



A newsletter from the Parent-Educator Connection

for parents and educators of students receiving special education services

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Winter 2005

IDEA '97 HAS BEEN AMENDED

On December 3, 2004, President Bush signed into law the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004," amending IDEA '97. These amendments continue the focus on educating children with disabilities, to the maximum extent possible, in the general education curriculum and go a step further by aligning many of the provisions with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

SUMMARY OF IDEA

IDEA stands for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Every year, under this federal law, millions of children with disabilities receive special educational services designed to meet their unique needs.

What's Reauthorization All About?

About every five years, Parts C and D of the IDEA must be reauthorized. This means that these sections of the law will expire unless Congress passes them again. Part B was considered so important that it is permanently authorized so it will not expire. **Part B** gives money to States to provide services for eligible children and youth with disabilities. Part B includes the rules and regulations that States and school systems must follow to receive funds from the Federal government. Because Part B focuses on schools and children, it is probably the best known part of the law. Even though Part B of the law does not have to be reauthorized, changes are made to it during each reauthorization.



Summary of Key Points for Families and Professionals Who Serve Children with Disabilities

Specific Learning Disabilities: School districts do not need to consider whether a child has a severe discrepancy between academic achievement and intellectual ability. Rather, schools may use a response to intervention process as part of an evaluation. Since each region in Iowa does work a little differently, you may hear words or acronyms such as: general education interventions or GEI, response to intervention or RTI, solution focused process, problem solving or the Iowa Decision Making Model or IDM. These words mean that similar processes are being used to find the best way to support a child's learning.

Highly Qualified Special Education Teachers:

All special education teachers **must** meet these requirements by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. Teachers who teach multiple *core academic subjects* must meet significant additional requirements. This will make it much more difficult for junior and senior high teachers to have separate classes for *core academic subjects*.



Monitoring and Enforcement: Monitoring will include the development of state performance plans. States will monitor districts on state-defined priorities, and will enforce compliance on three levels: "needs assistance," "needs intervention," and "needs substantial intervention" with penalties imposed at each level.

State Rules of Special Education: States can no longer make their rules more complex than the federal regulations without extensive work so it is unlikely Iowa will have rules more rigorous than federal requirements.

Early Intervening Services: Schools **may** use up to 15 percent of their federal funds for services to support students who have not been identified as needing special education or related services. The focus is on students in grades K-3 who need extra support to be successful in general education.

Individualized Education Programs: Short-term objectives are eliminated except for children taking alternative assessments. There may be a 15-state pilot offering parents the option for a multi-year (3-year limit) IEP. Iowa has not indicated an interest in participating in this pilot. Parent's Rights must now be provided only once annually.

Individualized Education Program Documents: Federal model forms must be supplied within one year of federal regulations and Iowa will probably adopt federal forms.

Flexibility in Using Funds for Part C: States **may** allow children who have received services under Part C to continue in Part C until they enter kindergarten. Previously, eligibility under Part B was required to continue services past Part C eligibility. Parents will be able to choose between these programs. Iowa has not indicated an interest in making this option available.

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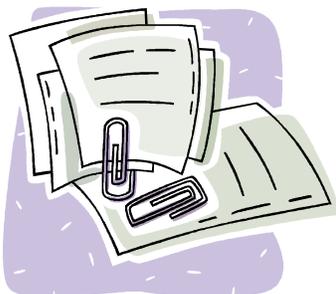
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Procedural Safeguards: Three requirements have been added regarding parent–school disagreements:

- 1) Prior to a due-process hearing, the district must hold a resolution session within 15 days of receiving a complaint. If a decision is reached during this session, that decision is binding. If the issue is not resolved within 30 days of the complaint, a hearing may then be held.
- 2) Persons requesting a due-process hearing must file a Due Process Complaint Notice before the hearing takes place.
- 3) Parents’ attorneys may be responsible for fees if the district or State is the prevailing party and the attorney has filed an “unreasonable” action, and parents or their attorneys may pay fees if the action brought was for an “improper purpose,” such as harassment or to increase litigation costs.

The law also continues to allow short term removals for violations of the conduct code without a manifestation determination. A streamlined version of the manifestation determination is conducted when a change in placement is sought for longer periods, but is not required for removals to interim alternative educational settings involving weapons, drugs, and serious bodily injury. Parents or the district are still allowed a quick appeal regarding these actions.

