

IEP PREP & PLANNING



PARENT'S GUIDE

WHAT IS AN IEP

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a legal document that outlines the special education services and goals for any child with a disability who attends public school in the U.S. The IEP is created in tandem with the child's parent, district personnel (teachers, counselors, etc.), and the student.

The IEP addresses your child's unique needs and abilities, and includes:

- Your child's current level of educational performance and their involvement and progress in the general curriculum.
- Measurable goals and objectives for your child's education.
- Any services for which your child qualifies.
- Educational accommodations to help your child succeed.
- Modifications needed for the administration of state and district-wide tests.



The IEP is free for families of
children in U.S. public schools.

IEP: WHAT TO EXPECT

As a parent, you set the foundation for handling your child's IEP. Your child's school must inform you of what's involved before the evaluation process begins. You must give your permission in writing before the school can move forward with providing special education services.


The school must also give you written notice before it changes your child's special education plan, including adding or denying services. It must tell you what it proposes to do and why.

You have the right to disagree with the school about what's best for your child. If you have a disagreement, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides you several dispute resolution options.

If you disagree with the school's evaluation results, you can get an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE). An IEE is an evaluation of your child's skills and needs by someone who's not a school employee. The school must consider the results of the IEE. However, the school isn't required to accept the findings.

Other important regulations to know about your child's IEP:

1. Your child's school must provide a written explanation of your rights under both IDEA and your state's laws. When the school provides you with any written notice, it must use language that's understandable to the general public and provided in your native language (this includes Braille).
2. You have a legal right to participate in meetings about your child's education, including IEP meetings; you can call an IEP team meeting anytime.
3. The school must protect your child's confidentiality. Personal information, such as your child's name, address, and social security number, is not shared. You can find exceptions to this rule on the [FERPA website](#).



Do you disagree with a proposed change to your child's IEP services or placement? The "stay put" protection keeps your child's current IEP in place while you and the school work things out. But you have to act quickly.



You have the right to see and get an explanation of your child's school records and you can also ask for corrections. These rights are protected by IDEA and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

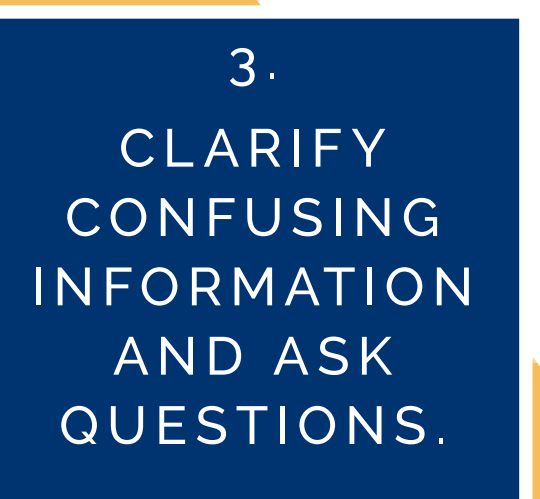
PARENT TO-DO LIST



A common misconception is that children with IEPs must be in a separate classroom, but most children with IEPs are in the same classroom as other children.



1.
FIND OUT
WHAT
TO EXPECT.



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Walking into a meeting where your child is the central topic can be anxiety-provoking. Clarifying as many unknowns as possible before the meeting can help alleviate some stress. Reach out to the special education coordinator and request a copy of the meeting agenda. Find out exactly who will be attending the meeting, the estimated length of the meeting, and how much time you will have to ask the individual evaluators questions about their findings during the meeting. Because schools schedule numerous meetings every week, this basic information might be inadvertently left out of the invitation.

