COLORADO
Department of Education

Colorado IEP Parent Training

Module 4, Part 2: IEP Development, Review, and Revision

May 15, 2026

Module 4 overview

- Part 1
  - Overview of IEP process
  - Parent participation
  - IEP meetings
  - IEP team members
- Part 2
  - IEP components
  - IEP amendment



Review of acronyms

- **IDEA**: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- **ECEA**: The Exceptional Children's Educational Act
- **CDE**: Colorado Department of Education
- **AU**: Administrative Unit, which includes school districts and Boards of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES), etc.
- **FAPE**: Free Appropriate Public Education
- **IEP**: Individualized Education Program
- **PSN**: Procedural Safeguards Notice
- **PWN:** Prior Written Notice

IEP Components

Overview of IEP components

1. **Present levels** of academic achievement and functional performance
2. **C**onsideration of **special factors**
3. **Post-secondary transition plan** (by age 15)
4. **Measurable annual goals**
5. **How progress will be monitored**
6. **D**escription of **special education and related services** and **supplementary aids and services** (including **modifications and accommodations**)
7. **Service delivery**: The projected date for the beginning and anticipated **frequency, location, and duration** of services and modifications
8. **Placement** in the **least restrictive environment**
9. **S**tate and district assessments and **alternate standards**
10. **Extended school year (ESY)** determination

1. Present levels (PLAAFP)

- The Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) section provides current information on the child's strengths and needs.
- This section includes:
  - Student Strengths, Preferences, Interests
  - Present Levels of Educational Performance
  - Student Needs and Impact of Disability
  - Parent/Student Input to enhance the child's education
- This information should be the basis for the annual goals and the special education services and supports to meet those goals.

Needs and impact of disability

- The statement of needs and impact of disability is based on evaluation and assessment data.
- This should include information on the child's current academic and/or functional needs.
- For each area of need, there should be an explanation of how the disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum.
- This section can include needs for academic skills, behavioral skills, social skills, assistive technology, independent living skills, and job-related skills.

Example of needs and impact statements

- **Communication:** A's slow processing speed makes it difficult for him to engage with peers in group activities. He needs direct support from a speech language pathologist to work on reasoning, problem-solving and communicating in group activities.
- **Literacy:** While B has cognitive abilities and reading ability below her age and grade level, she is a motivated student and can meet grade level expectations in the general classroom with some modifications to support comprehension. She needs modifications developed in consultation with the special educator.

2. Consideration of special factors

- IDEA lists five special factors that the IEP team must consider in the development, review, and revision of each child's IEP.
  - Behavior
  - Limited English proficiency
  - Blindness or visual impairment
  - Communication needs/Deafness
  - Assistive technology
  - 34 CFR §300.324(a)(2)(i)-(v).



3. Postsecondary plan (by age 15)

- IEP planning for life after high school begins **at age 15 in Colorado (no later than the end of 9th grade).** The team may agree to begin earlier.
- Planning for life after high school is often called ”secondary transition planning” or “transition planning.”
- From this time, the IEP must include post-secondary goals based on age-appropriate transition assessment related to:
  - Training / education
  - Employment
  - Independent living skills, only where appropriate



- The IEP must include transition services needed for the child to reach those goals.

Transition services

- Transition services are a coordinated set of activities designed to help children with disabilities successfully transition from high school to post-school life.
- These services focus on preparing them for further education, employment, and independent living through individualized support and goal-oriented planning.
- Learn more at Secondary Transition: Special Education Services for Youth Ages 15-21.

18-21 secondary transition services

- The IEP team may determine that a child **who has not graduated with a regular diploma** has continuing transition needs and may extend IEP transition services until age 21.
- To receive 18-21 services, the child cannot have received their diploma, even if they have met graduation requirements.
- After grade 12, the focus is on meeting transition needs.
- 18-21 services are not an extension of high school.
- 18-21 services are not full time.
- AUs may have different programming options available.

4. Measurable annual goals

- IDEA requires **measurable annual goals**, including academic and functional goals, to:
  - meet the child's needs that result from the child's disability **to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum**; and
  - meet each of the child's **other educational needs** that result from the child's disability.
- 34 CFR § 300.320(a)(2).



Specific and measurable

- Goals should be written in brief, specific, and clear language.
- Goals should be easily understood by someone who does not know the child well.
- The goal statement should pass the “stranger test.” This means that a stranger reading the goal could understand:
  - what skill the child is working on,
  - the circumstances under which the child must demonstrate the skill,
  - how to measure the child’s progress,
  - how to assess when the goal is achieved, and
  - the relevant timeframe.

