

Technical Assistance on  
The Role of the General Education Teacher in the IEP Process  
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The IEP team plays a critical role in identifying the needs of students with disabilities and how those needs will be met in the educational setting. Team members must include a parent or guardian, general education teacher, special education teacher, local education agency representative (LEA), and someone who is qualified to interpret assessment results. In addition, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the student, including related services personnel when applicable; and whenever appropriate, the student with a disability.

The Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) states that IEP teams must include at least one general education teacher in the development, review and revision of the IEP (if the student is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment (§300.321)). Teams should make every effort to schedule meetings at times convenient to the parties that are required to be in attendance. If there are members of the team that cannot attend, the meeting should be rescheduled if possible. If it is determined that it is not necessary for a member to attend because the members area of the curriculum or related services is not being modified or discussed in the meeting, then an excusal form must be signed prior to the meeting, and included in the students file, provided the requirements below are met.

“A required member of the IEP team may be excused from attending and IEP meeting, in whole or in part, when the meeting involves a modification to or discussion of the member’s area of the curriculum or related services, if:

- a. the parent, in writing and the LEA consent to the excusal; and
- b. the member submits, in writing, to the parent and the IEP team, input into the development of the IEP prior to the meeting,” (§300.321).

The IEP meeting is the time for service providers to meet and discuss the needs of the student and what type of services a student will receive in order to access and make progress in the general education curriculum. “Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), in order to make Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) available to each eligible child with a disability, the child’s IEP must be designed to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum. 20 U. S. C §1414(d)(1)(A).” The general education curriculum is defined in Part B of IDEA as “the same curriculum as for nondisabled children.” 34 CFR §300.320(a)(l)(i). The U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSEP) further defines curriculum for non-disabled children to be the curriculum that is based on the states academic content standards for the grade in which a child is enrolled... and includes instruction and supports that will prepare the child for success in college and careers.

**It is vital that the general education teacher attend the IEP meeting to ensure that the needs of the student are addressed in the context of how the student will participate in the general education classroom, this includes the type of instructional supports and accommodations a student may need to access grade level core content.** In addition to accessing core content, the team must determine the

specially designed instruction the student will receive to progress toward his/her goals as outlined in the IEP. Specially designed instruction is defined as adapting as appropriate, the content, methodology or delivery of instruction to meet the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability and is the critical element in defining special education. It is important to note that specially designed instruction is in addition to and not in place of core instruction. Teams must work together to ensure that the student receives his/her education in the least restrictive environment and that services match student needs while balancing access to grade level core instruction with the specially designed instruction required for each student. This can only be achieved through collaboration and team work where appropriate input is given, concerns are addressed and all team members are actively engaged in the discussion.