

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Roadmap for Physical Education

School physical education programs offer the best opportunity to provide physical activity to all children and to teach them the skills and knowledge needed to establish and sustain an active lifestyle.¹ Research shows that physical activity has a profound positive impact on health outcomes for all students including those with disabilities. Physical activity plays a vital role in a student's physical, emotional, and social development. Teachers strive to provide students with lifelong experiences so they can live a healthy life. Despite the documented benefits of physical activity on health, students with disabilities face many barriers that exclude them from full participation in physical activity through physical education, recess, sports, and exercise.³

An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is part of the educational process that allows students with disabilities to participate during physical education activities. Physical education and adapted physical education teachers are an integral part of the IEP team.² Teachers support student development by stating goals, assessments, benchmarks, and objectives for physical education that are specific to the student's needs. As the physical educator, you should be present in the meeting and take part in the discussion by suggesting accommodations that are age/ability-appropriate. This will help provide a safe, successful, beneficial environment for the student.

Unfortunately, in some districts, physical educators are not entirely involved in the process.² For example, physical education teachers do not get access to their students IEPs or they are not invited to attend the meetings, even though they have expressed the desire to be involved in the process. We hope that this resource provides some guidance to physical educators to be able to navigate through the IEP process while making the biggest impact on their student's health and wellbeing. The information presented in the roadmap could also help parents and other IEP members that are not familiar with IEPs.

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1. Advanced Solutions International, Inc. (n.d.). Is It Physical Education or Physical Activity? Retrieved January 8, 2019, from https://www.shapeamerica.org/publications/resources/teachingtools/qualitype/pa_vs_pe.aspx
2. Ellen M, K., & Daggett, S. (2006). Getting involved in the IEP process. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 77(7), 35-39.
3. Murphy, N. A., & Carbone, P. S. (2008). Promoting the participation of children with disabilities in sports, recreation, and physical activities. *Pediatrics*, 121(5), 1057-1061.
4. 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee Scientific Report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018

Special Education Law/Rights

There are three main pieces of disability rights law and guidance that directly relate to and/or affect physical education:

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973⁴ states that “no qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall be excluded from, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under” any program or activity that receives Federal financial assistance. Section 504 covers every student with a disability. Often, students who use a wheelchair but do not have any other limitations will fall under section 504.
- Office for Civil Rights (OCR) Dear Colleague Letter¹ does not specifically speak to physical educators; however, it affects athletic opportunities in all schools and may affect the goals and outcomes for some of your students. On January 24, 2013, the OCR issued a Dear Colleague Letter clarifying schools’ obligations under the Section 504 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to provide extracurricular athletic opportunities for students with disability.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)² requires public schools to make available to all eligible children with disability a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) in the “least restrictive environment”³ alongside their peers without disability as is appropriate to their individual needs.

Least restrictive environment is defined by the law as:

“to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities... are educated with children without disabilities, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from regular education environments occur only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.”

- Federal Register, August 1977, p. 42497



1. Dear Colleague Letter from Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Russlynn Ali.-Pg 1. (2018, September 26). Retrieved February 8, 2019, from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201104.html>
2. Idea Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. (n.d.). Retrieved February 8, 2019, from <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/>
3. Office of Special Education Programs Policy Letters Regarding Least Restrictive Environment. (2018, May 25). Retrieved February 8, 2019, from <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/letters/revpolicy/tpre.html>
4. Protecting Students with Disabilities. (2018, September 25). Retrieved February 8, 2019, from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>

Determining Eligibility

The referral process usually starts when a teacher, parent, or doctor notices that a student is not performing to set standards in the classroom. The concern is then brought to the attention of notified to the school counselor or psychologist. The next step involves gathering data regarding the student's academic progress through a meeting with the parents, a meeting with the student, student observations, and analysis of the students' performance. The students' performance analysis involves areas such as attention, behavior, work completion, tests, classwork, and homework.²

Students with disabilities should receive the same amount and quality of physical education as their non-disabled peers. Evaluation is the first step to ensure that students with disabilities are given equal opportunity to receive the same amount and quality of physical education as their non-disable peers. Physical education evaluations provide information in regards to the student's level of fitness, skill development, and physical education knowledge. This information is used by the IEP team to make decisions about placement, program planning, goals and benchmarks for the student. Evaluation should not be fully dependent on test scores.¹ Other forms of evaluations such as observations, informal assessment, student's input, parent input should complement test scores in order to make appropriate informed decisions about the student's needs.

