

State of Connecticut



Department of Education
Department of Mental Retardation

Making the PPT Process
More Effective for You
and Your Child



■ Today you will learn more about:

- Changes to IDEA and the new IEP form
- Strategies for effective communication
- What to do when you disagree

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – IDEA 2004

- 1975 – Education of All Handicapped Children Act
- Reauthorized every five years
- Provides for a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities
- Last reauthorized in 2004
- Final regulations have been issued



The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – IDEA 2004

- The law tells us that parents are expected to be equal partners in planning and implementing their child's educational program.
- No Child Left Behind – Parent involvement and choice is expected
- IDEA – required parent participation since 1975 and funds the Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs)



IDEA '04 Requirement

- New monitoring priority in 2004 – in State Performance Plan

Increase the percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities.



Preparing for the Planning and Placement Team Meeting - PPT

The PPT meets to:

- ✓ Initiate and discuss evaluations
- ✓ Determine eligibility for special education and related services
- ✓ Develop, review and/or revise a child's Individualized Education Program (IEP).



■ The PPT consists of:

- The child's parent or parents;
- At least one regular education teacher if the child is being considered for regular education setting;
- At least one special education teacher;
- A representative from the district knowledgeable of the availability of resources;



■ The PPT consists of:

- An individual who can interpret evaluation results;
- Others at the discretion of the parent or agency; and
- When appropriate, the child.

■ Attendance at PPTs – IDEA 2004

A PPT member may be excused when:

- ✓ The parent and the agency agree, due to the fact that the member's area is not being discussed;
- ✓ The parent consents in writing, and the agency also consents; and
- ✓ The member submits, in writing to the parents and the team, his or her input into the development of the IEP prior to the meeting.



Building Blocks

- Knowledge of the child – who is this child?
How does this disability affect the child?
- What are visions and priorities for the child?
- Effective communication
- Desire to work together
- Knowledge of education laws
- Acknowledge different ways to participate



Communication Strategies

- Acknowledge your own communication style and feelings – be willing to move forward
- Encourage mutual respect
- Maintain open communication
- Establish a relationship with your child's educators
- Communicate on a regular basis – email, communication log, phone call, notes, quick chats etc.



Preparing for the PPT Meeting

- Gather important and relevant information – create a home file
- Think about the student's strengths and needs – use Positive Student Profile and Goals-at-a-Glance
- See the big picture – consider Futures Planning as an option
- Prioritize the most important issues
- Share your agenda with the team ahead of time



The IEP

- The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written plan that details each child's special education and related services.
- All students receiving special education must have an IEP.
- The IEP must be reviewed annually.



Components of the IEP:

The IEP must include:

- ✓ Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance – page 4-5
- ✓ A statement of measurable annual goals, including both academic and functional goals – page 7
- ✓ IDEA allowed for elimination of short term objectives – CT requires short term objectives.



Components of the IEP

Prior Written Notice – page 3

- ✓ Provides written notice of the action(s) that have been proposed or refused by the PPT;
- ✓ Team needs to indicate the reason for refusal of an action;
- ✓ Team needs to indicate the evaluation procedures, assessments, records or reports used for the action refused.

■ Reporting on Progress:

IEP must include:

- ✓ A description of how progress toward meeting annual goals will be measured and
- ✓ A description of when progress reports will be provided to parents.



IEP Includes Service and Supports that Allow the Child to:

- Advance towards meeting annual goals;
- Progress in the general education curriculum;
- Participate in extracurricular activities and non-academic activities; and
- Be educated and participate with children who do not have disabilities.



■ Related Services on the IEP

Related services are developmental, corrective, or supportive services required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education.

■ Examples of Related Services

- Assistive Technology
- Audiology Services
- Counseling
- Physical Therapy
- Parent Training
- School Nurse Services
- Psychological Services
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Language Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Social Work Services
- Transportation



IEP Services

- Must be based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable;
- Must refer to the child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum; and
- Must include a statement of the projected date for the beginning of the services, the frequency, the location and duration of services – page 11.

