



What Your Child's IEP Must Contain in California

A Parent's Checklist • Empowering Families. Supporting Students. Building Futures.

Federal law (IDEA, 34 C.F.R. § 300.320) and California law (Ed. Code § 56345) require every Individualized Education Program to include specific components. Use this checklist to review your child's IEP before and after every meeting. If something is missing, you have the right to ask for it.

1 | Present Levels & Measurable Goals

- Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP), including how the disability affects involvement and progress in the general curriculum
- Measurable annual goals — academic and functional — designed to meet needs resulting from the disability
- For students taking alternate assessments: benchmarks or short-term objectives
- How progress toward goals will be measured, and when periodic progress reports will be provided (e.g., quarterly)

2 | Services & Supports

- Statement of special education and related services, based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable
- Supplementary aids and services
- Program modifications and supports for school personnel
- Projected start date, frequency, duration, and location of ALL services
- Extended School Year (ESY) determination

3 | Placement & Participation

- Explanation of the extent (if any) the student will NOT participate with nondisabled peers in general education — the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) justification
- Accommodations needed for statewide and districtwide assessments
- If an alternate assessment is used: why the regular assessment is not appropriate and why the alternate assessment was selected

4 | Transition Planning (by age 16, earlier if appropriate)

- Measurable postsecondary goals — training/education, employment, and independent living where appropriate — based on age-appropriate transition assessments
- Transition services and courses of study needed to reach those goals
- By age 17: notice that rights transfer to the student at age 18

5 | California-Specific Requirements (Ed. Code § 56345)

- English learners: linguistically appropriate goals, objectives, programs, and services
- Low-incidence disabilities: specialized services, materials, and equipment
- Students who are blind or visually impaired: Braille instruction determination
- Students who are deaf or hard of hearing: consideration of language and communication needs, including opportunities for direct communication with peers and professionals in the child's language and communication mode
- Behavior that impedes learning: positive behavioral interventions and supports (BIP consideration)
- Pathway to a regular high school diploma — or alternate pathway information — where applicable

6 | Procedural Elements

- All required IEP team members present, or properly excused in writing (parent consent plus written input for excusals)
- Parent consent / signature page
- Prior Written Notice (PWN) for any proposed or refused changes, if applicable

Sources: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 34 C.F.R. § 300.320; California Education Code § 56345. This checklist is provided for general educational purposes by Dickerson Education Advocates, non-attorney parent advocates, and is not legal advice.