2. REVIEW PAPERWORK BEFORE HAND

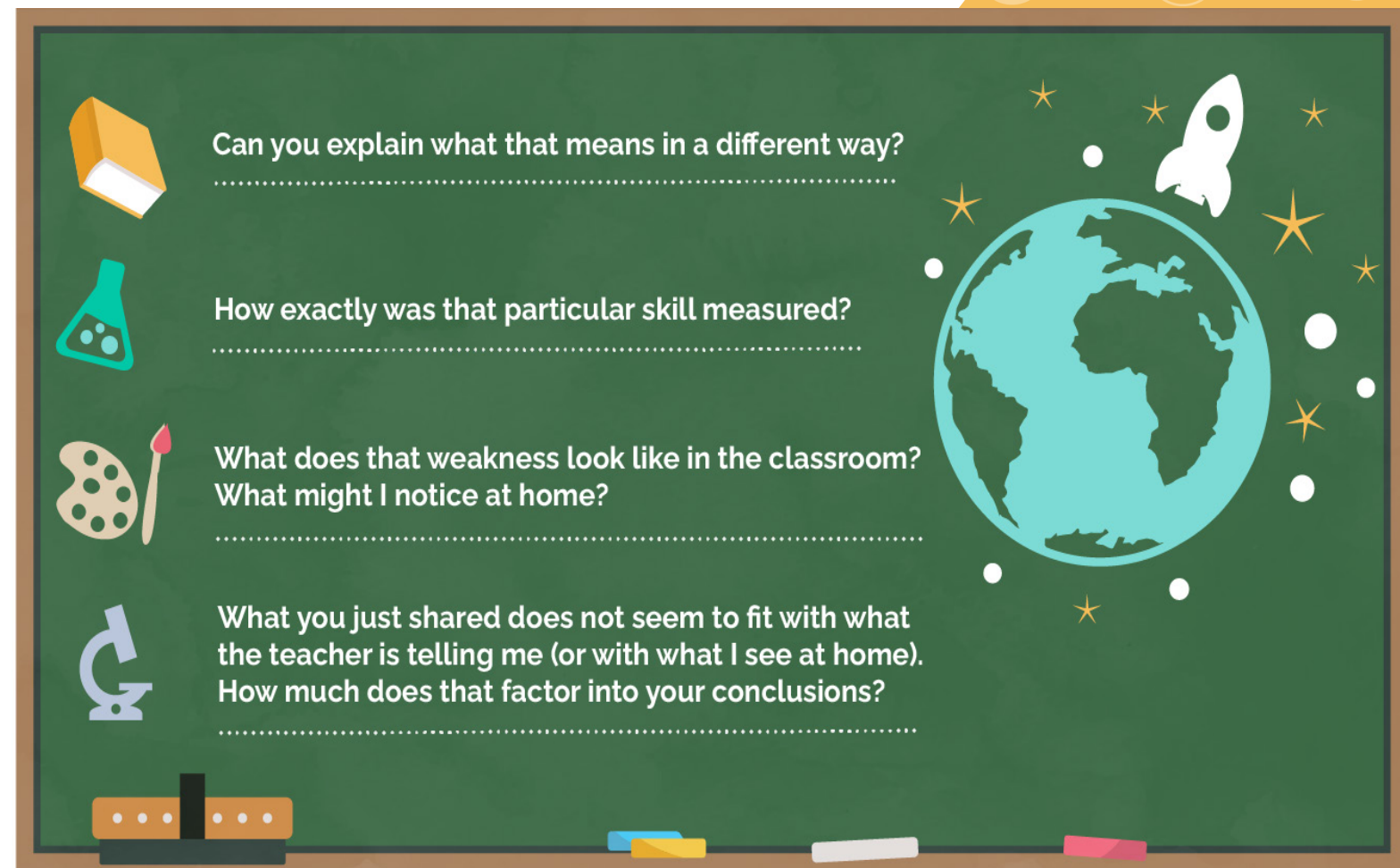
You should receive a copy of all paperwork reviewed at the meeting (e.g., evaluation reports and IEP drafts) at least five days before your meeting. If the meeting is quickly approaching and you are still waiting for the reports, contact the special education coordinator to request copies. Take advantage of having the reports beforehand and familiarize yourself with the contents. Make notes where something seems inaccurate or confusing. Review the recommendations at the end of the reports and highlight anything you want to try but need more explanation before implementing the strategy.



