

How Inclusive Educators Lead the IEP Process



Adapted from
*The Educator's Handbook for
Inclusive School Practices*
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Coming Summer 2015!

This booklet will remind you what to do...

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A MONTH BEFORE THE MEETING



Preparing families and students



Have a conversation with the parents.



1. Let them know **WHO** is likely to be at the meeting.
2. Tell them about the typical **FORMAT** of the meeting.
3. Remind parents that they can bring **ANYONE** they wish to the meeting.
4. Determine **WHERE** the meeting will be held and be sure the family is comfortable with that location.
5. Let families know that they are welcome to **SHARE** a statement, or photos of the student to kick off the meeting.
6. Some teachers send a **QUESTIONNAIRE** home for parents if they wish to fill it out:

- *What are your child's strengths, gifts and talents?*
- *What are your dreams and goals for your child?*
- *What are your concerns or worries?*
- *What is really working this year in terms of your child's schooling experience?*
- *What would you like to see changed or fixed?*
- *When you look at last year's goals, what changes would you like to see?*

Have a conversation with the student about the upcoming IEP.



Get the student thinking about their **strengths, talents, and dreams** as well as what is and isn't working for them at school.

Begin to help them plan a comfortable **level of involvement** in the meeting—whether that is presenting information, discussing strengths, needs and accommodations, or completely leading the IEP meeting.



**Two weeks before
the meeting**



Invite all members (including family) to informally jot down what they wish to see on the new IEP.

**One week before
the meeting**



Write all ideas up in draft form.

Send the draft out to everyone (including families) for feedback.

Be sure if any reports will be shared that families have at least a week to read them before the meeting.*

**No one should be expected to read or process this kind of information while seated at a meeting. This way the meeting can be about making the changes that the parents would like to make.*

THE DAY OF THE MEETING

Think about what it may feel like to be a parent walking into a room of professionals.

How can you make the room and meeting space more welcoming?



Some ideas include:

- picking the parent up at the office and walking with them.
- setting snacks out for people.
- if young students are present, having several activities ready so students can keep hands busy while participating.
- considering seating, lighting, and general comfort.
- being sure to greet and have name tags on for any team members that the family has not yet met.



THE DAY OF THE MEETING

Start with
the family or
the student

Have them begin by sharing anything they wish.



Some families start with a video of their student demonstrating all that they can do.



Some families start with a statement of hopes and dreams.

*The purpose of this is to ensure the meeting starts with the **FOCUS** being on a student that the family loves and cares about deeply.*

Have the student kick off the meeting by talking about their strengths and progress.



For some students, creating a PowerPoint presentation might be a comfortable way to share.

Other students may wish to lead the entire meeting including introductions, progress, goals and a closing.



We suggest inviting students to their own IEP meetings at a very young age—it is the best way to teach students to be their own **ADVOCATES. No matter what age or level of participation the student takes at the meeting, if they are present be sure to **LISTEN** to their ideas and suggestions.**



THE DAY OF THE MEETING



Proceed
through
meeting

- Be sure to focus the time on **GOALS** and being sure that all are in agreement with the goals.
- Share **ASSESSMENTS** and **DATA** across subject areas.
- Always share **POSITIVE** information first in these meetings.
- Check in with all present.
- Ask **QUESTIONS** like...



