

Communication Guidelines

1. Keep the focus on the student.

The IEP team meeting is not about the adults in the room – it's about the student!

2. Everyone will have an opportunity to share.

As a result, each member should allow those sharing to finish without being interrupted or shut down. Parents must have an individual voice.

3. Keep the focus on the future.

The parties can get stuck when conversations are geared toward what happened in the past. The focus needs to be on “what are things going to look like moving forward.”

4. Be sure to listen when others are speaking.

When listening, your goal isn't to come up with answers or build your argument. Instead, you are listening with the goal of understanding what the other person is saying and where they are coming from.

5. Think about how to share what you need to say in a way that makes it easier for others to hear, understand, and respond.

When sharing with the team, be sure to share your thoughts with others in a way that is respectful. Mutual respect between team members helps members to stay engaged and not become defensive.

Effective Communication - IEP Team

The IEP team is intended to be a collaborative partnership between school personnel, parents, and other parties that have the goal of working together to make appropriate educational decisions regarding the student on an IEP. Effective communication is an essential tool that supports teaming and collaboration.

The Individual with Disabilities Education Act intends for team members to work collaboratively to try and reach consensus. Consensus is best achieved when the parties to the team are respectful in working together. Consensus is most challenging when various members of the team have diverse opinions. Through careful and purposeful work of sharing ideas, consensus can be achieved.

It is difficult to listen and hear anything positive from someone who is adversarial within the team. All team members deserve respect and should be prepared in any meeting to act respectful to others. Team members work best when they view themselves as allies.

