

ENGAGING YOUTH IN INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS (IEP)

Best Practice and Recommendation 2024

Created by the SD Special Education Advisory Panel with input from individuals, parents, educators, and agency staff.

ENGAGE
STUDENTS EARLY

ENCOURAGE
STUDENT INPUT

SUPPORT
STUDENT-LED
IEP MEETINGS

INFORM
OTHERS & SEEK
ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION

ENCOURAGE
SELF-ADVOCACY

Best Practice & Recommendations

1

ENGAGE STUDENTS EARLY

Students of all ages can participate in IEP meetings with guidance and support. It is empowering for students to learn about their disability, so they can advocate for their needs. Prior to the meeting, expectations should be discussed with students to ensure understanding of the role services play in educational and life successes.

2

ENCOURAGE STUDENT INPUT

Encourage students to provide input regarding their strengths, needs, interests, services, and transition goals. Educators should utilize developmentally appropriate tools to gather input from the student.

3

INFORM OTHERS AND SEEK ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

All members of the student's IEP team, including the student, need to provide input in the plan. A shared document or survey could be an effective way to gather, track, and incorporate additional input from all who interact with the student.

4

ENCOURAGE SELF-ADVOCACY

Everyone should help develop a student's self-advocacy skills. Students learn appropriate ways to request accommodations, advocate, and share input by participating in the development of their own IEP. Remember, students know themselves best.

5

SUPPORT STUDENT-LED IEP MEETINGS

Students should be encouraged to help lead their annual IEP meetings, as developmentally appropriate. A student-led script or agenda may be utilized to support the student and establish a framework for the meeting. It may be best to slowly introduce students into meetings (briefly and intentionally, then increase). The atmosphere of the IEP meeting should remain positive and include sharing progress which helps students see their growth and encourages them to plan for their future.