Goal format

- Goals typically include the following elements:
  - Target behavior = what the child will do (e.g., the desired academic or functional skill)
  - Conditions = the setting or context
  - Baseline data = current level of performance
  - Criteria for success = level of performance (e.g., how well, how often)
  - Timeframe = the time during which the goal should be achieved

Goal examples

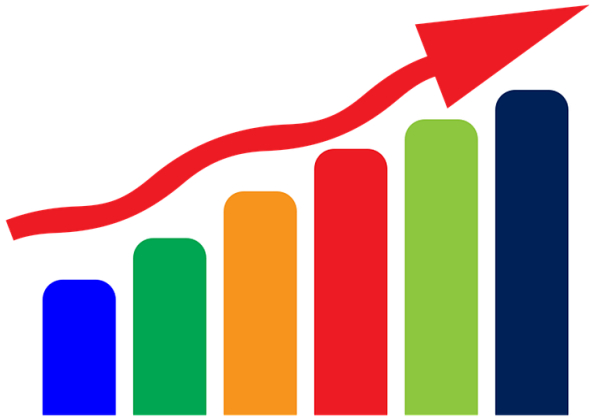
- Given a passage at the 3rd-grade reading level, K will read aloud at a rate of 115 correct words per minute by the end of the school year.
- During the 20-minute morning recess, J will initiate a positive peer-to-peer interaction at least once per recess, 3 out of 5 days, for 4 consecutive weeks, as deemed appropriate by a 3-point rubric, by October.
- Source: IRIS, Developing High-Quality Individualized Education Programs

Short-term objectives

- Short-term objectives can be helpful to provide a roadmap to achieve goals.
- There is no restriction on including short-term objectives in a child's IEP. ECEA Rule 4.03(6)(f).
- Some AUs include short-term objectives for all IEPs.
- Short-term objectives are **required** for children that take alternative assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards (i.e., students with the most significant cognitive disabilities -- approximately 1% of students). Colorado's alternate standards are called Extended Evidence Outcomes (EEOs). More information is provided under State and District Assessments below.

5. Progress monitoring

- The IEP must describe how progress toward annual goals will be measured and reported.
  - Measures should be objective.
  - The description should specify who (by role or qualification, not by name), when, and where.
  - The description should state when parents will receive reports.



6. Services and supports to meet goals

- Services and supports to meet goals can include:
  - Specially-designed instruction
  - Related services
  - Supplementary aids and services
  - Program modifications and support for school staff
- Services might be direct or indirect.



Related services

- Related services provide extra support to children with disabilities to help them:
  - benefit from their special education,
  - participate in the general education curriculum, extracurricular and nonacademic activities, and
  - participate in activities with other children with disabilities and without disabilities.
  - Learn more: CDE Related Services page.

Related services examples

- Examples of related services:
  - Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) or audiology services, occupational therapy or physical therapy
  - Psychological or counseling services
  - Interpretation
  - Transportation
  - School health and nursing services
  - Parent counseling & training

Supplementary aids & services

- Supplementary Aids & Services are supports that help students access and participate in the general curriculum.
  - Accommodations
  - Modifications
  - Assistive Technology
  - Staff support and training
  - Physical environmental supports
  - Adult or peer support
  - Others deemed necessary by the IEP team

Accommodations

- Accommodations change **how** the student receives instructions or shows what they have learned.
- Examples:
  - Use of an audio recording instead of printed text
  - Large-print versions of printed text
  - Have test questions read aloud
  - Be given notes of a lesson
  - Preferential seating in a classroom
  - Extended time to complete an exam

Modifications

- Modifications change **what** students learn (i.e., curriculum).
- Typically, students do not have curriculum modifications unless they are eligible for state alternative achievement standards.
- Examples:
  - Read a different version of an assigned text
  - Complete different homework problems
  - Answer different test questions
  - Learn different material
  - An alternate grading standard

Program modifications and support for staff

- Program modifications and support help school staff support the child.
- This could include:
  - Changes to the physical environment
  - Changes to the program or schedule
  - Professional development
  - Materials or equipment
  - Time for planning together about the child's educational program



Research-based practices

- IDEA requires that special education and related services and supplementary aids and services be based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable.
- 34 CFR § 300.320 (a)(4).



