

# Preparing for a Virtual IEP Meeting: A Resource for Families



## BEFORE THE IEP MEETING

### WHAT TO EXPECT BEFORE THE MEETING



- **At least 10 days before the meeting**, an official email or mail **invitation** that has the meeting purpose, a list of who has been invited, and the website link to the meeting (or phone number information if the meeting is taking place by phone).
- A copy of the **draft** IEP and any other school documents to be discussed during the meeting **at least 5 days** before the meeting.

### PREP IN 5 STEPS



1. **Read** through your documents.
2. Talk with your child about their **strengths, hopes, dreams, goals, challenges, struggles, and how your child is involved in the community**. Involve your child in the virtual IEP meeting as appropriate.
3. **Talk** with your child's teachers.
4. **Write down your thoughts** to bring to the meeting.
5. **Prepare any documentation** about your child's services, needs, or growth that you wish to share with the IEP team.

### TECHNOLOGY TIPS



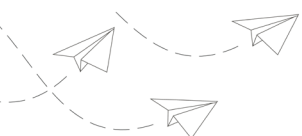
- If you are unfamiliar with the technology platform being used, **reach out** to the school for technology support ahead of time.
- **Charge** your device or plug into an outlet.
- Find a **quiet, distraction free** place to sit.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK



- Ask questions** as needed to make sure you have what you need such as:
- Will I be able to see the IEP on a shared screen in the meeting, so that I can see any changes being made in real time?
  - Will the teachers and providers be on screen during the meeting?
  - How will I receive the documents prior to the meeting? Will I receive them by email? By mail?
  - What is the best time and method to contact teachers and providers if I have questions or concerns?

**Note:** There is a **family support coordinator** in every jurisdiction that can help families to understand the IEP process and prepare for meetings.



# Preparing for a Virtual IEP Meeting: A Resource for Families



## BEFORE THE IEP MEETING

### WHAT TO EXPECT BEFORE THE MEETING



*Expect to get information from the school before the meeting.*

#### You should receive:

- An official email or mail invitation **at least 10 days before the meeting** that has the meeting purpose, a list of participants, and the website link to the meeting (or phone number information if the meeting is taking place by phone).
- A copy of the **draft IEP** and any other school documents at least 5 days before the meeting. The virtual platform that will be used for the IEP meeting is likely the one the school system uses for student learning. Make sure you **know how to use the virtual platform** before the IEP meeting. You can ask to confirm if Prior Written Notice is a document that is separate from the IEP document.

### PREP IN 5 STEPS



*Prepare for a successful meeting by reviewing your documents, talking with your child and teachers, and writing down your questions and thoughts.*

#### Step 1: Read through your documents

- Virtual IEP meetings follow the **same process** and must meet **regulations** in the same way as a face-to-face IEP meeting. The entire IEP team should attend, and you may invite other participants. For example, you can invite a trusted family member, friend, or advocate.
- **Read** the entire **draft IEP** and any other documents that come with it (e.g., recent progress report).
- Identify your **questions**. It will be helpful to write them down.
- Keep track of communications between you and the school team that take place before the meeting. It is best to ask for answers to your questions **in writing** (such as using email).

#### Step 2: Talk with Your Child

- Talk with your child about their **strengths, hopes, dreams, goals, challenges, struggles, and how your child is involved in the community** (including activities outside of the home).
- **Discuss ways to involve your child** in the virtual IEP meeting whenever appropriate. As children get older, they may have more to contribute to the meeting such as sharing their strengths and challenges as well as how the program is working for them.
- **Younger children** can participate by leading introductions, sharing what they like about school, and telling what is working well, for example. Your child does not have to stay for the entire meeting.

# Preparing for a Virtual IEP Meeting: A Resource for Families



## BEFORE THE IEP MEETING

### Step 3: Talk with Your Child's Teachers

- **Regular** communication between families and other IEP team members can help to build **positive relationships**. You can **touch base with your child's teachers and providers** before the day of the meeting if you have the opportunity. If you talk about the meeting ahead of time, you will not be surprised in the meeting.

### Step 4: Organize Your Thoughts to Bring to the Meeting

**You are the expert on your child** and a key part of the IEP process! IEP teams need your input and feedback. Here are some sentence starters for you to think through and complete to help prepare for your IEP meeting.

Jot down your thoughts for the sentence starters below:

- My child's strengths are...
- My child needs the most help with...
- At this time, it's really important to me that my child works on this year...
- The top two things that matter most to me about my child are ...
- Here are the three things that would be helpful to me if the school understood ...
- During virtual learning, my child is doing well with ...
- During virtual learning, my child is struggling with...
- My child is supported through virtual learning by...
- Details about my family life and traditions that I feel are important to share (because they are part of who my child is) are...

### Step 5: Prepare Any Needed Documentation

Prepare any documentation you have of: missed services; information about skill loss or growth; a list of new behaviors or needs you have noticed; any data you have collected that support your concerns; and any other information you wish to share with the IEP team.

# Preparing for a Virtual IEP Meeting: A Resource for Families



## BEFORE THE IEP MEETING

### TECHNOLOGY TIPS



*Get ready to use technology to fully participate in a virtual meeting with video conferencing.*

- If you are unfamiliar with the technology platform being used, **reach out** to the school for technology support ahead of time.
- Find a **quiet, distraction free place** to sit so you can hear and participate in the IEP meeting.
- Make sure that your **computer or device is fully charged** before your meeting. Find a comfortable spot near an outlet just in case.
- If any member of the IEP team (including parents) wants to record the meeting they must **notify and get permission** ahead of time.”

### QUESTIONS TO ASK



*Ask questions as needed to make sure you have what you need for the meeting.*

Here are some examples of questions you might email to the school:

- Will I be able to see the IEP on a shared screen in the meeting, so that I can see any changes being made in real time?
- Will the teachers and providers be on screen during the meeting?
- Should I plan to be on screen too?
- Can I participate via phone call? I am not comfortable being on video.
- Will an interpreter be available for me at the IEP meeting?
- Can I receive a copy of the procedural safeguards (parent rights) so that I can read them prior to being given them in the meeting?