More Than a Meeting: Cultivating a Culture of Connection
Connection Activity
Poll
(flood the chat with the why)

What is your role here today?

What are you seeking out of this session?

Rank your skill set in participating in a child and family centered IEP meeting.
Essential Question:
What do you currently do to promote the practice of child and family centered IEP processes?
Essential Question:
What practices do you engage that negate the family voice in the IEP process?
What should professionals know...
Families Guide to IEP meeting

A Family’s Guide to a Family/Child Focused IEP

Understanding the needs of your child and navigating the process of appropriate support he/she needs is a complex task! It is overwhelming, but take a deep breath, put your shoulders back, head up and get ready for a partnership with your child’s school. As your child’s most valuable advocate, this guide will help you understand the IEP process and how to communicate and advocate effectively so that your child will receive the appropriate support in the educational setting.

PrePlanning:

★ Write your thoughts about your child. What are they good at, what are they struggling with? What are some observations you have made?
★ Write down your questions/concerns.
★ Educate yourself on the process specific for what you are going to be doing (Initial/ Annual/Addendum/Reevaluation)
★ Make a folder of all of your child’s evaluations, observations from other providers-doctors/therapists/teachers.
★ Access Resources in your community regarding IEP process, parent support, etc.
★ Request an agenda for the meeting if it was not given. Ask who will be participating and contact information for those individuals.
★ If you plan on bringing anyone, let the school know. Contact that person to make arrangements.
A family-child centered IEP process – a professional perspective...
Before the Meeting
A family centered IEP process – a parent voice...
During the Meeting
A family – child centered IEP process – a professional perspective...
After the Meeting
A Practitioners Guide to a Family/Child Focused IEP

Planning an Individualized Education Plan should include all of your data and include a pause to recognize the process through the eyes of the family. Many families are coming to the table for the first time while others are no strangers to the process. As a practitioner, when you are preparing for the IEP meeting, you can use this guide to help you and your team connect to the child and family in an authentic, practical, and professional way!

PrePlanning:

★ What is your relationship with this family? Introduce yourself and explain your role. Some ideas include: put a face with a name (add your photo to your email signature line/meet in person at carpool/etc.); Connect with family and child prior to the meeting.

★ What are the family dynamics and needs? What do you know about the family that will help you connect and understand their circumstances? (Education level? Cultural values? Native Language? What situations have they been going through lately?) Understanding this will allow you to see this process through their eyes and how you may adjust your tone and pace while interacting.

★ Is this the first time that the family has experienced the IEP process?

[YES] Someone on your team should reach out to the family and before all the checklists and info dumping to say something along the lines of:

“Hi Mr./Mrs./Miss___!! This is ______ from________. I just wanted to let you know that although this is a lengthy process, you can trust us to listen to your concerns and answer your questions with empathy and professionalism.

We know that this is overwhelming and we are here every step of the way to make sure ______ gets the support he/she needs. (Person on the IEP team) will be contacting you soon to schedule/go over necessary paperwork we will need from you! Pause and listen”
What shifted your thinking?
Before the Meeting
What shifted your thinking - a professional perspective...
During the Meeting
IEP meetings sometimes leave families feeling...
After the Meeting
IEP meetings sometimes leave families feeling...
After Meeting Reflection Guide - Families

Developed by Jenna Ramsey and Christine Burkhart
After Meeting Reflection Guide - Professionals

Review the Parental Concerns and Vision Presented in Meeting
Were they all addressed?

Yes
- Follow up and confirm with family that they understand and agree with solution(s)

No
- Pause, give yourself breathing room before correspondence and/or making a plan. Give it 24-48 hours.

Minimize potential solutions

Formulate goals, or set up a meeting to communicate concerns and potential solutions.

After following this process and you still have not come to an agreed solution, consider accessing alternative dispute resolution and parents rights.

Developed by Jenna Ramsey and Christine Runkehart
Essential Question:

What roadblocks do you see in facilitating a child and family centered IEP process?
Essential Question:

What is one tangible change you can make prior to your next IEP meeting?