



SPECIAL EDUCATION

Starting the Year on the Right Foot

Beth Benevides | Howard County Autism Society | September 2018

The Individualized Education Program

required by the
**Individuals with
Disabilities
Education Act
(IDEA)** for children
with disabilities who
need additional
services to succeed

Individualized Education Program

The IEP identifies special education and related service supports needed for a student with a disability.

It is a written, legal document outlining **the who, what, when, why, where, and how of instruction and related services** that are to be provided.

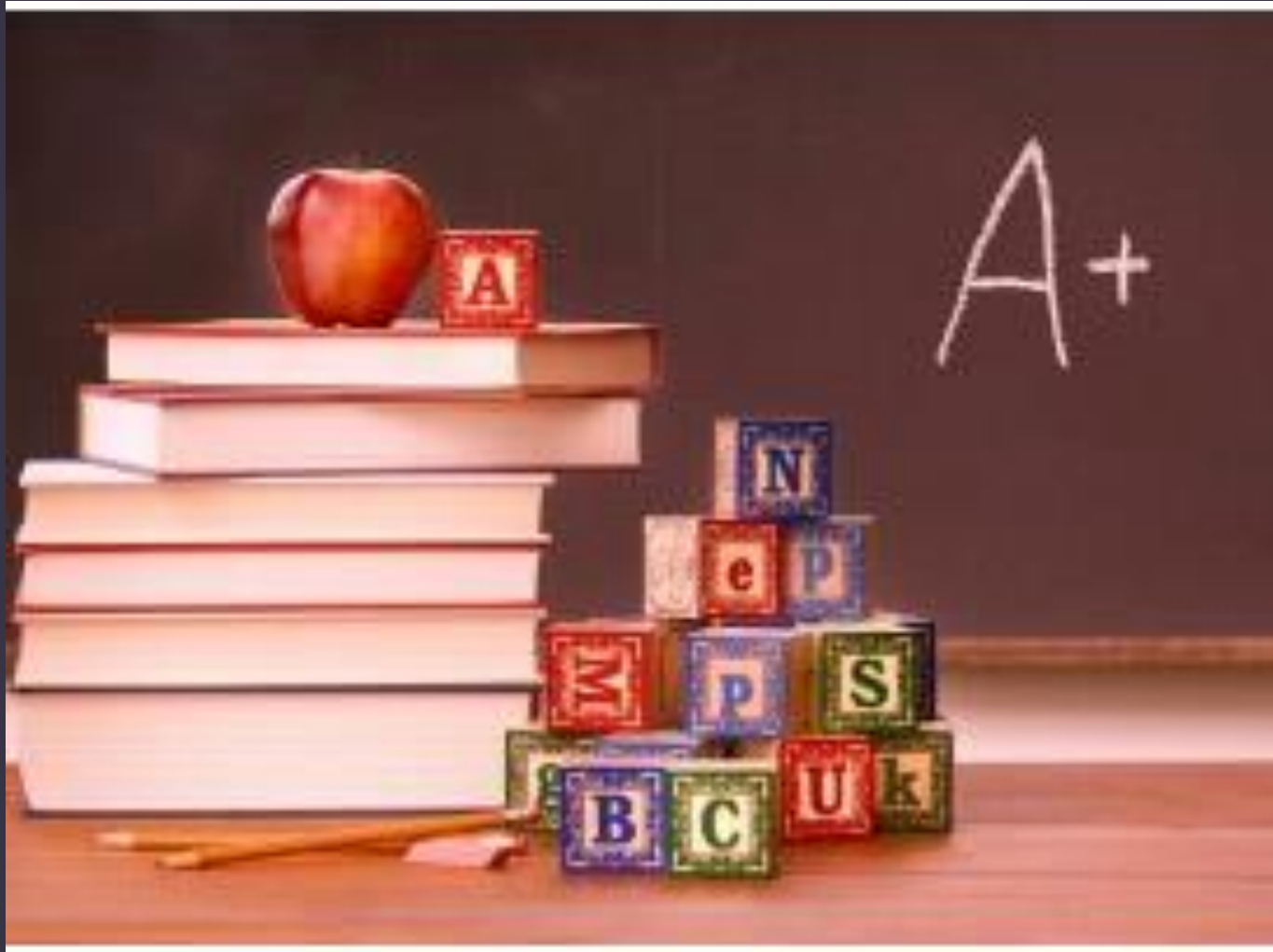
Six Principles of IDEA

1. **Zero reject** (*all children will be served*)
2. **Nondiscriminatory evaluation** (*children will be tested fairly*)
3. **Free appropriate public education** (*schools have a duty to provide individually designed, appropriate programs for every child at no cost to their parents*)
4. **Least restrictive environment** (*students will be educated with general education students to the maximum extent possible*)
5. **Procedural due process** (*parents have legal rights under IDEA*)
6. **Parent participation** (*partnership is key*)