This information assists school personnel to engage in specific practices to help the student become more successful in school. If these practices are unsuccessful, the student should participate in assessments for learning disabilities or other impairments to help determine qualification for special services.



1. Adapted Physical Education Advisory Council (n.d.). Evaluation and Eligibility for Special Education in the Area of Adapted Physical Education. Retrieved January 8, 2019, from http://www.nc-ape.com/uploads/2/0/9/0/20902480/nc-pe-ac_guidance_doc_-_evaluation_and_eligibility.docx
2. Bachrach, S. J. (Ed.). (2016, September). Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Retrieved August 14, 2018, from <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/iep.html>

What's an IEP?

The law requires that students classified as needing special education have an IEP. The school staff has the responsibility to provide special education services that are documented by an IEP team during a meeting to discuss how to address the student's needs.¹ The IEP team includes the student and his or her parents, the student's teachers, a counselor, an administrator, and a special education coordinator or teacher.²

The IEP has two general purposes:²

- 1) To set reasonable learning goals for a student, and
- 2) To state the services that the school district will provide for the student.

An IEP is similar to a map that allows parents to be advocates for their child's education. It also calls for parents to be involved when following this plan. However, trying to understand an IEP and its benefits can be an added responsibility for parents who have a child with a disability. Here is why parents must be involved with an IEP.

What is the difference between an IEP and a 504 Plan?

The processes to develop IEPs for students who required specialized instructions are controlled under IDEA.⁴ The IDEA process is more involved than that of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and requires documentation of measurable growth. Some students with disabilities do not require specialized instruction. However, equal access to public education and services need to be guaranteed for those students. A 504 Plan should be written and updated annually to ensure that the student is receiving the most effective accommodations for his/her specific circumstances to ensure their academic success and access to the learning environment that is the most appropriate for them.⁴

In some instances, a 504 Plan would address needs for a student with a temporary impairment or in remission so they can continue to participate in physical education while the episode is occurring. Impairments that are episodic in nature are in remission or are ongoing, while temporary impairments exist for a limited time span.³ For example, an impairment such as a broken leg may be a covered disability under the ADA Amendments Act. The intention of ADA Amendments Act is to make easier to prove that an impairment is a disability.

1. Idea Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. (n.d.). Retrieved February 8, 2019, from <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/>
2. New School Year & New to IEPs: What You Need To Know: NCHPAD - Building Inclusive Communities. (n.d.). Retrieved August 14, 2018, from <https://www.nchpad.org/1598/6620/New~School~Year~~~New~to~IEPs~~What~You~Need~To~Know>
3. Protecting Students with Disabilities. (2018, September 25). Retrieved February 8, 2019, from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>
4. Understood. (n.d.). The Difference Between IEPs and 504 Plans. Retrieved February 8, 2019, from <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/504-plan/the-difference-between-ieps-and-504-plans>