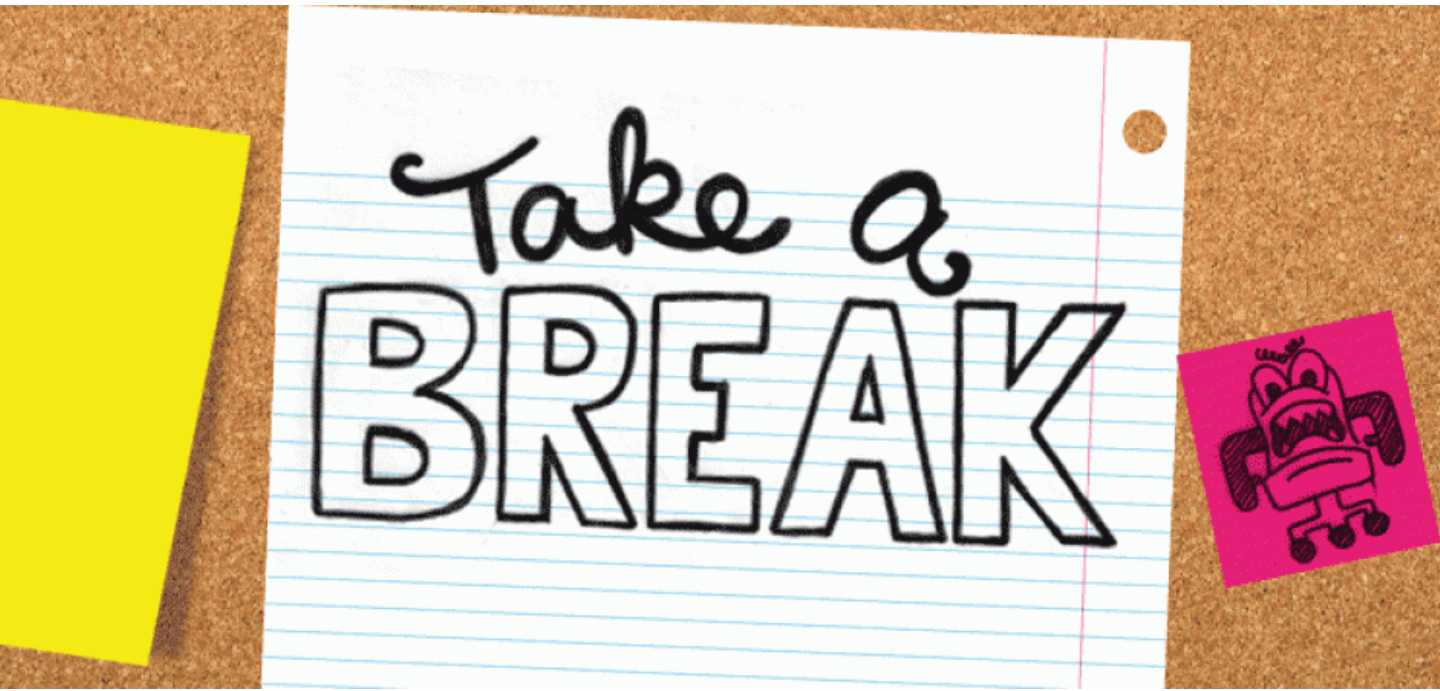
How does that sound?

Does anyone have an issue with that goal?

Does this make sense to everyone?



THE DAY OF THE MEETING



***Remember that
anyone can request
a break at anytime.***

AFTER THE MEETING

Thank You Notes


Send a simple note to the student and the parent. Thank them for coming! Let them know that you will be sending a finalized version soon (be clear on the date) and open the door for communication for any further questions or concerns they may have.


TIPS TO REMEMBER

 **Don't expect anyone to process a lot of information at the meeting.**

 **Don't share reports and drafts for the very first time at the meeting.**

 **Partner with parents. Parents are equal members on the team and should be treated as such.**

 **Remember general and special educators are co-equal partners in the process also. Although the general education teacher might not lead the meeting, they are equally responsible for the content of the IEP and for carrying it out.**

 **Think like a parent! Think about how it might feel to walk into a room of professionals to talk about one of the most important things in your life—your child. Be thoughtful about your communication.**

 **The student is key! This means students should be invited, meaningfully included, and listened to.**

Find more answers to your
inclusion questions in...

The Inclusion Handbook Series



<http://bit.ly/InclusionBundle>

If you're looking for practical guidance for your whole school team, check out the complete Inclusive School Practices series by Julie Causton & her colleagues.

The inclusive
classroom
survival
guides!



The newest book in the series,
*The Educator's Handbook
for Inclusive School Practices*,
will be out in July 2015.

Stay tuned to
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