■ IEP and Secondary Transition

Beginning with the IEP to be in effect when the child turns 16 (IDEA 2004) and then updated annually thereafter, the IEP must include:

- ✓ Appropriate post secondary goals based on age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment and when appropriate, independent living skills – page 6.

■ IEP and Secondary Transition

The IEP must include:

- ✓ Transition services including courses of study;
- ✓ Age of majority information;
- ✓ Expected date of graduation (up to age 21) ; and
- ✓ If graduating or exceeding age eligibility, the completion date of the Summary of Performance (IDEA 2004) – back of IEP manual.

Changes and Amendments to the IEP

- Changes to an IEP can be made without a team meeting if parents and district agree and develop a written document to amend or modify the current IEP (IDEA 2004);
- Districts shall encourage the consolidation of re-evaluation meetings and other PPT meetings; and
- Amendments to the IEP can be made by either the PPT or the parents and the district and the IEP can be amended, rather than redrafting the entire document – unless the parent requests a copy of the revised IEP.



What to do when you disagree:

- Share your vision and priorities for the child.
- Try not to personalize disagreements.
- Refocus the discussion on the child's strengths and needs.
- Recognize that there is more than one way to do things.
- Share information.



Conflict Resolution Options

- Compromise
- Informal mediation or facilitated IEP – identify an ally in the school
- Go up the chain of command
 - ✓ Teacher
 - ✓ Principal
 - ✓ District Central Office–Sp Ed Director or Supervisor
 - ✓ Superintendent
 - ✓ State Department of Education



■ Resolution Options

- Mediation
- Due Process Hearing
- Advisory Opinion
- Resolution Session (IDEA 2004)
- File a complaint



Mediation

- Mediation is an informal process that is voluntary and confidential.
- Both sides must agree to mediation.
- What is said during mediation cannot be used as evidence in subsequent legal actions.
- The mediator provides a problem solving structure and process to assure everyone will be listened to.
- The mediation helps the parties begin a constructive dialogue.



Mediation

- The mediator does not make decisions for the parties.
- A successful mediation will result in the development of a plan that both parties are comfortable with and can implement together.
- A mediation agreement must be in writing and signed by both parties.

■ Due Process Hearing

- Due Process Hearing is a formal legal proceeding.
- The parties, their attorneys or advocates present evidence to the hearing officer.
- The hearing officer makes a decision and issues a written order.
- Either party can request a due process hearing.

■ Resolution Session

- Within 15 days of the Due Process Hearing request by a parent, the district must convene a meeting with:
 - ✓ Parents
 - ✓ Relevant PPT members
 - ✓ An agency representative with decision making authority
 - ✓ May not include the district attorney unless the parent's attorney is present.
 - ✓ Parties may agree, in writing, to waive the meeting or use mediation in lieu of resolution session.



Advisory Opinion

- The Advisory Opinion is an optional process in CT, available to parties of a due process hearing.
- Parties jointly request the Advisory Opinion before the hearing convenes.
- The Advisory Opinion is not available after the hearing has convened.



Advisory Opinion

- Each party has 45 minutes to explain their cases and then an additional 15 minutes to ask questions of any witness or elaborate on their case.
- The advisory opinion hearing officer will render an oral opinion within 30 minutes of the closing presentation.
- After rendering an opinion, the hearing officer may facilitate settlement discussions.

Filing a Complaint

- A complaint is filed with the CT State Department of Education (SDE) if a parent believes that the school did not follow the law.
- The request must be made in writing.
- The SDE will investigate the complaint and issue a written final decision in 60 days.
- The SDE will monitor each corrective action required by the final decision.



What Happens When It's Over?

- Win or lose, you still have to work together for the good of the child, so....
- Be positive
- Be respectful
- Be welcoming
- Be ready and willing to start over!



For More Information Contact:

- Your School, District, or B-3 Service Coordinator
- Your DMR Case Manager, Ed Liaison, Transition Coordinator
- The Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center, 1-800-445-2722 or visit the website at www.cpacinc.org
- The State Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education, 860-713-6910 or visit the website at www.sde.ct.gov
- The State Education Resource Center (SERC). (860) 632-1485 or visit the website at www.ctserc.org