3. CLARIFY CONFUSING INFORMATION AND ASK QUESTIONS

How IEP information is presented can vary widely from person to person. Some read directly from their reports, while others hit only certain points. Sometimes, the findings are explained in a very relatable manner, and sometimes, the evaluator uses a lot of jargon or technical terms, which can leave you wondering what is actually going to happen when you leave the room. Either way, it might feel like you are disrupting the flow of the meeting by asking questions, or you might feel like your only option is to nod along. Keep in mind that at the end of the meeting, you will be asked whether or not you agree with the eligibility determination, or you will have to decide whether or not to consent to services. To make an informed decision, you must understand all your options and the rationale for what is offered or denied. In other words, don't hesitate to stop and ask questions. This meeting is for you about your child. You have every right to ask as many questions as you need to clarify the plan.

GENERAL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER DURING YOUR MEETING:



RESOURCE:

[Special Education: Federal Law vs. State Law](#)

SPEAK UP

Share your expertise. After all, you know your child better than anyone there. As a member of the IEP team, your opinion and input hold just as much weight as anyone else's at the table. This process should be a collaborative one that consists of a merging of ideas on how best to support your child's needs. Be sure to share your observations at home in terms of how your child approaches their work, handles challenging tasks, and manages frustration. Let the team know about your child's interests, which can serve as motivators in the school setting. Share your child's dislikes or worries if those things present unnecessary obstacles at school. If you have specific ideas on what might be helpful for your child or know from previous experiences that a particular strategy was not beneficial, be sure to share that information.

AFTER THE MEETING

Leave with action steps to continue supporting your child. Most, if not all, of these meetings are focused on what your child needs in the school setting. However, it is just as crucial for you to leave the meeting with strategies you can implement at home to reinforce skills taught at school. As the team reviews IEP goals, ask, "What can I do at home to help reinforce these skills?"

Staying in close communication with your child's general education and special education teachers will also provide you with opportunities to get ideas on how to generalize learning to the home setting. By working on your child's goals with their school providers, you will be better positioned to assess what is working or needs tweaking at the next meeting.



TOOLS THAT CAN HELP YOUR CHILD SUCCEED

Visual planning apps are a fantastic way to help your child succeed in the new school year — and year-round.

