



Parent Friendly and Productive Virtual IEP Meetings

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Meet Your Presenters



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Thank You!

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[Parent Friendly and Productive IEP Meetings 2020](#)



Learning Outcomes

During and after our time together we will:

- Review DPI Guidance Relating to Virtual IEP Meetings
- Understand and Identify Barriers to Virtual IEP Meetings
- Prepare for a Virtual IEP
- Engage IEP Team Members During the Virtual IEP Meeting
- Reflect on and Enhance Future Virtual IEP Meetings

Please Note

- This presentation will not address questions relating to IEP revisions that may be needed as a result of school closure
- For guidance and resources on other topics, go to the Special Education tab of the [WI DPI COVID 19 Web Page](#) and search the [Division of Learning Support Email News Archive](#)
- Stay tuned for upcoming WI FACETS and DPI video on “Understanding Special Education Guidance During COVID-19 Pandemic” that will be posted to above web page

COVID-19 Questions – Contact DPI 

Poll

What is your experience participating in a virtual IEP meeting?

- I consider myself an expert and have participated in many IEP meetings virtually
- I have participated in a few virtual IEP meetings
- I have not yet participated in a virtual IEP meeting



Stay Calm and Carry On

- **Relationships matter!**
- This is a huge learning curve for ALL students, families, and school districts
- Stay calm, we will get through this together

CCR IEP Learning Resources

<https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/college-and-career-ready-ieps/learning-resources>

The screenshot shows the website for CCR IEP Learning Resources. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Families & Students, Schools & Educators, Libraries, and Data & Media. Below this is the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction logo and a search bar. The main content area features a sidebar on the left with a 'Special Education' menu containing links to the Special Education Index, What's New, Information for Educators, Information for Families, Results Driven Accountability, College and Career Ready IEPs, Special Education Program Areas, and Early Childhood Special Education. The main content area is titled 'CCR IEP LEARNING RESOURCES' and 'CCR IEP Learning Resources'. It includes a sub-header 'Explore in-depth information and resources about CCR IEPs.' and a section for 'Upcoming Learning Opportunities' with the text 'Regional CCR IEP Training Calendar coming soon!'. Below this are four featured resource cards: 'Introductory Resources and Full Day Trainings', '5 Beliefs' (with sub-links for High Expectations and Culturally), '5 Step Process' (with sub-link for Step 1 - Understand Achievement), and 'Digging Deeper: Special Topics' (with sub-link for Coming Soon!).



Review DPI Guidance Relating to Virtual IEP Meetings



DPI Guidance for Virtual IEP Meetings

- Every attempt should be made to comply with required timelines
- All IEP requirements still apply to virtual IEP meetings
- All required team members should participate unless appropriately excused
- Parents should be notified ahead of time who will be absent and appropriate documentation is required

Extended School Closure due to Covid-19 Special Education Question and Answer Document 03-25-20
Current FAQ Available on: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/covid-19-sped-updates-and-resources>

DPI Guidance for Virtual IEP Meetings

What if the parent does not want to meet virtually?

- Parent may request a phone meeting
- Parent may request to wait for an in person meeting and DPI understands postponing an IEP team meeting may mean not meeting annual IEP timelines
- Parents may choose to allow LEA to proceed with meeting without them

Extended School Closure due to Covid-19 Special Education Question and Answer Document 03-25-20

Current FAQ Available on: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/covid-19-sped-updates-and-resources>

DPI Guidance for Virtual IEP Meetings

- **What should IEP teams do about the IEP team meeting signature requirement - particularly for SLD evaluations?**
 - Electronic or digital signatures can be used
 - SLD evaluations may use electronic signatures to document agreement or disagreement with the eligibility determination
 - Ensure all members have access to email
 - Document that the IEP team met virtually due to the public health order
 - Share a copy of the evaluation report with the IEP team members



Virtual IEP Meeting Confidentiality Considerations

- Be transparent about the potential threats to confidentiality that are out of anyone's control
- Document the steps taken to protect confidentiality, such as:
 - Use screen sharing or “snail mail” versus emailing documents when possible
 - Only video conference and email from your work computer / device versus personal computer / device
 - Be mindful of your video surroundings (and what is on your screen if sharing) when conducting a virtual meeting

<https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/training/email-and-student-privacy>

[FERPA and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

[FERPA and Virtual Learning](#)

Understanding and Identifying Barriers to Virtual IEP Meetings



UDL Guidelines




Provide multiple means of **Engagement** →

Affective Networks
The "WHY" of learning

A diagram of a human brain with several areas highlighted in green, representing the affective networks.


