



Getting your head around your ASD child's IEP

What is an IEP?

An IEP (Individualised Education Plan) is a collaborative document drawn up at the beginning of the school year on behalf of your child. It aims to define their strengths and challenges and set meaningful and measurable goals and objectives for the year ahead. It includes the input of all the people who are part of your child's support team, including teacher, SNA, resource staff and SENO, as well as other services who may support your child such as psychologist, OT etc. From this document the action plan is formed to help your child progress as successfully as possible in the school year ahead.

As a parent you are vitally important in this process, as you are not only the one who knows your child the best, but you are also the one who can extend these goals into the home setting.

The school will typically initiate the process and ask for your input a few weeks into the term. In preparation you should create a list of what you believe to be your child's strengths and challenges. From this list will stem the goals and objectives which will be agreed on by all involved. For maximum success the goals need to be specific, measurable, achievable and have a specific timeline.

Remember, this is a team effort. It is also helpful to encourage accountability in terms of who is responsible for which goals.

Sensory accommodations

Does your child struggle with any sensory challenges? Let the teacher know about these and be ready to make suggestions of some classroom accommodations to help support your child in coping with them. You can find a list of suggestions here:

http://www.bcfamilieswithautism.ca/pdf/Sensory_Accommodations.pdf

Think through the goals

Remember that all goals should be specific, measurable, achievable and have a specific timeline. Here is a list of some of the types of goals you may consider, depending on your own child's needs :

Communication goals:

eg. The child will greet classmates / request to go to the toilet

Social skill goals:

eg. The child will initiate an interaction with a classmate / respect personal space

Behaviour goals:

eg. The child will learn to handle a frustration without melting down / stay seated while the teacher is talking

OT goals:

eg. The child will learn to do up their own zipper / laces / use scissors correctly.

Education goals:

You may or may not be required to help suggest your child's education goals. Things like literacy, certain elements of number work etc. may be worth adding into the IEP.

Figuring out these goals in advance will give you time to put in place any equipment or supports that are necessary, such as visual schedules/prompts pencil grips etc.

Get those reports in hand

Bear in mind that you may wish to include in the IEP any recommendations from supporting professionals such as your child's doctor/psychologist/OT/ABA therapist. Ensure that these are sourced in advance, so that they are ready to be included when the time comes. You may also want to have a chat with your child's previous teacher to seek their input.



For visual supports and therapy materials for autism:
www.therapics.org