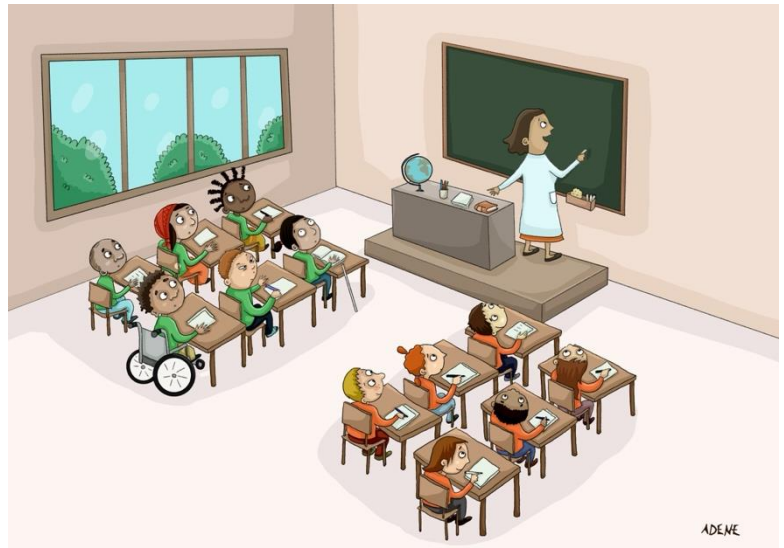
7. Service delivery statement

- The service delivery statement includes a description of the date services and supports will start, how often, the location, and the duration (e.g., minutes per week or month). The information may be summarized in a table (see example below).
- The frequency and duration of services need to be enough to meet the child's needs and to make progress toward goals.
- The service delivery statement should have enough detail that parents know what a typical school day will look like.

Specialized Instruction Area and/or Related Services *300.320(a)(4)*	Location	Special Education or Related Services	Service Provider Role *300.18 & ECEA 3.04*	Start Date *300.320 (a)(7)*	End Date *300.320 (a)(7)*	Frequency of Special Education/Related Services *300.320(a)(7)*		
						Minutes	Frequency	Direct/ Indirect

8. Recommended placement in the LRE

- "**Placement**" or "educational placement" means the provision of special education and related services described in the child's IEP. ECEA Rule 4.03(8)(a).
- **In the LRE** means that the special education and related services described in the IEP are provided in a setting with children without disabilities as much as appropriate.



Team determination

- The IEP team first determines the child's program of special education and related services. Then, the team determines the educational setting based on the child's needs and the IEP.
- The educational setting refers to the amount of time a child participates in a setting with children without disabilities. In other words, educational setting is about **who** is in the classroom.
- IDEA has a strong preference for children with disabilities to be educated with children without disabilities. This comes from IDEA's Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) requirement.

IDEA's LRE requirement

- IDEA says that a child with a disability must be educated with nondisabled peers to the **maximum extent appropriate**. 34 CFR § 300.114(a).
- IDEA also says that the IEP must include "an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will **not** participate with nondisabled children in the regular class and in extracurricular and nonacademic activities." 34 CFR § 300.320(a)(5).
- Supplementary aids and services help children participate in the regular classroom.
- **Module 5** is about Least Restrictive Environment.

Description of educational setting

- The educational setting may be described using a percentage of time (e.g., inside the regular class 80% or more of the day, etc.) or a category (separate schools, residential facilities, or home-bound/hospital placements).
- The use of percentages of time is for IDEA's reporting requirements. The appropriate setting and the amount of time spent with peers without disabilities depends on the child's IEP.
- When the IEP is final, the primary educational setting is often shown on the cover page of the IEP.

9. State & district assessments

- A small number of children with **significant cognitive disabilities** take alternate assessments aligned to Alternative Academic Achievement Standards (sometimes referred to as Extended Evidence Outcomes or EEOs). The number is about 1% of all students. (Learn more about the criteria: Participation Guidelines)
- Parents must be informed of the differences between regular and alternate assessments.
- Parents must be informed of the effect of taking an alternate assessment on their child's education. For example, if the child would not qualify for a regular high school diploma because of taking alternate assessments.

10. Extended school year (ESY)

- **Some** children with IEPs will be eligible for Extended School Year (ESY) services, which are special education and related services that are provided **beyond the normal school year** in accordance with the child's IEP and at no cost to the parents.
- Determination of eligibility for ESY services is decided by looking at **regression and recoupment** data collected after school breaks as well as predictive factors.