Provide multiple means of **Representation** →

Recognition Networks
The "WHAT" of learning

A diagram of a human brain with several areas highlighted in purple, representing the recognition networks.

Provide multiple means of **Action & Expression** →

Strategic Networks
The "HOW" of learning

A diagram of a human brain with several areas highlighted in blue, representing the strategic networks.



Potential Barriers to Virtual IEP Meetings

- Varying levels of comfort and experience with technology and video
- Virtual experience may be different based on platform (ie: phone, tablet, computer)
- Physical environment of meeting will be different for each team member
- Unique confidentiality concerns for virtual web-based meetings
- Different sensory experience for virtual meeting compared to in person meeting (audio, visual, non-verbal cues)



Potential Barriers to Virtual IEP Meetings

- Virtual or phone IEP meeting may inhibit rich “discussion” and/or ability to develop deeper relationships and understanding between students, families, and educators
- Some parents may be inhibited by the actual IEP process, let alone the virtual platform
- Providing accommodations virtually may require additional knowledge and use of technology (e.g. providing accommodations such as interpreters)

Group Activity

Use Chat Feature to Respond

What additional barriers can you think of for virtual IEP meetings compared to in person IEP meetings?



Overcoming Barriers

Despite these barriers, virtual IEP meetings also offer unique opportunities and new possibilities for flexibility, engagement, and building relationships

Overcoming Barriers



The only difference between
stumbling blocks and stepping stones
is the way you use them.

~ American Proverb



Preparing for a Virtual IEP Meeting





Traditional IEP Participant Comments

“I appreciated that the district contacted me prior to the meeting and really stressed that I was an important part of the team. It felt like they really wanted my input.”

“By far the most helpful thing has been to meet with teachers and providers ahead of time so we are not bogged down with minutiae and can focus on longer term goals and broader perspective.”



Virtual IEP Participant Comment

“Everybody is going to need a lot of patience and flexibility! My virtual IEP meeting ended up having to be changed to a phone meeting on the fly since no one could get the video call to work! That could have been really frustrating, but thankfully I had a draft of the IEP in front of me and had already spoken to my son’s special education teacher earlier in the week about my concerns. So despite the format of the meeting being a surprise, nothing in the actual meeting was, and I felt good about what we were able to accomplish.” - parent who recently participated in a virtual IEP



Virtual IEP Participant Comment

“I have found that the virtual IEP meeting is much like meeting in person. Be prepared with your paperwork and be prepared to troubleshoot any technical issues. Allow parents the opportunity to participate over the telephone if videoconferencing isn't an option for them. We have been using Zoom as our meeting platform and it's been working great.” - Natalie Poppe, Speech Language Pathologist, Reedsville School District



Tips for Planning In Advance-Technology

- Have a backup plan in case the video conference software isn't working
- Have a backup meeting/date time scheduled
- Arrange any necessary accommodations for team members
- Test technical applications prior to the meeting

Preparing for a Virtual IEP Meeting

- Ensure all IEP team members are familiar with the platform you are using
 - Send a “pre-meeting checklist” via email to participants to help them prepare for virtual meeting [Sample Checklist](#)
 - Create a short “screen shot video” with narration that outlines key features of video and send to participants to view prior to meeting
 - Offer a 15 minute pre-meeting to all participants to go over sound, video conference features, etc. prior to start of actual meeting



Preparing for a Virtual IEP Meeting

- Familiarize parents and students with technology
 - Reach out to the family via phone prior to the meeting
 - Find out how they are able to receive documents
 - Create a short “screen shot video” with narration that outlines key features of video and send to participants to view prior to meeting
 - Offer to walk through the virtual platform with family to review sound, video conference features, etc. prior to start of actual meeting

Preparing for a Virtual IEP Meeting

- Additional information for all team members
 - Create and share an agenda in advance
 - Have parents and students help create the agenda
 - Consider identifying team members who will lead the discussion or present information within each section of the IEP
 - If translation is needed, have documents translated prior to the meeting
 - Email or snail mail additional materials/documents
 - See next slide for examples and resources

Preparing Students and Families for an IEP Meeting

- Inform parents of their legal rights: [Procedural Safeguards Brochure](#)
- Blank IEP forms for parents to follow along
- [Student Snapshot or Positive Student Profile](#)
- [WI Transition App](#)
- [CCR IEP Discussion Tool](#)
- [IEP Checklist for Parents](#)
- [Special Education in Plain Language](#) and [Introduction to Special Education](#)
- Additional family resources from WSPEI / WI FACETS
(<https://wspei.org/iep/>) (<https://wifacets.org/>)



