

Mount Prospect School District 57



Communicating With Your Child's IEP Team

As a district, we embrace the opportunity to collaborate with parents, as we believe that no one knows your child better than you do. Parents bring an insight to the IEP team that is invaluable. By looking at a wide range of perspectives about a child, we are able to get a complete picture of a student's strengths and needs and are able to develop a truly "individualized" plan. An IEP team meets at least annually to review a child's IEP, but communication should occur more frequently to ensure that we are all working together toward the same goals and that a student is progressing as expected. At the IEP meeting, the IEP team will develop goals based on the student's areas of needs. As a parent, you can expect to receive goal updates on the student's progress as frequently as you receive a child's report card. However, progress is communicated more frequently through other methods such as conferences, emails, progress monitoring graphs, etc. It will be important to develop and share expectations about communication as a team.

Tips on Communicating with Your Child's Teacher(s) and School

- Keep in touch with your child's school and teachers. Attend parent-teacher conferences, read your child's school newsletters, and contact your child's teacher by phone or email if you have questions or concerns.
- Work with the IEP team to establish a system of communication outside of the IEP meeting. Share with the team the type of information you would like to be communicated to you and the best method to do so. As a team, define what this will look like so that each team member has a clear expectation of the communication plan.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions. Asking questions will help you understand more about your child's learning needs.



- Start thinking about questions before a meeting or conference at school. Consider making a list of questions to bring with you so you don't forget anything important.
- Collect information about your child's disability, the services available to him or her, and the specific things you can do to help your child develop to the fullest extent possible.
- If you have any specific concerns about your child's educational progress, let your child's teachers know.
- Be aware of what's going on in your child's school (activities and events).
- Continue to work with your child's teacher or school even if you disagree with grades, scores or the way services are being delivered to your child. Maintaining communication with your child's IEP team will ensure that your child's academic and social needs are being met.
- Remember to keep written copies of all documents from physicians, teachers and therapists regarding your child.
- Visit your child's classes, ask questions and don't hesitate to have your child's teachers or school staff provide a clearer explanation of anything you don't understand.

Prior to an IEP meeting, it's often helpful to think of questions or concerns that you would like to talk about at the meeting. Examples of questions you might want to ask include:

- How is my child doing? Are there any problems I should know about?
- How is my child's IEP working? Any problems or modifications that we may need to consider?
- Is there a way that I can help at home?
- What additional activities and services might my child need?

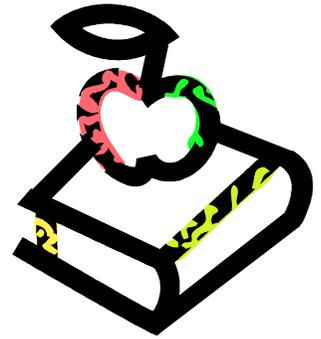
The best parent-school relationships are trusting and open, with a commitment to communicate about how to best meet your child's needs.

Information adapted from the following website:

http://www.education.com/reference/article/Ref_Communicating_IEP/

Do most parents of students with an IEP have a formal method of communicating with teachers (i.e. daily note, weekly note, behavioral notebook, etc). When would this type of system be advisable?

The communication between a student's school team and parents will vary depending on a variety of factors such as the needs of the student and the preferences of those involved. As a general rule, the level of communication should increase with the level of the student's needs.



Should the parents always cc the child's case manager on IEP-related emails?

As a general rule, the primary contact for the family and other IEP team members will be the case manager, however, parents should not hesitate to contact other staff that work with their child. When contacting other staff, if you believe the information would be important for the case manager to know in order to meet your child's needs or help facilitate the implementation of the IEP it would be important to keep them in the loop. On the other hand, if you are communicating with a team member about a specific topic and it's not necessary for the case manager to be aware of the conversation to meet the student's needs, you do not need to include them on the email. However, it is always best to talk with the case manager at the beginning of the year to develop a communication plan that is mutually beneficial.

How much information are instructional assistants given about the students that they work with?

As an IEP team, we make sure that all staff who work with a child are familiar with his/her IEP including his/her needs, goals, accommodations, services, and other information specific to a student that staff would need to know in order to meet the student's needs. Additionally, the case manager and IEP team members collaborate regularly with instructional assistants to help ensure that all parties have the information needed to meet the needs of students. When sharing information about a student, student confidentiality is maintained and information is only shared on a "need to know" basis. If there is information that you want to make sure is shared with specific individuals, communicate this to the case manager to make sure the information is communicated appropriately.

How much information is given to “specials teachers”? Should we introduce ourselves and or give them a brief overview of our child? What type of information should parents share with teachers?

As an IEP team, we make sure that all staff who work with a child are familiar with his/her IEP including his/her needs, goals, accommodations, services, and other information specific to a student that staff would need to know in order to meet their needs. Additionally, our teams, including specials teachers, engage in ongoing collaboration to meet the needs of students.

Communication is a key component to making sure all team members working effectively to meet the needs of a student. We highly encouraged parents to reach out to all teachers who are a part of your child’s life and share any information that you think would be helpful in understanding your child’s strengths, needs, and strategies for helping them be successful.

Should my child’s private therapists be communicating with the IEP team? How does that get arranged?

We look forward to collaborating with all individuals who work with a student, as we feel this helps us take a more holistic approach to meeting the individual needs of a student. School staff and private providers each have a unique perspective about the child and we find that ongoing collaboration helps us work toward a common goal.

In order for school staff to speak with a private provider, a parent would need to give written consent for us to communicate with the private provider. A student’s case manager, or other IEP team members, can provide parents with this form.