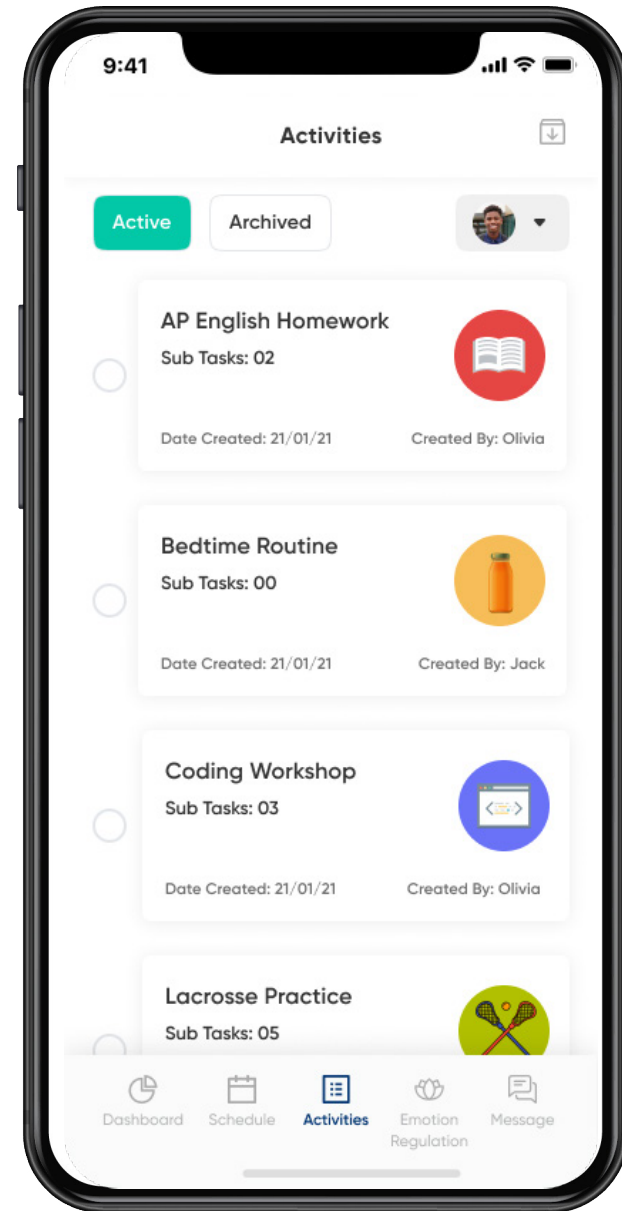
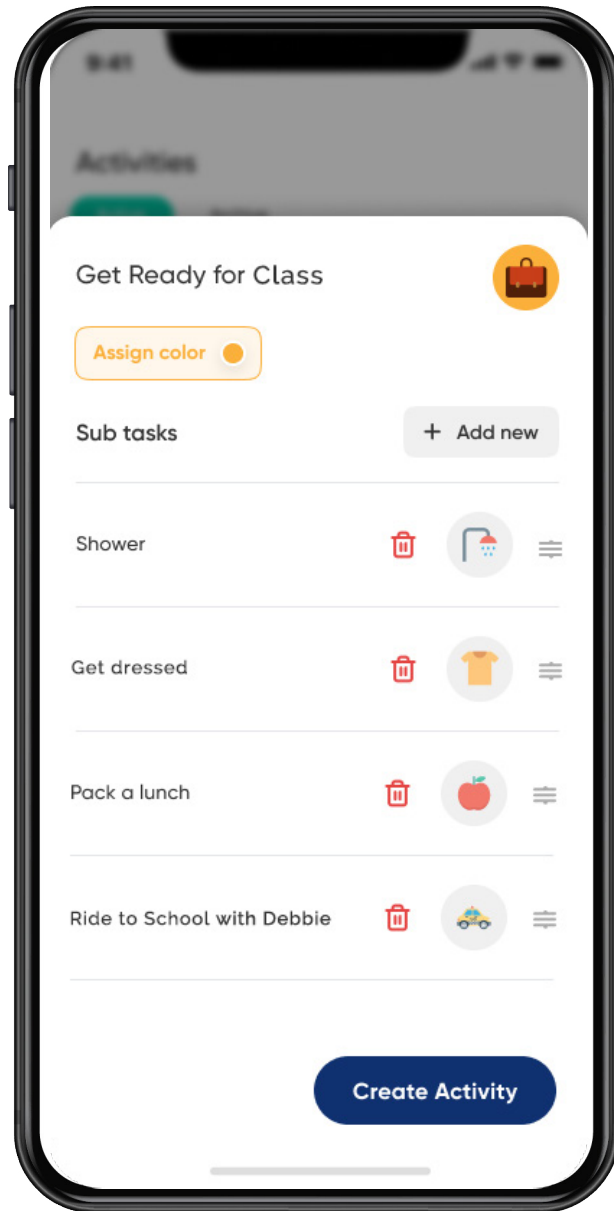
The THRIVE app provides the ability to:

- Plan your child's day with confidence.
- Allow your kids to manage their tasks efficiently.
- Improve accountability for their schedule and work.
- Create strategies to get back on track
- Regulate emotions during overstimulation.
- Communicate with teachers and caregivers in one central place.