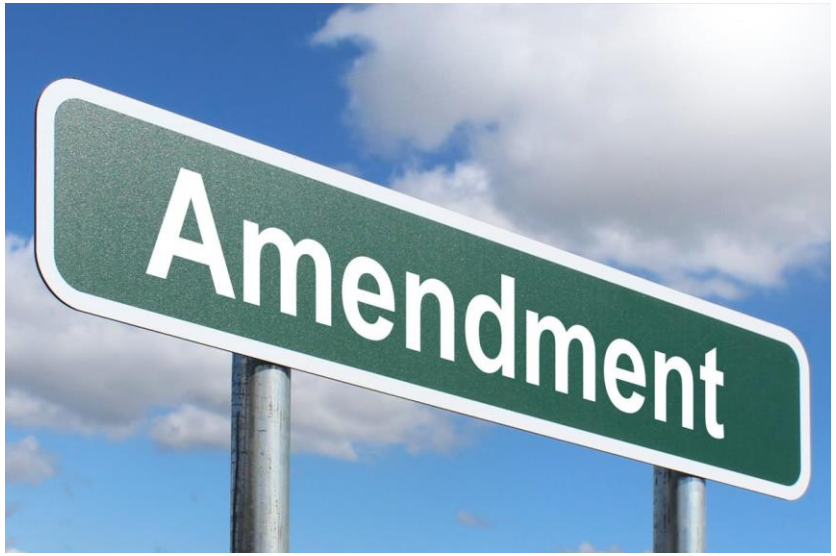
Regression & recoupment

- Regression is the **loss of skills and/or knowledge** experienced by the child during a break from school.
- Recoupment is the amount of time it takes for a child to recover skills and knowledge lost during a break.
- ESY services are based on the child's progress on IEP goals. They are not based on disability or level of achievement.
- ESY Services **are not** designed to develop new skills unrelated to the maintenance of existing skills.

Amendment of IEP

Amendment in IEP meeting

- An amendment is a change to the existing IEP.
- An IEP can be amended in an IEP team meeting after the annual IEP meeting during the same school year.
- An amendment in a meeting may be appropriate if the change is something that the entire team needs to discuss to come to consensus.



Amendment of IEP without meeting

- The IEP may be amended without an IEP team meeting after the annual IEP meeting in the same school year:
  - If parent and school agree in writing.
  - Parents participate in amendment process.
  - IEP team informed of changes.
  - 34 CFR 300.324(a)(4).
- Parents should review the written amendment before signing it to make sure that it shows what has been agreed to (and not more or less).
- Parents need to request a copy of the IEP with amendments.

Examples of amendments without a meeting

- An amendment without a meeting might make a change that the parent and school agree would better meet the child's needs.
- For example:
  - an increase to the amount of speech therapy services a child receives.
  - adding an accommodation such as a specific type of assistive technology.
  - removing or updating a goal that the child has achieved.
- Colorado's ECEA rules allow a "change in building or location that is not a change in placement, as described in Section 4.03(8)(b)," to be made without an IEP meeting or conducting a reevaluation. Such a change must consider the impact on the child's educational program and include parent participation. ECEA Rule 4.03(8)(b)(iii).

Meeting or no meeting?

- **Should this amendment be made with or without a meeting?**
- Example 1: The student is not making progress toward their academic goals in math and literacy. The IEP team members have different ideas about what is needed for the student to make progress. The math teacher proposes a change to the child's accommodations in math.
- Example 2: The speech therapist thinks the student would make more progress toward their goals if they increased their time from 1 time per week for 30 minutes to 2 times per week for 30 minutes each. The parents agree.

Module 4 summary



- Parent participation is a key part of IDEA.
- IEP decisions are made by a multidisciplinary team that includes the parents.
- IEP team meetings must follow procedures and include the right people.
- The IEP is the annual plan for the child that outlines their needs, annual goals, and educational program.
- The IEP has multiple required components.
- After the annual IEP meeting and in the same school year, the IEP can be amended in a meeting or, if appropriate, without a meeting if the parent and school agree in writing.

Individual support

Families, educators, and other professionals with questions about Special Education or needing assistance can contact CDE's Office of Special Education.

Phone: 720-926-1453

Email:

Parents_ESSUquestions@cde.state.co.us



CDE/Colorado resources

- CDE, Colorado Procedural Safeguards Notice (linked on CDE's Individualized Education Program page and at Dispute Resolution, Parent and Child Rights in Special Education)
- CDE, IEP Document Translation
- CDE, Secondary Transition: Special Education Services for Youth Ages 15-21
- CDE, Secondary Transition: Transition Services for 18-21 Year Olds
- CDE, Secondary Transition: 18-21 Secondary Transition Eligibility and Guidance for Concurrent Enrollment
- CDE, Related Services
- CDE, Co-Alt State Alternate Assessments
- CDE, Extended Evidence Outcomes
- CDE, Extended School Year Services: What Parents Need to Know

More resources (not specific to CO)

- Progress Center, IEP Tip Sheet Series
- Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR), Scheduling the IEP Meeting and Notifying Parents
- CPIR, When the IEP Team Meets
- CPIR, Special Factors in IEP Development
- US ED, Q&A on Serving Children with Disabilities Placed by Their Parents in Private Schools
- Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE), Educational Advocates: A Guide for Parents
- CADRE, Guiding Principles of Collaborative Advocacy
- IRIS Center, Challenging, Ambitious, Measurable Annual Goals