New forms: Along with the new state-wide IEP forms we will be using is a new form called the *Agreement to Excuse Attendance at IEP Meetings*. An IEP team member is not required to attend an IEP meeting if that member’s area of curriculum or service is not being modified or discussed, and the parent and the area education agency or school agree. An IEP team member whose input for a meeting is required because of modification or discussion of that member’s area of curriculum or service may be excused if the parent and the area education agency or the school consent to excuse the member and the member submits the input in writing prior to the meeting. This agreement must be documented in writing prior to the IEP meeting. This is something teams will find new and will need to work hard at doing in a timely manner. It is important for parents to return this form to the team before the team meets. The other new form that parents will see is the *Summary for Post-Secondary Living, Learning, and Working* form to be completed at an exit prior to graduation. This form addresses expectations for living, learning and working for the student after he/she leaves the school and provides information that will be helpful to agencies, adult services, educational opportunities or other supports recommended for the student.



Procedural Safeguards Manual for Parents: In past years, parents received this manual each time the team met with the parent to discuss their child’s programming. Now,

federal law requires that a parent be offered the safeguards only one time per year.

Reevaluations: The law requires that parent permission is required for all reevaluations.

Goals: A child’s IEP now must contain goals that are measurable. This replaces the benchmarks and short-term objectives to measure progress that have been a part of the IEP in the past. If your child is involved with the Alternative Assessment, they will continue to use the benchmarks or short-term objectives as a measurement tool.

Transition: Iowa will continue to address transition course of study issues at age 14. The goals in the IEP must address training, education, employment and when appropriate, independent living skills. The law does not require separate goals in each of these areas. Rather, goals may address more than one of these areas.

Part of this article is from *The Connection Update*, a newsletter from the Iowa Parent-Educator Connection and reprinted by permission. The author of the rest is Cindy Laughead.



The **Parent-Educator Connection** provides support and resources for families and teachers. For more information, please contact the Parent-Educator Facilitator in your service center:

Carol Aden, Bettendorf **563-344-6287**
Serving school districts: Bettendorf, Davenport, North Scott and Pleasant Valley

Kathy Anson, Clinton **563-242-6454**
Serving school districts: Andrew, Bellevue, Calamus-Wheatland, Camanche, Central Clinton, Clinton, Delwood, East Central, Northeast, Maquoketa and Preston

Cindy Laughead, Muscatine **563-263-8476**
Serving school districts: Bennett, Columbus Jct., Durant, Louisa-Muscatine, Muscatine, West Liberty and Wilton

Any one of them can also be reached by calling **1-800-947-2329**.



Cochlear Implants:

IDEA 2004 considers cochlear implants medical devices. Medical devices are excluded from “related services” which includes the optimization of device functioning, maintenance of the device, or the replacement of the device.

Check It Out!

A Thousand Roads

The 2006 Transition-PEC
Conference

February 26-28, 2006

Ames, IA

Iowa State Center, Scheman Building



This year the Parent-Educator Connection Conference joins with the Transition/Work Experience Conference to offer an event for parents of children with disabilities and the individuals who work with them. Join us as we learn and work together for the improved outcomes of youth with disabilities.

Kicking off the conference will be Neil Howe from Great Falls, Virginia, who is a historian, economist, demographer and author, with graduate degrees from Yale University. He has spoken and written extensively on the collective personalities of today's generations—who they are, what motivates them, and how they will shape America's future. His latest book, *Millennials Rising* (2000) focuses on today's rising generation of kids and teens.

...and in between the keynotes, 90 concurrent sessions on assessment, planning, community services, post-secondary options, instruction, legal aspects, the laws and opportunities for youth are offered in the areas of living, learning and work.

...Closing the conference will be Jonathan Mooney who is a writer and activist with dyslexia who did not learn to read until he was 12 years old. He is a graduate of Brown University and holds an honors degree in English Literature. Jonathan is cofounder of Project Eye-To-Eye, a widely duplicated mentoring program for students with disabilities. With the publication of *Learning Outside the Lines* when he was 23, now in its eighth printing, a book that is part memoir and part alternative study skills, Jonathan established himself as one of the foremost leaders in LD/ADHD disabilities and alternative education.