IEP Team

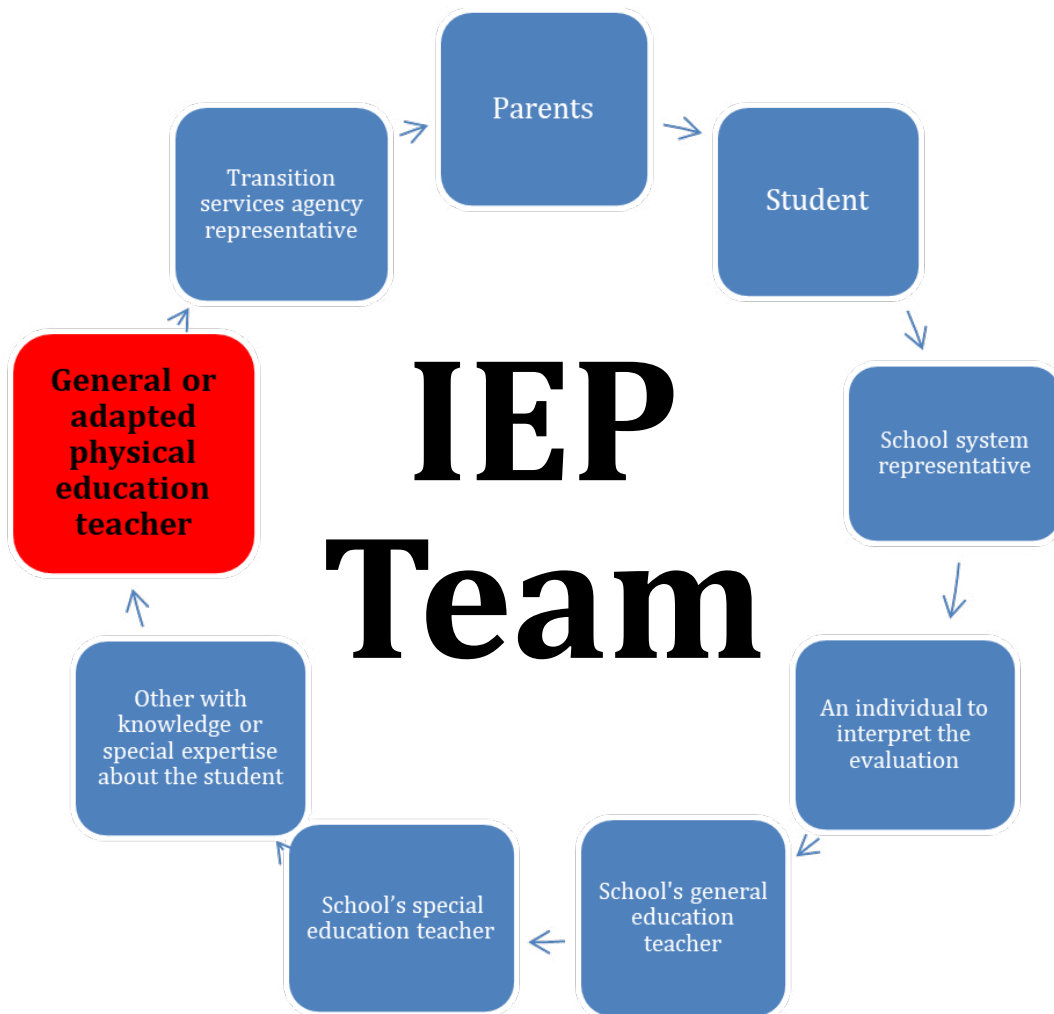
The law dictates that certain individuals must be involved in writing a student's IEP.

A meeting to write the IEP must be held within 30 calendar days of deciding that the student is eligible for special education and related services.

- Parents/Legal Guardians know their child very well and can talk about their child's strengths and needs as well as their ideas for enhancing their child's education.
- The student with the disability needs an opportunity to make decisions regarding their own education
- School system representative can share knowledge about special education services and educating students with disabilities.
- A teacher, educator, or the school district psychologist who can read and interpret the results of the IEP evaluation.
- The school's general education teacher must participate in discussions and decisions about how to modify the general curriculum in the regular classroom to ensure the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum and participation in the regular education environment.
- The school's special education teacher contributes important information and experience about how to educate students with disabilities.
- Physical education is a required component of special education. The general and/or adapted physical education teacher should be included as a member of the IEP team if the student is receiving specially designed physical education.
- Others with knowledge or special expertise about the student. Parents, for example, may invite an advocate who knows the student, a professional with special expertise about the child and his or her disability, or others (such as a vocational educator who has been working with the student) who can talk about the student's strengths and/or needs.
- A transition representative can be invited if the student is going from early intervention to school to help prepare students with disabilities that are transitioning out of school and preparing for adult life.