Tips for Planning in Advance-Logistical

- Determine in advance what materials team members will need, and ensure they have them ahead of time (don't ask if they have everything at the start of the meeting)
- Allow for additional time than a traditional face to face IEP meeting
- Make sure all necessary team members can attend
- Schedule a follow up IEP meeting before timeline expires

Preparing for a Virtual IEP Meeting

- How will communication from non-English speakers or sign language be incorporated into the IEP?
 - Some technologies allow you to “pin” a video of person (e.g. sign language interpreter)
 - Some technologies allow for live captioning
 - If using a language interpreter, how will this person and parent be prepared for translation protocol during a phone or virtual meeting?
 - How will written text be accommodated and supported to ensure everyone has access to key information?

Additional Supports to be Ready to Share

During this public health emergency, the following additional resources may be helpful to families:

- [WI DPI for Families Section of COVID-19 Webpage](#)
 - [Learning During COVID-19](#) and [Learning Every day, Everywhere](#)
 - Family section of DPI [Literacy and Mathematics Extended Learning During School Closure Page](#)
- [Child Mind Institute - Supporting Families during COVID-19](#)
- [Parent-Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope with COVID-19](#)
- [Talking to Children About COVID-19 - A Parent Resource](#)
- Additional Resources on [WI FACETS](#) and [Center for Parent Information and Resources \(CPIR\)](#)



Engaging IEP Team Members During the Virtual IEP Meeting





Traditional IEP Participant Comments

“It was nice that the district talked about my child’s strengths, as well as his challenges. It made feel that my child was a student – not a problem.”

“The district had so many people there that I felt I had very little time to talk. They were nice to me, but I felt as though I hardly got to say anything.”

“I appreciate that the case manager kept the meeting focused on the goals.”

Virtual IEP Participant Comments

“I was quite nervous about how the meeting would go not being face to face and not being able to read body language. However I felt it was more organized and to the point than it is in person. Everyone was better at taking their turns speaking and taking the time to listen. It felt more cohesive. Overall it was a good experience.” - Parent who recently participated in a virtual IEP meeting for the first time



Virtual IEP Participant Comments

"Over the course of the last couple of weeks, we have been able to host IEP Meetings with very good parent satisfaction through the use of Google Meet. One school person presents the IEP to the group and writes/reviews the IEP as we normally would at an in person IEP Meeting. Parents have been very receptive and comfortable with our process with most parents stating this was more or less the same as meeting in person". -Shaun Young, Director of Learning, Gibraltar School District.

During the Virtual IEP Meeting

- Minimize distractions as much as possible
- Be aware of your surroundings and what the meeting participants can see
- Don't stress if you do get interrupted!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mh4f9AYRCZY>

During the Virtual IEP Meeting

- Introduce all team members
 - Ensure staff have a picture as icon on screen or shared when doing introduction if not sharing video
- Check in - “How is everyone doing?”
- Review timelines
- Review parent rights
- Establish norms [Examples of Possible Norms](#)



During the Virtual IEP Meeting

- Stick to the agenda
- Be mindful of time
- Stay student centered
- Emphasize strengths and positives



During the Virtual IEP Meeting

- Stick to the highlights of each section of the IEP
- Use examples and parent friendly language
- Check for understanding and consensus
- Engage the parent in group discussions when important decisions are being made
- Do not mute parents at any time

Traditional IEP Participant Comments

“There was no one that I could connect with – all the professionals took over.”

“During the IEP meeting, the teacher explained to my child, in terms he understood, the progress he has made and also talked to him about goals and objectives so that he’ll know what he is going to be working on during the coming year.”

“Parents need to feel safe, and heard. Sometimes when the power of one parent is strong it can be very uncomfortable. All professionals need some training in dealing with difficult conversations.”



Keeping Virtual IEP Meeting Participants Engaged

- Make connections with students that may be present
- State the page number/section you are referencing or discussing
- Minimize educational jargon and acronyms
- Ask for input and feedback from the parent after each section



Keeping Virtual IEP Meeting Participants Engaged

- Use clarification and verification techniques throughout the meeting
 - “Does this match your understanding?”
 - “Do you see the same strengths or concerns?”
- Monitor your body language and facial expression
- Look for non-verbal cues from parents as well



Group Activity

Use Chat Feature to Respond

What are some other ways you could keep IEP meeting participants engaged in a virtual IEP meeting?



