



Northern Lights Special Education Cooperative

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Large Team IEP Process

The Northern Lights Special Education Cooperative is recommending the use of a Student Centered/Needs-based IEP meeting, particularly when multiple agencies are involved. The Needs-based process tends to treat all participants as equals and therefore, negates a common complaint by other agencies involved, that IEP meetings are predominantly educational in content. Additionally, the student centered/needs based IEP meeting is highly regimented and focused and therefore, greatly reduces meeting time.

Requirements:

Permission from the parents/family to use the format, a facilitator, a note-keeper, a circular seating arrangement, a board or note pad for recording responses.

Roles:

The Facilitator:

- Contact family for permission and input (see form)
- Follow all due process requirements for an IEP meeting
- Make physical arrangement and gather supplies
- Explains and enforces the ground rules
- Leads all aspects of the meeting
- Writes responses/statements on a visible board or large paper
- Facilitates, addresses, leads, etc.

The Recorder:

- Writes down all relevant statements
- Copies what the facilitator writes
- Regroups the stated needs as determined by the team (see form)
- Participates as a full team member

The Agenda (an approximation):

- **5 minutes** Description of meeting and ground rules explanation.
- **5-10 minutes** Introductions/grounding
- **10 minutes** Present Levels of Performance (positive statements/strengths about the student in the environment with which you work with them.
- **20 minutes** Generate needs...” (student) needs to learn to.....”
- **5 minutes** Regrouping/Consolidating: Team consolidates and prioritizes needs.
- **15 minutes** Discussion. How will the needs be met? Who is responsible? What are the goals? What are the services?
- **5 minutes** Concluding remarks and wrap-up.

The Process:

Prior to the meeting: The facilitator should gather from the family (either through the form or via a conversation for a few minutes prior to the meeting) their feelings for the child's needs and their preferences for services.

Ground Rules: The meeting is well ordered. Preferably, participants sit in a circle and are permitted one comment at a time. The facilitator must be willing to terminate unnecessary digressions, refocus speakers and ensure that participants speak in turn and address the issue. Generally, parents are allowed the option of being first or last. Statements, whether positive or of need, are not to be repeated by another member. Any member may pass if they have no comment to make.

Introductions: Each participant introduces him/herself and states her/his title, agency or relationship with the student. "Grounding" statements are optional. They are meant to lend an atmosphere of familiarity to the group. They are positive statements about the participant's relationship with the student: how long you've known them; identifying a very successful moment in the student's life; recalling a humorous situation; identifying something the student really enjoys; etc. You may skip grounding and include these statements into the Present Level of Academic and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) section.

Present Level of Performance: Each participant makes one positive statement about how the student is performing in the environment in which s/he deals with the student. The facilitator may choose to go around the group once or twice. The recorder writes down all comments.

Identifying Needs: Each participant identifies one student need. The facilitator writes the needs on the board, grouping them roughly under educational and non-educational categories. The recorder also keeps track of statements. Without repeating previous comments, each person gives a need statement or passes. Unlike in the PLAAFP portion, the facilitator now continues going around the group until each person has passed. A person may pass one round and jump in at another. It may take two or fifteen times around the circle until each person in succession has passed and no additional needs are identified.

Regrouping: During this time, the facilitator will lead the team in grouping similar needs into categories. For example, there may be several that are related to reading skills or to social skills or to a transitional area. Several needs may be home, rather than school, related. Once grouped, the team should attempt to prioritize the needs areas, identifying which are the most urgent and should receive the greatest attention. The recorder consolidates the information (see form).

Discussion: At this point the team assigns responsibility to the various need areas and produces general goal statements related to those areas. The recorder keeps track of the information.

After the meeting: The facilitator should provide each participant with a copy of the recorder's summaries.

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