

IEP Information

What is an IEP?

IEP stands for ***Individualized Education Plan***. It is a written document describing the educational services that a child will receive when eligible for special education services. The purpose of an IEP is to set reasonable learning goals for the child, list accommodations, and specifically state the services that the school district will provide. IEPs should be personalized to meet the child's unique needs. IEPs are governed by the Federal Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), and the IEP document is legally binding - meaning the school district must provide the services written by the IEP team.

How do I ask the school to evaluate my child for an IEP?

Ask in writing for a full, comprehensive evaluation. Examples are available online.

Q: "I am concerned about my child's reading, but when I ask the schools if it could be dyslexia, the school says, 'We don't test for dyslexia'. Is this correct?"

A: Yes and No.

- Schools do not typically directly diagnose students with dyslexia, but they have an obligation under "Child Find" to identify students with disabilities.
- Schools should be **screening** all students not reading at grade level for dyslexia (not diagnosing) under MN Statute 120B.12. This screening is different than a special education evaluation.

How does a child qualify in MN?

In IDEA, dyslexia falls under the category of Specific Learning Disability (SLD). Minnesota Administrative Rule 3525.1341 follows the Federal IDEA law and outlines the qualifying criteria for eligibility. A child can qualify in two ways; by being 1.75 standard deviations below the mean (see Subp. 2. C) or from an inadequate rate of progress (see Subp. 2. D). A child must meet the criteria in Subp. 2. A, B, and C **or** A, B, and D. A team override decision could also be made per Minnesota Administrative Rule 3525.1354 "Team Override on Eligibility Decisions". There is also information in MDE (MN Department of Education)'s SLD Manual, in particular, Chapter 10 - Deciding Eligibility.

My child qualifies - now what?

The IEP is developed by a team of school personnel and the child's parents. The IEP team meets, reviews assessment information about the child, and develops an educational program for the individual needs of the child. The initial IEP meeting must be held within 30 calendar days of determining the child is eligible for special education. A child's IEP must also be reviewed at least annually to determine if the child's goals were met and if any changes are needed. A parent can ask for an IEP meeting at any time. The United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit released an opinion that an IEP can specify a specific methodology: "When a particular methodology plays a critical role in the student's educational plan, it must be specified in the IEP rather than left up to individual teachers' discretion."

What does MDE (Minnesota Department of Education) say?

There are lots of Q&A resources on MDE's website under "IEP, Evaluations, and Eligibility". NOTE: IEPs should be based on the educational needs of the student. See their Q&A for Needs-Based Goals. Do you still have questions? Contact MDE's Compliance and Assistance Division.

What if there is a disagreement?

MDE has a page dedicated to "Conflicts in Special Education".

For more information visit <https://www.decodingdyslexiamn.org/iep>

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