Principles Guiding IEP Development in Maryland

- All children can learn
- Successful learning involves successful home and school partnerships
- All students have a right to attend schools in which they can progress and learn
- All students should have the opportunity to learn equally rigorous content

- Schools should help prepare students for productive adult lives
- Special education is specifically-designed instruction and related services to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities
- Planning for students with disabilities requires flexibility and an open mind
- To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities are to be educated with students who are non-disabled (Least Restrictive Environment)
- The IEP is based upon a student's ability to participate and progress in the general education curriculum, with appropriate adaptations to meet the unique needs of that student



Parent Input in the IEP Process

Parental Input for IEP Development

To the Parent/Guardian of:	ID Number:	Date of Birth:
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In preparation for a meeting to approve an IEP, the IEP team will be developing a draft for your review prior to the meeting. The team will be considering many areas which impact on the contents of an appropriate IEP for your child. Your participation in this process is greatly encouraged and appreciated. In order for the team to prepare a draft, the following areas will be considered. Please make your suggestions and comments below. If you are planning to meet with the team in person prior to the meeting, please bring this information with you. Your input is essential in drafting the IEP. The draft will be sent to you within the 5 days of the meeting. Final revisions based on input from all members of the team will be made at the IEP approval meeting.

Please return a copy of the completed form to by .

What do you see as your child's strengths?

What school-related concerns do you have regarding your child?

Do you have concerns regarding your child's behavior at school? Yes No
 IF YES, what positive behavioral interventions, strategies, or supports does your child require at school, if any?

Does your child have limited knowledge or understanding of the English language? Yes No
 Does your child require instruction in Braille? Yes No
 What other communication requirements does your child have, if any?

What type of assistive technology, devices and services does your child require at school, if any?

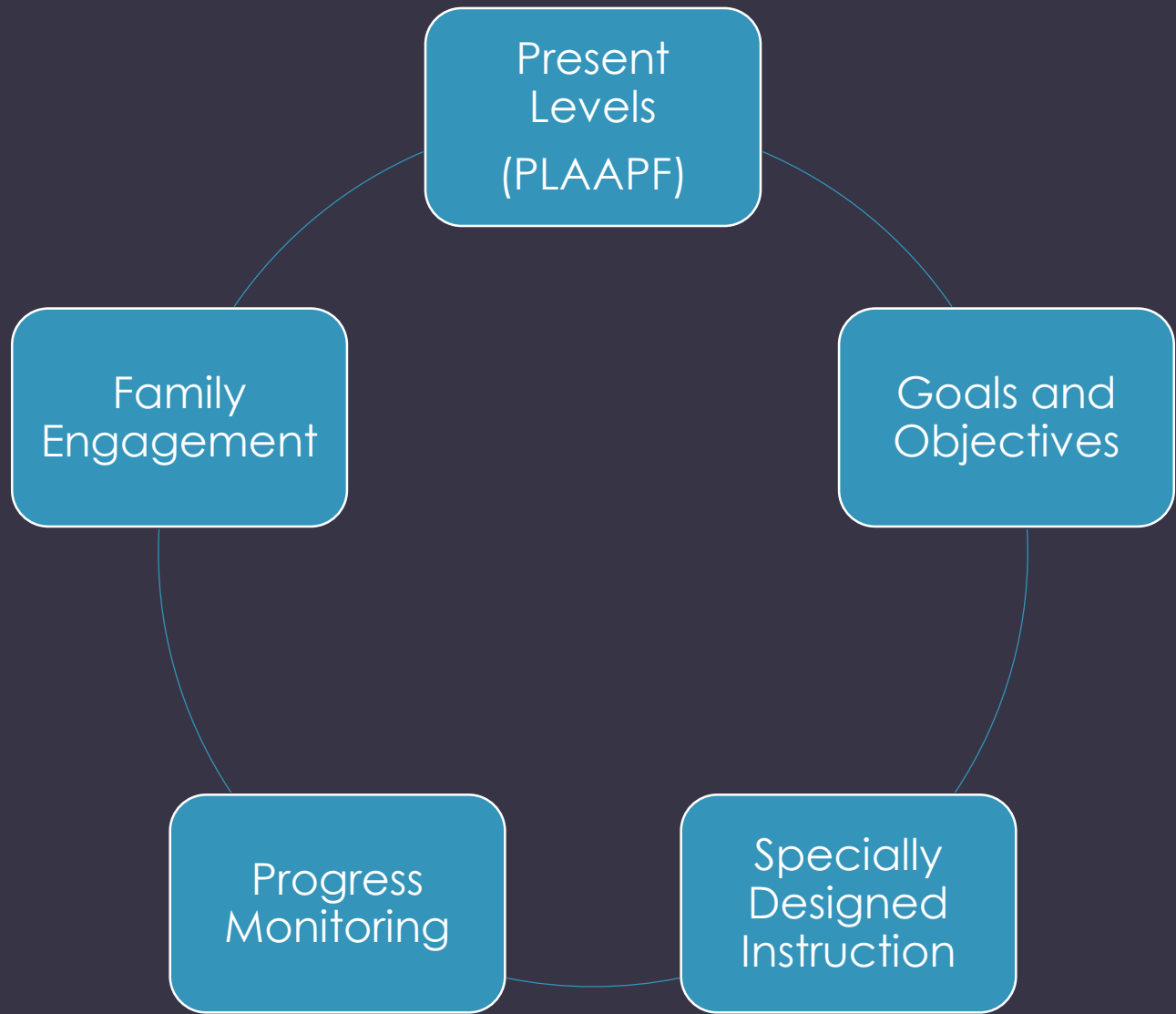
Do you have any other comments or concerns regarding your child's educational performance? Yes No
 IF YES, please explain.

