



Understanding an Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Parent Input

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Parent input is vital in creating a successful IEP. Parents can give information on background and detail information on a student's strengths. Parents can also provide information on previous strategies and their level of success. Families can also provide information on their level of knowledge of the special education process.



Communicate

Communication is a two-way street. Avoid educational jargon and practice active listening skills. Effective communication allows for IEP team members with different knowledge to provide valuable input.



Questions

Seek clarification about the message. Give undivided attention. Restate and paraphrase to ensure that message are clear.



Perspective

Different backgrounds and experiences allow for collaborative development of an IEP.



Look to the Future

Take into account strategies that were implemented in the past, but develop a plan to meet the current and future needs of the student.



Step 1

Gather

- Build parent rapport throughout the year
- Personalize and maintain communication
- Provide methods of contact
- Develop a communication system



Step 2

Document

- Consider using a family survey
- Student background information
- Concerns over student growth
- Record options considered but not implemented



Step 3

Respond

- Treat family concerns with respect
- Provide enough time to listen and consider concerns
- Schedule more time if necessary
- Ensure that families understand decisions at the IEP meeting and follow up to maintain communication

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