To register, please contact Kathy Anson at 1-800-947-2329 or 563-242-6454
or email kanson@aea9.k12.ia.us or send in the form below

Save the Dates!

Registration Form for *A Thousand Roads*, The 2006 Transition-PEC Conference, February 26-28, 2006, in Ames

Registration Fee is \$30. Stipends are available for parents, teachers, and paraprofessionals to help with expenses.

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Email _____

City, ZIP _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Registration Deadline is January 30, 2006.

Mail or send on the AEA van to Kathy Anson, Mississippi Bend AEA, 1908 N. 3rd St., Clinton, IA 52732

Ten Areas of Transition Need

When planning for a student's transition from high school to the adult world of work or further education, think of these 10 categories of life skills and how IEP teams can include them in the student's high school program.

LIFE SKILL EXAMPLES

1 SELF DETERMINATION

Explaining your needs and strengths in the workplace or school. Requesting your needed accommodations. Getting advocacy or legal support when needed.

2 ACADEMIC/LIFE LONG LEARNING

Taking classes at a university or community college. Going to community workshops such as gardening, parenting classes, home repair. Using community resources such as the library. Planning a 4-year degree from a college.

3 DAILY LIVING

Cooking meals, using home or commercial washers/dryers, using home cleaning equipment, painting walls.

4 HEALTH/PHYSICAL CARE

Personal cleanliness such as bathing, washing hair, using deodorant. Dental care, making doctor appointments, learning CPR. Sex education.

5 LEISURE ACTIVITIES

Joining a bowling league, pursuing a hobby, making dates for movies with friends, going out to eat, and biking every evening.

6 MOBILITY

Getting a driver's license, how to ride the city bus, using the city maps, calling a cab, sharing the cost in a car pool.

7 MONEY MANAGEMENT

How to open and manage a checking account, what credit cards mean, how to get a bank loan, how to budget.

8 SOCIAL SKILLS

Speaking and greeting others, appropriate behavior at work/school/ friends. Good manners in restaurants, going out on a date, relationships with the opposite sex.

9 WORKPLACE READINESS

Managing workplace stresses, dealing with authority, going to a job interview, time management.

10 OCCUPATIONAL SPECIFIC SKILLS

Learning the functions of the tools needed for the job, finding a mentor, practice job skills after work.

Learning to Make Decisions: Students and Their IEPs



When you think about your daughter or son's future, do you see him/her being able to make decisions and taking at least partial responsibility for choices in her/his life? Does s/he have the communication skills, the confidence and the desire to have a voice in the decision process? Being involved in their own IEP meetings can be a great learning ground for students to practice decision making skills. The student's thoughts and wishes should be central to the team's planning for the individual's future. Student involvement can yield several results:

- Take the responsibility for direction setting about their future
- Preparation for assuming age-of-majority rights by age 18
- Develop a better understanding of their disability and the implications for life after school
- Learn to interact with providers who will share responsibility for his/her receiving services
- Learn how to resolve differences when teachers and/or parents want something different from what they want.

A student should not be expected to walk into a meeting "cold" and effectively participate.

Before the meeting:

- Teachers can help students understand the IEP Process and the student's role in it.
- Parents can talk with their son/daughter about the kind of input s/he may want to offer to help the IEP team plan for transitional programming.
- Students can be given responsibility for a specific part of the meeting – reporting goal progress since the last meeting, sharing their perspective on how their disability impacts their lives, or, covering the Vision and Concerns parts of the IEP with their interests, desires and worries.

During the meeting:

- Students should be encouraged to share; have them identify their strengths from their point of view; they should have input into every decision made.
- Someone who has helped them prepare should assist and prompt the student through the process.
- Periodically checking for understanding will help clarify student input.
- All team members should work to affirm a student's effort and help her/ him feel successful.



After the meeting:

- Goal progress should be reviewed with the student regularly.
- Parents should have on-going discussions about decisions made and the student's satisfaction with the direction those decisions are taking him/her.
- Where there is failure, parents and teachers need to help the student learn from the experience.



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A Day in the Life...

By Susan Ward, Heartland AEA 11

Today, I was awakened by babbling noises coming from Emma's room. I went in with a cheerful "Good morning," opened the blinds, "Look, the sun is shining today." Emma quieted and just looked at me, so I scooped her up as she reached out. As I changed her diapers, she stretched and kicked her legs. We played peek-a-boo with the diaper, until it fell to the floor. "Look, Emma, there it is!" She squealed with delight as I retrieved the diaper.