Always complete this form!

You may request the form electronically.

You may type your responses in a Word document.

Your responses should be copied and pasted by the case manager into the IEP.



Foundations of an IEP

Five important elements to building IEPs

Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PLAAFP

Multiple data sources that have significance and demonstrate bearing on the student's academic and functional levels of performance

The most recent data available to inform instructional decision making.

01
current

02
relevant

03
objective

Based upon facts, data and observations

04
measurable

Concrete, quantifiable data and information.

05
understandable

Written in family-friendly language.



“What should I look for in the Present Levels section?”



Benchmarks – data that specifically states what your child is able to do at this particular point in time



Support needs – comments (and data) about prompts, adult direction, assistance necessary at this particular point in time



Accommodations – comments (and data) about accommodations that have been especially helpful or not necessary in the past year

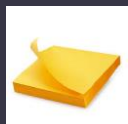


Behavior concerns -- comments (and data) about behaviors

Compare current levels to last year's levels



Skills (including prompt levels) – did your child progress / maintain / regress?

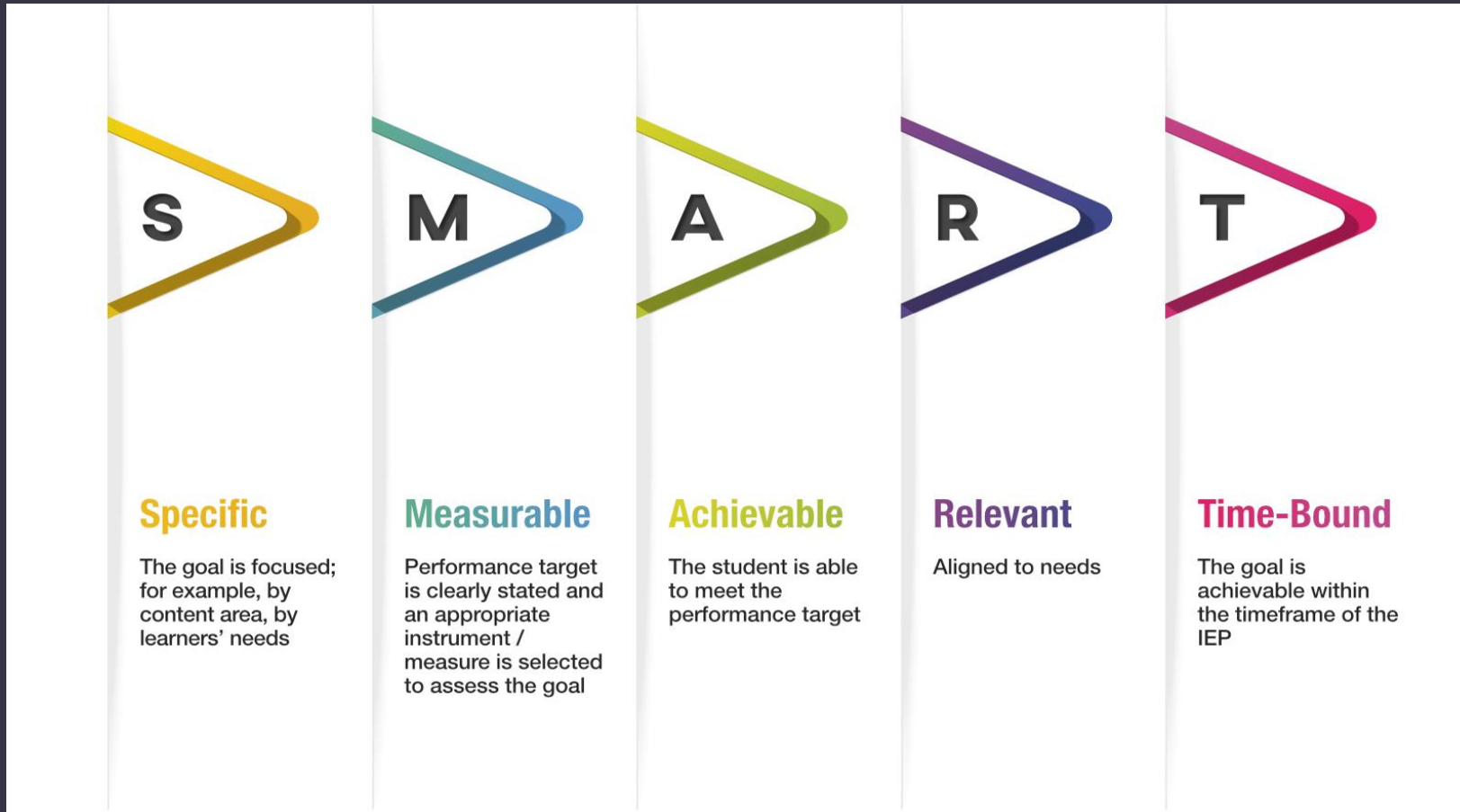


Accommodations – were there supports or accommodations provided that are not included in Section III. Supplementary Aids and Accommodations?



Behaviors – were there behaviors identified that need to be further addressed, perhaps with the help of a behavior specialist or Functional Behavior Assessment?

Goals and Objectives



Specially Designed Instruction

