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IEP MEETING CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH DEAF-BLINDNESS



Developed by the SPAN Parent Advocacy Network
In collaboration with the Perkins School for the Blind
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Dear parent of a child with deaf-blindness:

As the parent of a child with deaf-blindness, you face many challenges every day. You have hopes and dreams for your child, and you want their educational services to help them develop and learn.

In 2008, the Perkins School for the Blind worked with experts in deaf-blindness, including state deaf-blind projects, to develop Deaf-Blindness: Educational Service Guidelines (the Guidelines). These guidelines provide state and local education agencies a framework to support the development of meaningful, appropriate programming for students with deaf-blindness. They also identify the knowledge and skills educators need to help their students who are deaf-blind reach their full potential and become successful, contributing members of our society.

In 2010-2011, the Perkins School for the Blind collaborated with the SPAN Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN), state deaf-blind projects, and families of children with deaf-blindness, to develop resource materials for families of children with deaf-blindness based on the Guidelines. The resource materials include fact sheets, mini-guides, and this IEP Meeting Checklist. You can access the resource materials and the Guidelines on the websites of SPAN (www.spanadvocacy.org), the Perkins School for the Blind (www.perkins.org), and the National Center on Deaf-Blindness (www.nationaldb.org). You can also find many other resources that will help you maximize your child's education and development on these websites. For additional assistance in advocating for your child with deaf-blindness in the education system, contact your state Parent Training and Information Center (PTI). You can find contact information for your PTI at www.parentcenterhub.org. For additional assistance in advocating for your child with deaf-blindness in the healthcare system, contact your state Family to Family Health Information Center (F2F). You can find contact information for your F2F at www.familyvoices.org.

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IEP MEETING CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH DEAF-BLINDNESS

Please review this checklist prior to starting your IEP meeting; you may wish to send a copy to your team prior to the meeting so they can use it to prepare. As you go through your IEP meeting, check to make sure that each of the issues below is addressed by your team. If it is not addressed, please ask your team to discuss it. Let the Director of Special Education know if your IEP meeting does not address each issue.

The IEP discussion should always start with your child's strengths and needs. This leads to a discussion of annual goals and objectives and the services and supports that will be provided to help achieve them. Then there is discussion about whether or not your child can achieve their goals in the general education classroom, and if not, which setting is the "least restrictive" appropriate setting. Each step builds on the previous step:
Strengths & Needs → Goals & Objectives → Services & Supports → Placement → Implementation

CADRE has an excellent parent guide with information on how to effectively advocate for your child in the special education process, *Steps to Success: Communicating with Your Child's School*.¹

1. ___ *Prior to the meeting*: I received a copy of the meeting notice, in my language, with enough time to allow me to prepare for the meeting, and the meeting is being held at a convenient time and place for me.
2. ___ *Prior to the meeting*: I received a copy of evaluations and other reports, in my language, far enough in advance of the meeting to allow me to prepare for the meeting.
3. ___ *At the meeting*: My meeting is with a complete IEP team, including (a) my child's general education teacher, (b) a special education provider or supervisor, (c) someone who can interpret the evaluation results, (d) a professional with expertise in deaf-blindnessⁱⁱ, and (e) a district representative who has the authority to make commitments for services for my child. If a member of the team is not present, I gave informed written consent for their absence from the meeting and any information they would have provided at the meeting was given to me in advance. If I or my child needed an interpreter to help us participate, it was provided.
4. ___ At my IEP meeting, we talked about the following issues in the following order:
 - a. ___ My child's "present levels of academic and functional performance" (how my child is doing in school and home, the results of the most recent evaluations and testing, any information I provided, etc.).
 - b. ___ Measurable annual goals (and objectives if my child is taking alternate assessments tied to alternate standards) that are tied to the general education curriculum (at least one set of goals for each need).ⁱⁱⁱ
 - c. ___ Special education & related services that my child needs, including:
 - i. ___ Whether my child needs "supplementary aids and services," either directly for him/her, or for the teacher, or other children in the class, to help support my child's successful inclusion in the class.^{iv}
 - ii. ___ Any special personnel needed (e.g., teacher of the visually impaired, teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing, educational audiologist, special educator, orientation and mobility specialist), and any special skills, knowledge, or professional development needed by my child's teacher, aide/paraprofessional, related services provider(s), etc.;^v
 - iii. ___ Any assistance and/or parent training I need to develop my ability to help my child receive a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, and to progress, such as (if appropriate):
 - (1) ___ *Communication*: Hands-on instruction and communication tools (signs, topic boards, picture schedules, calendar box, schedule box, etc.) to learn effective strategies to decrease my child's frustrations associated with limited receptive/expressive language skills and to facilitate increased communication between me and my child, including Braille or sign language if that is the communication modality that will be taught to my child;^{vi}