1. Guide to the Individualized Education Program. (2007, March 23). Retrieved August 14, 2018, from <https://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/spced/iepguide/index.html#review>

IEP Team



1. Guide to the Individualized Education Program. (2007, March 23). Retrieved August 14, 2018, from <https://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html#review>

Pre-meeting

An IEP meeting can be confusing particularly for those who are experiencing the process for the first time. Teachers can become familiar with the IEP process by asking the following questions before the meeting takes place. Teachers can help parents become familiar with the IEP process by providing information on what to expect during an IEP meeting.



Questions to Ask Before the IEP Meeting¹

- What strengths do the students exhibit during physical education?
- In what areas do you see the student struggle most in your classroom?
- What accommodations do you regularly provide for the student in your daily classroom instruction, and how effective do they seem to be for the student?
- What accommodations do you provide for assessments and how effective do they seem to be for the student?
- In what skill area would you place your highest priority of need for the student to receive special education instruction and services?

1. IEP Quality Project (n.d.). Teacher IEP Planning Sheet Directions & Guidance. Retrieved January 8, 2019, from https://iepq.education.illinois.edu/documents/teacher_planning_sheet.pdf

During the IEP Meeting

Parents know their child's strengths, abilities, and what makes them unique.² This information is relevant and necessary during the IEP meetings. Parents are one of the most important members of an IEP team. During an IEP meeting, teachers should encourage parents to communicate what is important to for them and the student, concerns, interests, likes and dislikes, and learning styles. By being an active IEP team member, you can ensure that the IEP is developed with thought given to long-term needs for successful adult life.

Questions to ask during the IEP meeting:

1. Did you understand the assessment results?
2. Will the goals, services, and accommodations proposed by the IEP team actually help the student and address the academic or behavioral weaknesses the team has identified?
3. Are the goals and services different from previous years' IEPs?
4. Does the IEP include services?
5. What is the student's setting?
6. What is the diploma pathway?
7. What was included in the final IEP? Does the IEP reflect what was discussed in the meeting?

Physical educators can help parents to understand the information that was presented during the IEP meeting by explaining:

- The assessment results.
- How are the goals and services different?
- Identifying what services are included in the IEP.
- What setting will the IEP be implemented within?



What to do if you are going to be absent at the IEP meeting:

Teachers may be excused from a meeting if their area of expertise is not going to be discussed or modified.¹ Teachers must have parents' written consent to be excused from a meeting. Teacher might be required to provide written input before the IEP meeting. Keep in mind that parents have the right to inform the school district if they don't want any team members to be excused from a meeting. The school can accommodate for you to be included at the meeting via phone call.

1. Do Parents Have to Excuse Members of the IEP Team? (n.d.). Retrieved February 8, 2019, from <https://www.wrightslaw.com/blog/do-parents-have-to-excuse-members-of-the-iep-team/>

2. New School Year & New to IEPs: What You Need To Know: NCHPAD - Building Inclusive Communities. (n.d.). Retrieved August 14, 2018, from <https://www.nchpad.org/1598/6620/New~School~Year~~~New~to~IEPs~~What~You~Need~To~Know>

Related Services

The IEP includes what type of supports and services the student will receive. For example, if the student is going to receive physical therapy the IEP will say how many minutes a week he or she will receive this therapy. The IEP could also include supplementary aids and services such as one-on-one aide, assistive technology, audio books etc.

A student may require any of the following related services in order to benefit from special education. Related services, as listed under IDEA, include (but are not limited to):¹

- Audiology services
- Counseling services
- Early identification and assessment of disabilities in students
- Medical services
- Occupational therapy
- Orientation and mobility services
- Parent counseling and training
- Physical therapy
- Psychological services
- Recreation
- Rehabilitation counseling services
- School health services
- Social work services in schools
- Speech-language pathology services
- Transportation



1. Individualized Education Plan (IEP). (n.d.). Retrieved August 14, 2018, from http://www.autism-society.org/living-with-autism/academic-success/individualized-education-plan-iep/#related_services

