

The Individualised Education Plan

The Role of the I.E.P.:

The individualised education plan or I.E.P. is a useful tool in the administration and implementing of an inclusive policy. Its main function is the provision of information and the development of an awareness of the pupils' needs at a level which is useful to and useable by all staff. Too many I.E.P.s, too much detail and prescription in I.E.P.s, and overtly academic and dictatorial I.E.P.s, all inevitably reduce the value of the plan itself.

Schools must develop a manageable and practical system to suit their own circumstances. An I.E.P. should cover all needs. ***Of seminal importance is personal contact, not paper contact*** and this applies equally to pupils and parents. Ultimately, a pupil responds to the teacher and, once given the basic outline of a pupil's needs, a teacher can develop his/her own approach, utilising individual skills. In this way the I.E.P. should become a practical, working document.

An IEP should be:

- a detailed plan of action
- a tool for communication and collaboration
- a record of progress
- a framework for decision making

An IEP should:

- have a learning element
- be built on the curriculum the pupil is following
- make use of programmes, activities and materials which are available
- be implemented as far as possible in the normal classroom setting

An IEP should set out:

- the nature of the pupil's learning difficulty
- the special needs provision required such as :
 - staff involved, including the frequency of support

- external specialists involved, including frequency and timing
- help from parents at home
- specific programmes/activities/materials and equipment
- targets to be achieved in a given time
- monitoring and assessment arrangements
- review arrangements and date

Targets are sometimes called behavioural, instructional or performance objectives. They should describe the knowledge, skills or understanding that a pupil is expected to have by the end of a particular time period.

Targets should be SMART:

- **S** – specific (behaviour, conditions, criteria)
- **M** – manageable and measurable
- **A** – achievable and agreed
- **R** – realistic and reviewable
- **T** – time bounded

Targets should include:

1. **Behaviour:** the observable action; what the pupil must do to demonstrate mastery of the task (e.g. “say the alphabet”)
2. **Conditions:** the conditions under which that behaviour is expected to occur (e.g. “given the oral direction, say the alphabet from memory”)
3. **Criteria for Acceptable Performance:** to what extent the pupil will be able to perform the action (e.g. “...in thirty seconds with 100% accuracy”)

Examples of targets with clearly stated behaviour, conditions and criteria.

- Pat will read aloud correctly all 50 words on his personal sight word list.
- Ann will be able to verbally identify and correctly label the colours – red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet.
- Kim will stay on a self-selected task for five minutes, working independently, on at least one occasion each day.

While Individualised Educational Plans must be personal and specific to each individual pupil's needs, teachers can use dedicated software such as IEP Writer 2 or IEP Manager, to assist with the preparation of I.E.P.s. They can also use word processing or desktop publishing software to create their own templates.

*See sample I.E.P. forms in printable pdf format in this section.

Individual Profile and Learning Programme

An alternative to the Individual Educational Plan is the Individual Profile and Learning Programme (IPLP), which is included in the Learning Support Guidelines that are issued to learning support teachers in the south. Like the IEP, the IPLP provides for recording assessment outcomes, setting learning targets, and planning future learning experiences. Again, there is an emphasis on how class teachers, learning supports teachers and parents can co-operate in achieving agreed learning outcomes within a specified time frame.

*See sample I.P.L.P. forms in printable pdf format in this section.

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