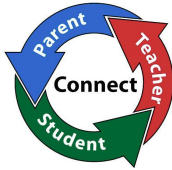
Purpose of the Law



- To ensure that children with disabilities receive educational benefit that allows them to progress from grade to grade, learning the knowledge and skills of their non-disabled peers
- To provide the services and supports needed for your child with disabilities to become a productive adult, contributing to the community

Your Role and Responsibilities

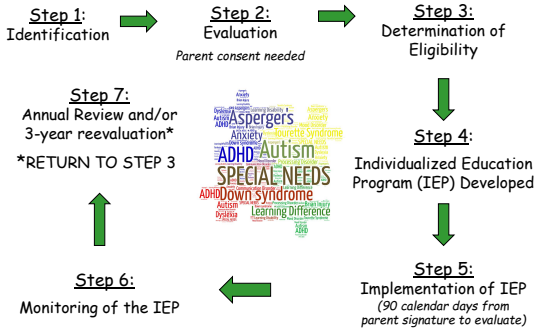
- An equal partner in decision-making, with the right to give or withhold consent for each evaluation and for initial services
- To be at every decision-making meeting
- To share your concerns for enhancing your child's education



Tool for Parent Involvement Positive Student Profile



Special Education Delivery Cycle



Step 1: Identification

Also called a "referral"

Once a referral is made:

1. Meeting held within **20 days** to determine need for evaluation
2. If evaluating- discuss testing needs
3. If not evaluating- discuss other services & interventions available to student



Step 1: Identification



- You must provide written consent to the initial evaluation and all future **evaluations**.
- If you do not consent, the district cannot evaluate but **may** request an impartial hearing.

Step 2: Evaluation

- At least two, but can be more, evaluations **must** be conducted.
- Evaluations may not discriminate against child and should be conducted in the child's language.
- Evaluations must be conducted in all areas of "**suspected**" disability.
- Reports should be sent to parents at least 10 days before eligibility conference
- A functional behavior assessment (FBA) should be conducted for children with challenging behaviors.



Step 2: Evaluation



- You have a right to an **independent evaluation** at the district's expense if you disagree with the evaluation.
- You do not need to explain your disagreement.
- The district cannot deny your request for an independent evaluation. It must grant it or request a hearing to prove its evaluation is appropriate.
- Your request must be in writing!

Step 3: Eligibility

- Your child has an identified, covered disability
- The disability affects his/her ability to learn
- Your child requires special education &/or related services to benefit from education



Step 4: The IEP

THE IEP TEAM:

- Parent
- At least one general education teacher
- Someone qualified to provide or supervise special education
- Someone who can interpret evaluation results
- Someone who can make commitments on behalf of the district
- Student, when appropriate



Step 4: The IEP

COMPONENTS:

- Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAPF)
- Measurable annual goals tied to general curriculum
- Special education & related services
- Placement in the least restrictive environment (LRE) with opportunities to interact with non-disabled peers



Step 4: The IEP

COMPONENTS:

- Parental concerns
- Transition Plan
- Participation in assessment
- Student Needs
 - Behavior
 - Language
 - Communication
 - Assistive Technology
 - Extended School Year (ESY)
 - Participation in non-academic activities
 - Needs of students who have visual or hearing impairments



Step 5: IEP Implementation

PLACEMENT:

- Your child has the right to be educated in the "least restrictive environment" (LRE) where their IEP can be implemented and they can make progress toward their annual goals.

CONTINUUM OF PLACEMENT:

- General education class, full time
- General education class with pull-out
- Self-contained class
- Out-of-district public or private placement
- Home or hospital instruction
- Residential placement



Step 5: IEP Implementation

PARENTAL CONSENT:

- You must consent to the **initial** IEP before it can be implemented
- If you do not consent to the IEP, the district no longer has the obligation to provide FAPE
- Parents can "withdraw" consent for services
- Not signing the IEP at the annual review meeting does not stop it's implementation!



Step 6: Progress Monitoring

- Parents have the right to be regularly informed of how their child is progressing towards mastering the goals in the IEP.
- Progress reports should reflect how the is progressing towards **EACH** goal in the IEP.



Step 7: Annual Review Re-evaluation

- Every year the IEP Team meets to review the past year and develop an IEP for the upcoming school year
- Every three years the IEP Team meets to determine whether the student continues to be eligible for special education services
- REMEMBER- THE STUDENT IS PART OF THE IEP TEAM!



Additional Rights

THE RIGHT TO PROGRAM ACCESS

Access to same variety of education & support services as non-disabled peers

PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

Safeguards ensure that the rights of children with disabilities and their parents are protected



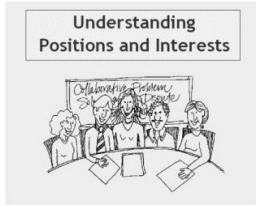
Questions?

Let's stop and take 5 minutes for questions.



Positions & Interests

- **Position:**
 - ❖ Specific solution proposed to resolve problem – the “What”
- **Interest:**
 - ❖ Underlying real need/desire that gives position its life (beliefs, values, expectations, fears, priorities, hopes, concerns) – the “Why”
- **Depositioning:**
 - ❖ Why is that solution so important to you?



Positions & Interests



Explain your interests

- Communicate and explain your interests.
- Make your interests come alive.
- Acknowledge the other party's interests.
- Share your interests and reasoning first and proposals later.

Adapted from Roger Fisher and William Ury (1981), *Getting to Yes, Negotiation Agreement without Giving In*

Interest-Based Negotiation

- Aims not to change the other person, but to change negotiation behavior
- Shifts from "your position versus mine" to "you and I versus the problem"
- Involves a mutual exploration of interests to yield more creative options.
- Uses objective criteria

Adapted from Highnam, K. (2001). Interest-based negotiation, CSSEA 2001 Fall Conference and AGM. Surry B.C, Canada. CSSEA; Fisher and Ury, *Getting to Yes*.

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Parent Involvement In Special Education

- Share your child's strengths.
- Gather and review information
- List goals you would like your child to achieve.
- Advocate for your child
- Keep the discussion child-focused
- Work collaboratively
- Maintain contact throughout the year
- Know what is in your child's IEP
- Stay involved



Reflection

- Where are you now?
- What do you still need to know?
- What is your next step?



Thank You
for joining us for this Presentation!

Please Complete Evaluations!



For more information contact us at:
SPAN
35 Halsey Street, 4th floor
Newark, NJ 07102
Phone: 973-642-8100
Toll free: 800-654-SPAN
Fax: 973-642-8080
www.spanadvocacy.org