**Preparing IEP Team
Members for Roles and
Responsibilities
Unique to Virtual
Meetings**



Traditional IEP Meeting Roles

- Parent
- Student
- General Education Teacher
- Special Education Teacher
- Local Education Agency (LEA) Representative
- Someone who can interpret assessment results
- Related Service Providers
- Other agency representatives (e.g. transition)



Considerations of Unique Aspects of Virtual IEP Meetings

Identifying key tasks and responsibilities to address differences between virtual and face to face IEP meetings:

- Teams should consider assigning specific members to each responsibility as they adapt to virtual meetings
- As teams become more accustomed to the format, specifically assigning these tasks may become less important

Logistics Considerations

BEFORE THE MEETING:

- Who will provide needed information and documents in advance of meeting? How will it be shared?
- Who is helping team members learn, navigate and troubleshoot the technology?
 - Video tutorial
 - Pre-meeting live practice
 - Screen shot instructions

Logistics Considerations

DURING THE MEETING:

- **Monitor the “room” for technology concerns:**
 - Anyone that drops off of the call
 - Anyone typing in the chat box that they cannot hear or see the shared screen
- **Monitor the time, established norms and the agenda**
 - Remind group of norms when breached
 - Monitor the time
 - Redirect to the agenda item if discussion begins to go off track

Documentation Considerations

- Updating the IEP documents in real time vs. taking notes
- What will IEP team members be seeing?
 - Official IEP forms updated in real time via screen sharing
 - Notes on hard copy drafts or blank forms
 - Technology alternative: presentation software
- Will chat features or other ways of web based communication such as “comments” be incorporated into the IEP?

Communication and Engagement Considerations



There are differences between communicating in person and communicating through technology:

- Maintain professionalism
- Be clear and transparent about limitations in maintaining confidentiality
- Nonverbals are different online than in person



Communication and Engagement Considerations

- **Ensure parents are comfortable and able to provide input throughout the meeting**
 - Use the agenda!
 - Cuing and checking in
 - Paraphrasing and clarifying
- **Use chat, but do so wisely**
 - Can help limit interruptions
 - Could cause confusion
 - Who is monitoring and responding to chat?



Agreement / Disagreement Considerations

Especially with the absence of visual cues ...

- How will consensus for major decisions be determined in a virtual or phone based discussion?
- How will disagreements be handled?
- If a disagreement persists, consider [dispute resolution options](#), such as mediation, or an IEP Facilitation through WSEMS



Reflect on and Enhance Future Virtual IEP Meetings





Group Activity

Use Chat Feature to Respond

How do you currently follow up with parents and team members after an IEP meeting?

Traditional IEP Participant Comments

- “I did not get a rough copy of what was discussed so I could compare with the final copy. I did not get a follow-up call/ email to go over the IEP to make sure I understood.”
- “Do what the team has agreed to and what is in the IEP - if you can't, then let me know. It becomes very difficult to trust the people entrusted with my child's learning when the IEP is not followed.”

After the Virtual IEP Meeting

- Survey all IEP team participants on virtual meeting experience and follow up on comments made
- Check in with parents via phone
- Follow up with IEP team members
 - Assign due dates on when to complete edits/revisions to IEP
- **Remember - Relationships Matter!**

Resources

- [CCR IEP Learning Resources](#)
- [Center for Parent Information and Resources](#)
- [Child Mind Institute - Supporting Families during COVID-19](#)
- [Dispute Resolution Options](#)
- [Division of Learning Support Email News Archive](#)
- [DPI Family Engagement Resources](#)
- [Email and Student Privacy](#)
- [Examples of Possible Norms](#)
- [FERPA and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [FERPA and Virtual Learning](#)
- [IEP Checklist for Parents](#)
- [Introduction to Special Education](#)
- [Learning During COVID-19](#)

Resources

- [Parent Friendly and Productive IEP Meetings](#)
- [Parent-Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope with COVID-19](#)
- [Procedural Safeguards Brochure](#)
- [Sample Virtual IEP Meeting Checklist](#)
- [Special Education in Plain Language](#)
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- [Talking to Children About COVID-19 - A Parent Resource](#)
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- [WI DPI for Families Section of COVID-19 Webpage](#)
- [WI Transition App](#)
- [WI FACETS](#)
- [WSEMS Videos](#)
- [WSPEI](#)

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Thank you and Questions for Presenters and Contributors

