



## **IEP FAQs**

### **What is an IEP?**

IEP stands for Individual Education Plan. This plan helps students access their education in the least restrictive environment. The IEP is a legally binding document that spells out the services and accommodations that the school district will provide to meet your child's needs.

### **Does my child qualify for an IEP?**

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (commonly known as IDEA) identifies thirteen categories that would qualify a child for an IEP. Visual impairment that cannot be corrected with glasses or contacts and adversely affects a child's educational performance qualifies your child for an IEP. In most states, a Best Corrected Visual Acuity (BCVA) of 20/70 or worse automatically qualifies as vision that "adversely affects" educational performance.

### **When should I start the IEP process?**

An IEP can be put into place for students when they turn 3 years old, regardless of whether the child will be in a formal preschool at that age. Often, as part of the IEP, the child may be eligible for a spot in a local special education preschool.

### **What if my child is under 3?**

IDEA requires every state to provide early intervention services to those who qualify at no cost to the family. An Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is created. Like an IEP, this is a legally binding document that specifies which services and supports the state will provide to your child.

Through early intervention, services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, and vision therapy can be provided in your home, usually at no cost to you.

Each state handles early intervention differently. The CDC lists the contacts for each US State or Territory [here](#).

## **How do I start the IEP process?**

**Step 1 - Referral:** The child is referred for an evaluation. Anyone can request the referral, including a parent, teacher, or caregiver. To refer your child, contact your local public school.

**Step 2 - Evaluation:** A team is created to evaluate the child's needs. Typically for Aniridia, a vision specialist called a Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) is part of the team. A Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS) should also be a part of the evaluation process. As part of the evaluation, you will be asked to give input, as well as provide documentation from a doctor regarding your child's visual impairment.

At a minimum, during this evaluation, a Functional Vision Evaluation and Learning Media Assessment should be completed to help determine the level of vision services required for your child. An Orientation and Mobility (O&M) overview should be completed as well to determine whether your child requires O&M services.

**Step 3 - Eligibility:** Once the evaluation has taken place, the evaluation team will write a report and determine together whether the child qualifies for services.

**Step 4 - IEP Meeting:** The entire team, which includes the parents, meet to write the IEP. This will be where you (parent/guardian) will work with the evaluation team and other stakeholders to set measurable goals for the student to be evaluated every year, determine how many minutes of direct services the child will receive, and establish the necessary accommodations for the child. More information about goals, services, and accommodations can be found in our IEP Creation Tips.

**Step 5 - Yearly Review:** The IEP team will meet at least yearly to review the IEP, report progress, and determine if changes need to occur.

**Step 6 - Full Reevaluation:** Every three years, the IEP needs to be completely reevaluated to assess whether the student still qualifies for services. The end-to-end process can take several months, and involves repeating the Functional Vision Evaluation and Learning Media Assessment, as well as a reassessment of O&M needs.

### **How do I change accommodation in an IEP?**

An IEP meeting can be called at any point during the school year if an adjustment is needed. Accommodations can also be changed at the yearly IEP meeting that is held to report annual progress.

### **What are the goals in an IEP?**

The goals in an IEP should be written so that the outcomes are measurable. Goals will change throughout a student's academic career. Ideally, there would be more than one goal each year.

See our IEP Creation Tips for more information about areas that goals could address.