IDEA defines specially designed instruction as “**adapting, as appropriate** to the needs of an eligible child under this part, **the content, methodology or delivery of instruction (i) to address the unique needs of the child** that result from the child’s disability; and (ii) **to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum**, so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children.” (Section 300.39(b)(3) of Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations [CFR])

- who:** what type(s) of professional will deliver the instruction/service?
- where:** location inside or outside of general education, type of setting?
- when:** how often and for how long?
- how:** using what kinds of instruction, strategies, and supports?

Special Considerations

Accommodations

- practices and procedures that level the playing field
- provide equitable access during instruction
- examples: timing and scheduling, setting, presentation, response method

Modifications

- alterations—changes—to instruction and assessments
- curriculum is changed to be more accessible and more academically appropriate
- may change, lower, or reduce learning expectations
- examples: reducing the number of problems a student completes; revising assignments; giving students hints or clues to correct responses; using different textbooks that are more academically appropriate

Progress Monitoring

Progress Monitoring Answers the Following Questions

01

Is the student making progress at an acceptable rate? It isn't enough to "just make progress". The progress must be meaningful with appropriate expectations and accommodations to close the gap between the student's performance and his or her peers.

02

Is the student meeting the short term objectives which will help him or her reach their long term goals?

03

Does the instruction need to be adjusted or changed to meet the individual needs of the student?