Writing the IEP

In 2015, the U.S. Department of Education issued a guidance letter that made it clear that all IEPs must be tied to state academic standards. For example, if the student is in the fifth grade, but manipulates objects at a third-grade level, the IEP goals must still be tied to the standards for the sixth grade.⁴ The team should write reasonable and measurable goals and objectives specific to each student's unique needs. For those students preparing for life after high school transition goals. Transition goals can address employment, education/training, and independent living.⁵

Physical Education goals should be written with the physical education teacher's input. In the event that the teacher cannot attend the meeting, the goals can be written in advance and discussed during the process. The team should track these goals and evaluate if the goals are met. The information included in the IEP should focus on the following areas:¹

- Education
- Physical Education
- Behavior
- Include benchmarks
 - Benchmarks are similar to the annual goals but benchmarks focus on accomplishments that show a path towards the accomplishment of annual goals.
- Skills learned
- Special Education Services
- Aids and Modifications
 - A modification changes what a student is taught or expected to learn.
- Modified Programs
- Accommodations and related services
 - Accommodations change how a student learns the material
- Assistive technology
- Additional support staff
- Medical services
- Transportation, which is not to impede regular school hours

1. Developing Your Child's IEP. (n.d.). Retrieved February 8, 2019, from <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/pa12/>
2. Individualized Education Plan (IEP). (n.d.). Retrieved August 14, 2018, from http://www.autism-society.org/living-with-autism/academic-success/individualized-education-plan-iep/#related_services
3. Roadmap to IDEA 2004: What You Need to Know About IEPs, IEP Teams, IEP Meetings - Wrightslaw. (n.d.). Retrieved August 14, 2018, from <http://www.wrightslaw.com/idea/art/iep.roadmap.htm>
4. SHAPE America. (2013). Grade-level outcomes for K-12 physical education. Reston, VA: Author
5. Transition Goals in the IEP. (n.d.). Retrieved February 8, 2019, from <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/transition-goals/>

Post-meeting Dispute Process

The student's IEP is reviewed by the IEP team at least once a year. Parents can request for the IEP to be reviewed sooner if they have any concerns. Again, parents are part of the review process and they can agree, disagree, or make suggestions for changes to the initial IEP. The meeting can be facilitated by an impartial person that is not an active member of the team but rather is there to keep the IEP team focused on developing the student's program while addressing conflicts as they arise.

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) has safeguards in place to ensure that parents can dispute and resolve conflicts to receive free appropriate public education for their child. If parents do not agree with the IEP, they may discuss their concerns with other members of the IEP team and try to work out an agreement. There are several options, including additional testing, an independent evaluation, or asking for mediation, or a due process hearing. They may also file a complaint with the state education agency.

Formal approaches to resolve a dispute

In mediation, parents and school personnel meet with an impartial person (mediator) and they talk openly about the areas where there is a disagreement. Mediation provides a positive, less adversarial approach to resolving disputes between parents and school systems. With the assistance of a skilled and impartial mediator, the parties involved in the dispute can communicate openly and respectfully about their differences as they try to reach an agreement.

A formal state complaint may be filed by parents or a local or out-of-state organization. The complaint is written directly to the State Education Agency (SEA). The complaint must describe what requirement of the IDEA the school has violated.

During a due process hearing, each party has the opportunity to present their views in a formal legal setting, using witnesses, testimony, documents, and legal arguments that they believe are important for the hearing officer to consider. Since the due process hearing is a legal proceeding, a party will often choose to be represented by an attorney.

1. New School Year & New to IEPs: What You Need To Know: NCHPAD - Building Inclusive Communities. (n.d.). Retrieved August 14, 2018, from <https://www.nchpad.org/1598/6620/New~School~Year~~~New~to~IEPs~~What~You~Need~To~Know>

Assessment

The IEP should be reviewed annually to update the goals and make sure the levels of service meet your child's needs.¹ However, IEPs can be changed at any time on an as-needed basis. If you think your child needs more, fewer, or different services, you can request a meeting and bring the team together to discuss your concerns.

