

The Top Ten Things You Should Know About The IEP Process

POAC-NoVA Meeting

16 January 2010

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10. IEP Notice

- You must be given notice prior to your annual or initial IEP meeting. It details the reason for the meeting and who will attend.
- Notice may be given verbally or in writing.
- If you receive verbal notice, make sure to write down the information given to you. You might want to send an email back to whomever gave you notice to make sure that you understood the information.
- Use IEP Page 202 (Notice page) as a reference for the information that you need to have before the meeting.

9. Policy

- If a member of the IEP team refers to a particular FCPS, state or federal policy with which you are unfamiliar, ask to see it in writing at the IEP meeting.
- You may opt to stop the IEP meeting if this policy has a significant impact on the services for your child.

8. Autism Certification In Virginia

- Virginia does not offer teacher certification for Autism. The Commonwealth does offer certification for MR, ED and LD.
- POAC-NoVA believes that the BCBA (Board Certified Behavior Analyst) and the BCBS (Board Certified Behavior Specialist) are the “highest qualification” for certified teachers who work with students with an educational label of autism.

Autism Certification, Continued

- FCPS students have access to support from professionals with a BCBA or BCBS via ABA coach support for their teachers through either Enhanced Autism Program (EAP) services or at sites where there are three or more students receiving Level 2 autism services.
- Not all coaches have either a BCBA or BCBS. To find out whether an ABA coach assigned to your EAP site has this certification, and/or whether your child is receiving autism services in a site where 3 or more students receive similar services, ask your IEP team. They will be happy to give you this information.

7. Prior Written Notice (PWN)

- PWN can be requested if the school division proposes to initiate or make a change in identification, evaluation, or educational placement of your child.
- There is a PWN section of your IEP Page 323. Basically, it is notice for the contents of your IEP. However, you can request separate PWN for changes made or not made to your child's evaluation, identification, or educational placement in the form of a separate document.
- You can only request PWN when the meeting or discussion is governed by your procedural safeguards during an IEP meeting, addendum, evaluation, Manifestation Determination Review (MDR), or appeal meeting. You cannot request PWN at an informal meeting.

7. PWN, Continued

- PWN must include the 8 specific parts detailed in your procedural safeguards.
- Ask for PWN at your IEP meeting when the school division refuses to provide something for your child that you believe is necessary for your child to receive FAPE.
- POAC-NoVA recommends that you ensure the school documents your specific request (what you want the PWN to explain exactly) on IEP Page 309, so it is part of the IEP or addendum.

6. Date/Time of Your IEP Meeting

- The date and time of your IEP meeting must be mutually convenient.
- Try not to go over the IEP end-date. This is called the “Date this IEP will be Reviewed” on the front page. Start thinking about dates a month or two before the end date, and contact your case manager with mutually convenient dates/times.
- Try your best, but if you can not make a meeting before the end-date of your current IEP- don't worry. The last signed, agreed to IEP is still in effect, and FCPS must follow it until another IEP is signed in agreement.

5. Attendance

- Anyone can attend an IEP meeting with you.
- POAC-NoVA recommends that you bring someone with you to the meeting, since a support system is always helpful.
- You do not have to notify the school in advance who is attending, but it is polite.
- The people that you bring to the IEP meeting are considered part of the IEP team.

4. Duration of an IEP

- The IEP team decides the duration of the IEP.
- Most IEPs are written for one year, unless the team decides it should be a shorter time frame.
- You can request an IEP meeting at any time to discuss a change in goals, accommodations, placement, etc.
- When your child masters a goal during the span of their IEP, the teacher should request a meeting to discuss a new goal, or when appropriate, discontinuation of services.
- You can have multiple IEP meetings during the year.

3. Data Collection

- You have the right to request data whenever you want to check on your child's progress. Data is information collected from teachers as well as Speech, OT and PT itinerants who deliver related services.
- The school division must measure progress (at least) in the way it is agreed upon at the IEP meeting (see the checked boxes below the goals).
- Document the frequency with which you want to see all data that supports your child's progress grades on Page 309 of your IEP or addendum.
- POAC-NoVA's suggestion for frequency: every two weeks or at least once a month. This level of frequency provides you with sufficient time to catch problems in achievement goals and allows you to work with the teacher to discuss alternative methods to achieve the goal. At the IEP meeting, discuss a format for data collection, which will allow the teacher to provide you with data based on the recommended frequency.

2. More Goals Do Not Equal a Better IEP!

- IEP goals must be written for challenges that your child has for material that is below grade level. You can not write a goal for material that is on or above grade level that is part of the curriculum available to your child through their Program Of Studies.
- All goals must be measurable and within reach of your child's ability. Aim high!
- Choose the areas of need that have the most impact on your child. Because an area of need is not written into a goal, does not mean that the school can/will not address it during the school year.

2. More Goals, Continued

- Any needs that are not addressed through goals (but that you feel are significant) can be written on IEP Page 309.
- Sometimes, keeping an eye on an issue is enough, and it doesn't require a goal with data.
- With too many goals, we run the risk of not enough attention paid to any one area of need.
- Choose goals wisely. Think of your child's most significant needs and cut out the goals that can be worked on later.

1. Signature Page

- POAC-NoVA recommends that you do not sign the IEP at the meeting. Take it home, show it to your significant other, or just hold on to it for awhile and think about it.
- You can sign in agreement to portions of your IEP. For example, you can sign in agreement with the goals and accommodations/ modifications, but in disagreement with placement.
- Until you sign in agreement with the IEP that you just wrote with the team, the LAST agreed to IEP is still in effect.
- Do not feel pressured to sign the IEP right away, even if you are over the review date. Take your time and make sure you agree with the contents.

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Preferred to be called if you have questions!