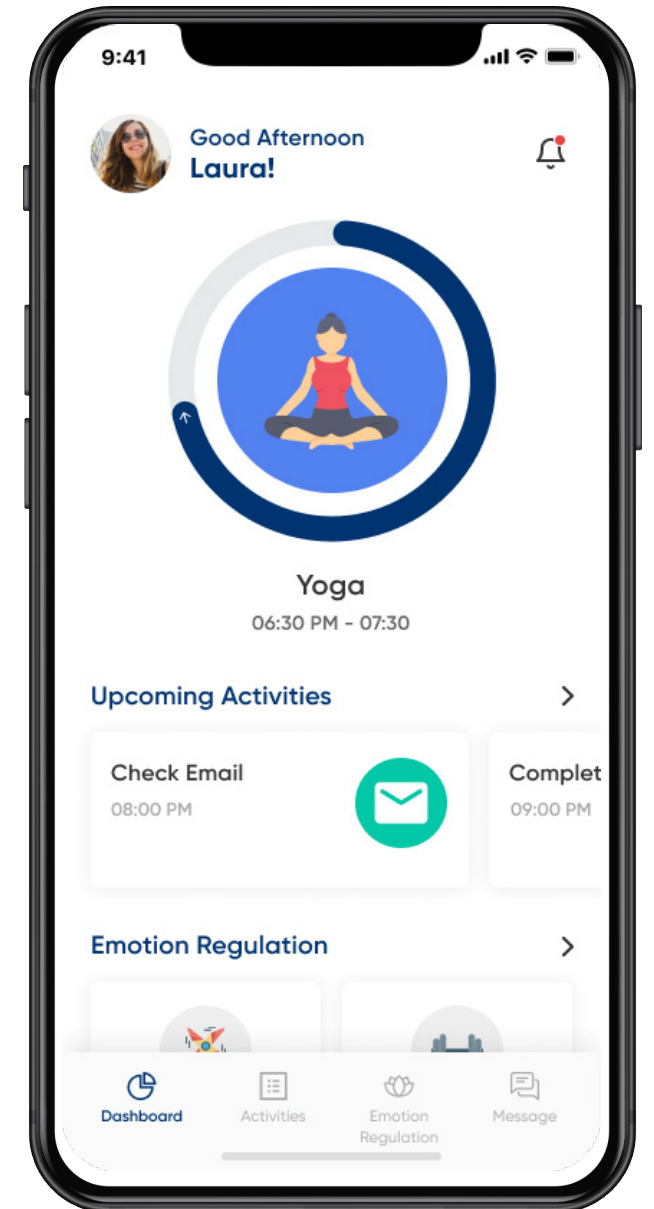
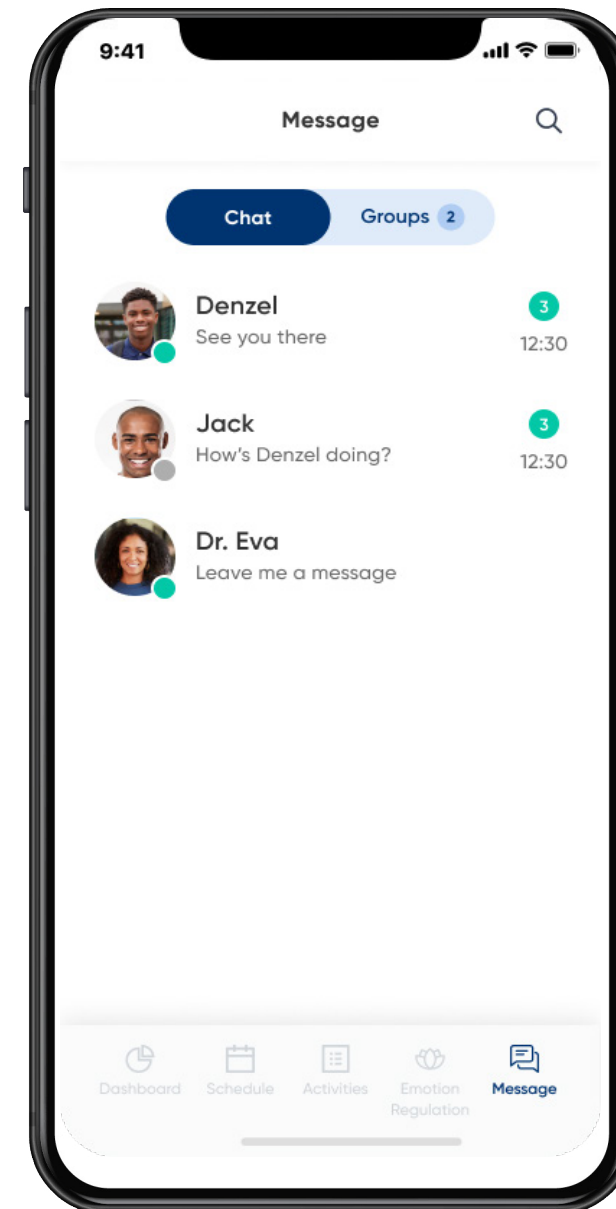
WITH THE THRIVE APP

CREATE TASKS & SUBTASKS FOR EASY PLANNING



EASILY AND QUICKLY REVIEW AND FOLLOW DAILY SCHEDULES

COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR KIDS & EXTERNAL CAREGIVERS



SUPPORT EMOTIONAL REGULATION



Stop compromising.
Start **THRIVING.**



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