- (2) ___ *Occupational therapy*: Hands on instruction and modeling of specific fine motor, gross motor, and sensory based activities so that I can work at home to enhance my child's independence;^{vii}
- (3) ___ *Physical therapy*: Strategies I can use at home to help my child increase balance, coordination, and muscle strength;^{viii}
- (4) ___ *Positive behavior supports*: Effective teaching methods and positive behavior intervention strategies to use in our home so that I can provide consistent instruction, address difficult behaviors, and address generalization of all acquired skills.
- iv. ___ Whether my child needs related services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, psychiatric or psychological services, transportation, travel training, orientation or mobility training, or other related services.^{ix}
- v. ___ Whether my child, who has significant healthcare needs, requires an Individualized Health Plan to ensure that his/her health needs are met in the school, on field trips, and on the bus.
- vi. ___ Whether my child, who has noted social deficits associated with his/her diagnosis, needs weekly instruction/intervention with a trained professional to facilitate his/her ongoing social emotional growth and ensure successful inclusion (social skills training).^x
- vii. ___ Whether my child needs extended school year services (ESY) to make sure that he/she doesn't lose knowledge or skills he/she has already learned, and what ESY services should be provided.^{xi}
- viii. ___ Whether my child/youth needs a functional behavior assessment & a positive behavior support plan to help address his/her challenging behaviors.
- ix. ___ Whether my child/youth needs to learn communication skills & strategies.^{xii}
- x. ___ Whether my child needs assistive technology and if so, what kind and how he/she will learn how to use it, as well as how s/he will be able to access that assistive technology to do homework.^{xiii}
- xi. ___ If my youth is 16 or older, or earlier if appropriate, the transition to adult life services and courses of study s/he might need to prepare for post-secondary education, training, or employment.^{xiv}
- xii. ___ How my child can access extra-curricular and non-academic activities open to students without disabilities before, during, and after school hours, including access to such activities within our home (sending) district even if my child is placed out of district.^{xv}
- d. ___ My child's placement, which should be the "least restrictive" setting in which my child's IEP can be implemented. We also discussed how my child will be able to interact with students who do not have disabilities, even if my child is not in an inclusive setting.^{xvi}
- e. ___ The person or people who are directly responsible for implementation of each service and program in my child's IEP and who is directly responsible to monitor my child's progress.
- f. ___ How I will be informed of my child's progress toward achieving the annual goals, and how often (quarterly, or as often as parents of general education students receive report cards).
- g. ___ How my child will participate in the statewide tests or district-wide tests, and what kinds of accommodations my child will need (extended time, having the questions read aloud, giving the answers orally, testing in a more private, quieter space, using a computer or calculator, etc.).
5. ___ I received a complete copy of the parental rights booklet/procedural safeguards notice and information about organizations to contact for information about my rights and to receive other needed services and supports, including information on my state's deaf-blind project and PTI (parent center).
6. ___ I received a summary of my child's program, services and placement at the meeting, and was informed that I will receive the final IEP prior to its implementation.

RESOURCE INFORMATION

Bring this Resource Information sheet with you to your IEP meeting. Ask your IEP team members to provide you with information with resources that will help you and your child with deaf-blindness.

My child with deaf-blindness has the following diagnosis: _____.

Please identify local, state, and national agencies that offer programs and assistance to children with deaf-blindness and their families:

- Our state deaf-blind project contact information: _____
- Our state Parent Center contact information: _____
- Other resource contact information: _____

Please identify community resources, respite and recreational programs that will help integrate our child with deaf-blindness in the local community.

Please identify support groups and upcoming workshops that will enhance our understanding of our child with deaf-blindness' current and future strengths and needs.

Please provide any additional information on resources that would be beneficial for our child/youth with deaf-blindness and our family.

Steps to Success: Communicating with your Child's School, <https://www.cadeworks.org/for-families> (CADRE, 2004)

ⁱⁱ Deafblindness: Educational Service Guidelines, Perkins School for the Blind; <http://www.perkins.org/resources/educational-publications/deafblindness-educational-service-guidelines>

ⁱⁱⁱ Deafblindness: Educational Service Guidelines, *Chapter 4, Services and Placement Options, Issue IV & V*. "The educational team should ensure that goals and objectives addressing the development of communication and social relationships are included in the IEP and ITP to meet the individual needs of the student who is deafblind." "The educational team should ensure that services address expanded curriculum areas to meet the unique needs of the student who is deafblind."