"Okay, Emma, here're your pants for the day. First this leg goes in, then this leg," I said as I tickled each one. "Now socks to cover those cold little toes, this little piggy goes to market..." and soon Emma was dressed, smiling and ready to go get breakfast. "What shall we have for breakfast? Let's get some milk. How about some cheerios?" I asked Emma as I put her in her chair.

Every day Emma and her mom or dad spend about 15 minutes getting the day started. This morning routine occurs in many households with young children, but for Emma it is also a learning time. Wiggling arms and legs, playing peek-a-boo, labeling parts of the body, and talking about breakfast foods are all opportunities to embed Emma's learning goals of motor skills, cause and effect (cognitive), and communication in our daily routines.

Emma has developmental delays and receives early intervention services. Our service providers (early childhood teacher, occupational or physical therapist, speech language pathologist) come to the home to work with Emma, but they also teach me, her mom. Then I can work with Emma daily on important learning skills within our daily play and routine.

I didn't know that many of these skills would also help Emma later with learning about reading and writing. When we're working on dressing, I can help her language by naming body parts and clothing. When we're reading books (I learned we should start early) she can use motor skills to reach out and touch pictures that interest her, or try to turn pages. I just love holding and cuddling Emma, but she's learning to love books!

It makes sense to practice the skills Emma needs to learn in meaningful ways. I have learned that the "stuff" of everyday life—getting up, getting dressed, meals, grocery shopping, as well as play time and bedtime stories are great opportunities for learning. This gives Emma several times to work on her "learning goals" than just when the "specialists" come. I can still be Mom, but I also know that I am helping Emma, and that makes me feel as important as the specialists.

Just think what a difference a day can make.

Routine/Activity	Skill/Goal	Time (estimate)
Morning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Label body parts while dressing Name breakfast foods 	Language Dressing/motor Language, symbol recognition	10 min.
Morning errands/or drive to childcare: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk about the world around you Sing songs in the car Practice saying "Hi," waving "bye" 	Language Symbol recognition	10-15 min. (or more)
Lunch: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look at board books while Mom fixes lunch Ask for more, or request a drink Indicate when finished 	Literacy Language	15 min.
Naptime: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read book with mom Cuddle time before sleeping 	Literacy Positive social bonding with parents	15 min.
Diaper change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play peek-a-boo, this little piggy Name body parts 	Cognitive: cause & effect, object permanence Language	5 min.
Supper: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play with Dad or sister/brother—take turns Indicate what toy to play with 	Language, Social interactions Turn taking	10 min. (or more)
Bedtime: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (un)Dressing skills Stories, songs, etc. 	Language Motor skills for dressing Literacy	15 min.

Look at your day, and see what a difference you can make in the life of your child!



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NEWSLETTERS OF INTEREST

KEEPING TABS ON TRANSITION is a newsletter from the Transition Advisory Board (TAB) for Clinton, Jackson, Louisa, Muscatine and Scott Counties in Iowa which is published three times a year. The TAB is focused on the transition of youth with disabilities into adult life. TAB members consist of post-secondary educators, parents, community resource providers, and workforce development organizations. This newsletter provides good information on upcoming events, websites and resources. If you are interested in receiving a copy of this newsletter, please contact **Michelle Wehr at the Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency - 563-344-6292, 1-800-947-2329 or mwehr@aea9.k12.ia.us**.

Three times a year the PACER Center (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights, a national center based in Minnesota), publishes ***PACESETTER*** a news magazine by and for parents of children and young adults with disabilities. The PACER Center is funded by grants from the U.S. Departments of Education, Labor and other sources plus donations. For more information about their services and free publications, visit their website: www.pacer.org or call them at 952-838-9000 or toll-free 1-888-248-0822 or TTY: 952-838-0190. They can also be reached by FAX: 952-838-0199 or by E-mail: pacer@pacer.org or by U.S. mail: PACER Center, 8161 Normandale Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044.

This publication, ***PARTNERS*** is available on the Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency's website <http://www.aea9.k12.ia.us> and by E-mail. Send your name and E-mail address to Carolee Stanley at cstanley@aea9.k12.ia.us to receive it by E-mail.



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