Family Engagement

Key Characteristics of a Family-Centered Approach

Family input
is valued
(Turnbull &
Turnbull, 1997)

01

Collaborative
partnerships
(Epstein, 2001)

02

Parent
empowerment
(Blue-Banning,
2004)

03

Person
focused
(Pomerantz,
2007)

04

Parent training
(Kellems &
Morningstar,
2009)

05

Parental Notification

At least **10 business days before** the scheduled IEP team meeting, school personnel must take steps to ensure that the parents are provided proper written notice of the meeting date, time, location, and purpose, as well as a list of all persons who will attend.

At least **5 business days before** a scheduled IEP meeting, the parents are to receive an accessible copy of each assessment, report, data chart, draft IEP, or other document the team plans to discuss at the meeting.

Within **5 business days after** the IEP meeting, the parents are to receive the revised IEP and meeting notes.

Special Education Handbook

The documents and checklists that assist the special education process

Note: This handbook is currently being updated as part of the [department's new strategic plan](#). We thank you for your patience as we work to revise and reformat the handbook so that the information is current and accessible.

The documents below are provided as PDF documents.

[← Back to the Special Education site](#)

Section 1 – Introduction

- [Introduction](#)

Section 2 – Procedures

- [Procedures and Guidelines for Special Education and Related Services](#)

Section 3 – Programs and Services

- [Special Education Programs and Services](#)

Section 4: Forms

- [Adapted Physical Education Checklist](#)
- [Classroom Observation](#)
- [Educational Report for Three- to Four-Year-Old Children](#)
- [Educational Report for Four- through Five-Year-Old Children](#)
- [Note Taking Tool for Conferences and Phone Conversations](#)
- [Parent Notice of Student Record Disposal](#)
- [Parent Questionnaire for a Preschool or Kindergarten Age Child](#)
- [Parent Questionnaire](#)
- [Referral for a Student Suspected of Having a Disability](#)

Partnership and Effective Advocacy

- “The Dance of Partnership”
Janice Fialka

Share Your
Vision for Your
Child

Establish
Communication

Ask for
Clarification

Be Open-
Minded

Support Goals
at Home

Focus on YOUR child

- **Do not compare your child's IEP to others' IEPs.**

These are called INDIVIDUAL Educational Programs.

What another child is getting may not be appropriate for your child.

It is not about who is getting the most services. It is about getting the services YOUR child needs.

Avoid “gotchas”

- **Avoid get-even moments**

If we are child-focused, we should be less concerned about tracking what is not being done and more concerned with what needs to be done.

If there are serious issues that violate the IEP or FAPE, handle it appropriately. Raise it with the team, administrators, and DSE. File an MSDE complaint if warranted.

- **Separate the people from the problem**

Make it less about the teacher, the paraprofessional, the service provider, etc., and more about the issue—your child is not making progress, behaviors are spiking, the environment is over-stimulating

Focus on interests not positions

- **Agree on your child's underlying needs**

Determine what you and the school agree upon (ex. student needs a more effective reading program)

- **Generate a variety of possible solutions**

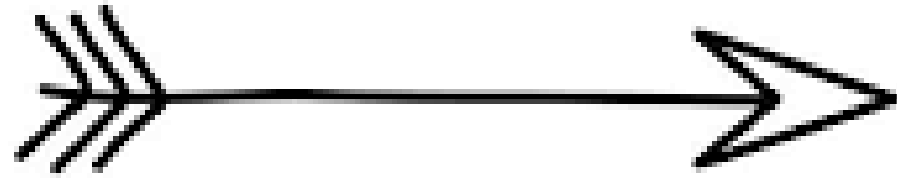
Before deciding what to do, together generate a list of options. Broaden the options on the table rather than look for just one answer.

- **If you argue positions, you may overlook potential solutions**

(ex. I want this reading program. The school wants this other reading program. Leads to deadlock instead of putting all options on the table and weighing pros and cons.)

Ask for clarification

- **Ask questions to make sure you have the facts correct**
- **Paraphrase what you understand the school's position to be**
- **Ask what the reasoning / principle is behind an action or suggestion**



KEEP MOVING
FORWARD

Use Your Resources

- HCPSS Department of Special Education
 - Resource Teacher
 - Instructional Facilitator
 - Coordinators
 - Behavior Specialist
- Family Support and Resource Center
 - Ann Scholz 410.313.7161
 - Weekly newsletter / announcements



SPECIAL EDUCATION NEWS CENTER

<https://specialed.howard-autism.org>



MARYLAND LEARNING LINKS

<https://marylandlearninglinks.org>



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1:1 Parent Advocacy / Attorney Consults with Disability Rights Maryland