The IEP team must revise the IEP to address:

- Any lack of expected progress
- Results of any reevaluation
- Information provided by the parents
- The student's anticipated needs

IEPs are required to include a statement about how the student's progress toward the annual goals will be measured, how the student's parents will be regularly informed about the student's progress toward the annual goals," and whether the student's progress is sufficient.

It is imperative that physical education teachers choose the appropriate assessment for each student to assess the students' progress. An IEP plan should provide guidance on the assessments that are most appropriate for the students in regards to their abilities. The IEP should also cover the types of modifications to different types of assessments. For example, for a student with Autism a teacher might utilize the PACER fitness test to assess if the student's ability on specific skill requirements such as lining up, reacting to signals or commands and following instructions.



1. Roadmap to IDEA 2004: What You Need to Know About IEPs, IEP Teams, IEP Meetings - Wrightslaw. (n.d.). Retrieved August 14, 2018, from <http://www.wrightslaw.com/idea/art/iep.roadmap.htm>
2. PHE America (n.d.) Skill and Fitness Assessment Ideas for Students with Disabilities. Retrieved January 8, 2019. <http://www.pheamerica.org/2016/skill-and-fitness-assessment-ideas-for-students-with-disabilities/>

Reevaluation

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires schools to reevaluate students with IEPs at least once every three years. This is known as a triennial reevaluation or review.¹ However, parents and teachers may want a reevaluation at another time, or before the three-year mark. A reevaluation is an evaluation that happens after your child's initial evaluation.

There are two types of reevaluations:

- Triennial Reevaluation (Three-Year Review)
- Parent- or Teacher-Requested Reevaluation

Considering and requesting a reevaluation

Just like an initial evaluation, a reevaluation can be an involved process. It takes time and effort from you, your child and school staff. Before starting a reevaluation, it's important to think carefully about why it's needed. You'll also want to spend some time thinking about how you'll explain the reevaluation to your child.



1. Morin, A. (n.d.). Reevaluations for Special Education: What You Need to Know. Retrieved August 14, 2018, from <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/evaluations/evaluation-basics/reevaluations-for-special-education>

Post High School Education/Training Employment, Community & Independent Living

Further IEP topics include transition resolution and behavior. These questions center around the student's post-education endeavors such as employment, community life and independent living.

Plans for transition include:¹

- What are the post-school goals
- Diploma options
- Coursework, training and learning experiences
- Talking to youth about future
- Writing a transition IEP
- What roles parent and school plays
- Identifying outside agencies that can assist



Transition Services

Statements about the student's transition needs must be included in the IEP after the student reaches a certain age:¹

- Transition planning, for students beginning at age 14 (and sometimes younger)--involves helping the student plan his or her courses of study (such as advanced placement or vocational education) so that the classes the student takes will lead to his or her post-school goals.
- Transition services, for students beginning at age 16 (and sometimes younger)--involves providing the student with a coordinated set of services to help the student move from school to adult life. Services focus upon the student's needs or interest in such areas as higher education or training, employment, adult services, independent living, or taking part in the community.

1. Archived: A Transition Guide to Postsecondary Education ... (n.d.). Retrieved August 14, 2018, from <https://www.bing.com/cr?IG=7CDB09BD422842CB8BC7BDAD709791DC&CID=060E4D9AB84E6D0D218541D1B9B36C8E&rd=1&h=YSiuVHKTuQTMhhZVq5-n5dAV9CPTQeda8Cs-AS4k1nY&v=1&r=https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/transition/products/postsecondary-transition-guide-2017.pdf&p=DevEx.LB.1,5461.1>

Resources:

Click on these links to access additional information and resources regarding IEPs and its process.

- [A Transition Guide to Postsecondary Education and Employment for Students and Youth with Disabilities](#)
- [Accesible Educational Materials and Thechnologies in the IEP](#)
- [Center for Parents Information & Resources](#)
- [How to Organize Your Child's IEP Binder](#)
- [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#)
- [Least Restrictive Environment \(LRE\): What you Need to Know](#)
- [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act](#)
- [Sports are for Everyone](#)
- [The authority on Facilitated IEP Meeting Professional Development](#)
- [Understood IEPs Toolkit](#)
- [What's an IEP](#)