^{iv} Deafblindness: Educational Service Guidelines, *Chapter 5, Supportive Structure and Administration, Issue VII-VIII*. "State and local education agencies must ensure the availability of a full array of appropriate services that meet the unique needs of students who are deafblind." "State and local education agencies should ensure that students who are deafblind receive instructional materials, adequate resources, and appropriate reading media on schedule with their sighted-hearing peers."

^v Deaf-Blind Specialist, Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments, Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Orientation and Mobility Specialist, Intervener, one-to-one Paraprofessionals (instructional aides/assistants), and/or Interpreters. Deafblindness: Educational Service Guidelines, *Chapter 2 Educational Personnel Issue I, VI, VII*. "Educational personnel should have the specialized knowledge and skills, and commitment to meet the educational and communication requirements of students who are deafblind, as stipulated in their individualized education programs (IEPs)." "Educational personnel should ensure appropriate participation of communication support personnel in all facets of the educational process for students who are deafblind." "Specialized personnel should be hired to provide direct and/or support services specified in students' IEPs." *Chapter 1, Foundations, Issue 1*. "Educators should be knowledgeable about appropriate service options and supports needed by students who are deafblind throughout their education and transitions." *Chapter 4, Services and Placement Options, Issue II*. "The educational team should consider how the student's combined vision and hearing losses may create a need for support to access and participate in the life of the school." *Chapter 5, Supportive Structure and Administration, Issue II*. "State and local education agencies should ensure that every student who is deafblind is served by a well-coordinated educational team with the specialized knowledge and skills to fulfill its responsibilities for developing and meeting the requirements of the Individualized Education Program or Individualized Transition Plan."

^{vi} Deafblindness: Educational Service Guidelines, p. xii; *Chapter 4, Services and Placement Options, Issue IV*. "The educational team should ensure that goals and objectives addressing the development of communication and social relationships are included in the IEP and ITP to meet the individual needs of the student who is deafblind." *Chapter 2, Educational Personnel, Issue II*. "Educational personnel should have the knowledge and skills to foster communication development including proficiency in the communication forms of students who are deafblind that will facilitate access to all aspects of the learning environment."

^{vii} Deafblindness: Educational Service Guidelines, *Chapter 4, Services and Placement Options, Issue III*. "The educational team should consider the challenges, unique to the student who is deafblind to ensure appropriate educational services and placement decisions."

^{viii} See footnote IV, above.

^{ix} See footnote IV, above.

^x Deafblindness: Educational Service Guidelines, *Chapter 4, Services and Placement Options, Issue IV*. "The educational team should ensure that goals and objectives addressing the development of communication and social relationships are included in the IEP and ITP to meet the individual needs of the student who is deafblind."

^{xi} Deafblindness: Educational Service Guidelines, *Chapter 4, Services and Placement Options, Issue V*. "The educational team should ensure that services address expanded curriculum areas to meet the unique needs of the student who is deafblind." P. 52 "When developing the IEP, important elements of the expanded core curriculum are...extended school days and summer programs that may be necessary to address the needs of the student who is deafblind."

^{xii} See footnote iii, above.

^{xiii} Deafblindness: Educational Service Guidelines, *Chapter 4, Services and Placement Options, Issue VI*. "Educators should ensure the availability and use of assistive technology for students who are deafblind." *Chapter 2, Personnel, Issue VIII*. "Educational personnel should be knowledgeable about assistive devices and technology for students who are deafblind."

^{xiv} Deafblindness: Educational Service Guidelines, *Chapter 1, Foundations, Issue VI*. "Educators should be knowledgeable about appropriate service options and supports needed by students who are deafblind throughout their education and transitions." *Chapter 4, Services and Placement Options, Issue VII*. "Educators must ensure that transition planning for students who are deafblind is collaborative and involves all appropriate adult service agencies." *Chapter 5, Supportive Structures and Administration, Issue VI*. "State and local education agencies should implement planning strategies for the important transitions that students who are deafblind will experience throughout their education." e

^{xv} Deafblindness: Educational Service Guidelines, *Chapter 1 Foundations*, and *Chapter 4 Services and Placement Options, Issue IV*. "The educational team should ensure that goals and objectives addressing the development of communication and social relationships are included in the IEP and ITP to meet the individual needs of the student who is deafblind."

^{xvi} Deafblindness: Educational Service Guidelines, *Chapter 4, Services and Placement Options, Issue III*. "The educational team should consider the challenges, unique to the student who is deafblind, to ensure appropriate educational services and placement decisions."