EducationWeek

Questions ELD teachers can ask when reviewing an IEP

Review these questions that English-language development teachers can ask about each section of an IEP for English learners with disabilities. Note that IEP formats and content may vary by district or state.

Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)

- [ ] How does the student's disability impact their academic, behavioral, health, or physical performance compared with grade-level or developmental expectations?
- [ ] What adaptations do I need to make to the content, presentation, and modality of my language lessons to align with the student's current abilities?

Special considerations

- [ ] What is the student's home language and English language proficiency level, and how can I share their linguistic assets with the rest of the instructional team?
- [ ] Does the student use assistive technology, or an augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device, eye gaze, facial expressions, or body movements to communicate? How can I incorporate these into my lessons so the student can express themselves, make requests, protest, and demonstrate understanding?
- [ ] Does the student have visual or hearing impairments that require tactile or auditory materials, descriptive language, preferential seating, captioning, or clear visibility for lip-reading?
- [ ] If the student has a behavioral intervention plan, what are the target behaviors, replacement behaviors, reinforcers, and exact response procedures I must follow (and collect data on) to maintain consistency?

Accommodations

- [ ] Which specific presentation, response, accessibility, scheduling, and setting accommodations apply to my ELD instruction (whether push-in or pull-out) and any assessments I administer?
- [ ] Based on the nature of the language activity used in class, which accommodations from the student's IEP are most necessary for them to access the task?

Supplementary aids and services

- [ ] Do the listed instructional supports (such as graphic organizers or chunked assignments) address a content or cognitive access need or an English language proficiency need—and how can I layer language scaffolds on top of them?
- [ ] Which daily supports (such as positive or concrete reinforcers or social stories) am I responsible for implementing consistently alongside the special education and general education teachers?

Goals and objectives

- [ ] What specific language functions, vocabulary, or grammatical features does the student need to interpret or express to achieve their academic, behavioral, or self-management IEP goals?
- [ ] Are there speech-language goals (such as articulation or phonics) or content-area goals where I can reinforce progress using my knowledge of home-language transference and direct language instruction?

Services

- [ ] When, where, and for how many minutes is the student receiving special education and related services?
- [ ] How can I coordinate with the special education and general education teachers to schedule ELD minutes so the student receives their full entitlement to both ELD and special education services?

Icons: Getty

SOURCES: EdWeek reporting and John Ladesic, an instructional specialist with Montgomery County Public Schools

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Questions general education teachers can ask when reviewing an IEP

Review these questions that general education teachers can ask about each section of an IEP for English learners with disabilities. Note that IEP formats and content may vary by district or state.

Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)

- [ ] How does the student's disability currently impact their academic, behavioral, health, and physical performance relative to grade-level expectations in my content area?
- [ ] What strengths and current skill levels can I build on when planning grade-level lessons, and what baseline adjustments do I need to make?

Special considerations

- [ ] Is the student also an English learner? If so, what is their home language and English proficiency level, and when can I consult with the ELD teacher to learn about their linguistic assets and growth areas?
- [ ] Does the student use assistive technology or augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device as "their voice"? Do I know how to operate it (or do I need a quick tutorial), and how can I build opportunities into my lessons for them to use it to express needs, protest, or show understanding?
- [ ] Does the student have visual or hearing impairments? How do I need to adjust my physical classroom (by reducing clutter, creating visual boundaries, ensuring a predictable layout, or providing preferential seating) and my instruction (by chunking tasks and timing to prevent sensory overload, facing the student for lip-reading, using captioning, providing written instructions, or adding tactile and auditory materials)?
- [ ] What are the student's target behaviors, the function of those behaviors, replacement behaviors, and reinforcers? What exact response procedures and staff contacts must I follow if challenging behavior occurs in my classroom, and how will I help collect data?

Accommodations

- [ ] Which presentation, response, accessibility, scheduling, and setting accommodations am I legally required to provide during daily content instruction and classroom or state assessments?
- [ ] Depending on the specific assignment, activity, and classroom setup, which accommodations from the student's IEP are essential for them to participate fully?

Supplementary aids and services

- [ ] Which daily supports (such as positive or concrete reinforcers, social stories, or breaking assignments into smaller units) must I implement consistently in my classroom to match what the special education teacher uses?
- [ ] Are there supplementary aids (like graphic organizers or tailored materials) I should co-create with the special education teacher to align with my specific content curriculum and the student's interests?

Goals and objectives

- [ ] Which academic IEP goals (such as reading comprehension or math problem-solving) relate directly to my subject area, and how can I embed opportunities to practice them during daily instruction?
- [ ] How can I reinforce the student's behavioral, health, physical, or related-service goals (such as speech, or adapted PE targets) during classroom routines, transitions, and group work?

Services

- [ ] Am I listed as a service provider for any special education minutes in the general education setting, and what does that delivery look like?
- [ ] When does the student leave for pull-out special education, related services, or ELD instruction, and how can I structure my pacing so they don't miss core content instruction or lose their entitled service minutes?

Icons: Getty

SOURCES: EdWeek reporting and John Ladesic, an instructional specialist with Montgomery County Public Schools

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Questions special education teachers can ask when reviewing an IEP

Review these questions that special education teachers can ask about each section of an IEP for English learners with disabilities. Note that IEP formats and content may vary by district or state.

Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)

- [ ] Have I gathered and integrated current performance data from the general education teacher (and ELD teacher, if applicable) alongside my own assessments to paint a complete picture of the student's abilities across academic, behavioral, health, and physical domains?
- [ ] Does this narrative clearly articulate how the student's disability impacts their access to the general education curriculum so that non-special educators understand what adaptations are needed?

Special considerations

- [ ] Is the student dually identified as an English learner? Have I alerted the team and consulted with the ELD teacher to gather the student's linguistic profile, home language background, and proficiency level?
- [ ] Does every teacher working with the student know how to operate their assistive technology or augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, ensure the device travels with them all day, and implement necessary visual or hearing accommodations? Do any non-special educators need a quick hands-on tutorial from me?
- [ ] Have I shared the full behavioral intervention plan (target behavior, function, replacement behaviors, reinforcers, and response procedures) with all staff, ensured they know who to contact during a behavioral incident, and set up a clear system for them to help collect progress-monitoring data?

Accommodations

- [ ] Does every general education, ELD, and specials teacher (art, music, PE) have a clear copy of the student's presentation, response, accessibility, scheduling, and setting accommodations—and understand that they apply across all instructional settings and qualifying assessments?

Supplementary aids and services

- [ ] Which daily supports (such as positive or concrete reinforcers, social stories, or chunked assignments) do I need to create and distribute to all staff so they are applied with identical consistency across settings?
- [ ] How can I collaborate with the general education and ELD teachers to co-create tailored scaffolds that address both the student's disability-related content access needs and their English-language development needs?

Goals and objectives

- [ ] What specialized instruction do I need to deliver directly so the student can meet their IEP goals, and how will I systematically collect data to track progress and update targets?
- [ ] Have I shared relevant academic, behavioral, and related-service goals with the general education and ELD teachers so they can reinforce those skills and target underlying language demands in their classrooms?

Services

- [ ] Are all required special education and related service minutes being delivered at the exact frequency, duration, and location mandated in the IEP—whether provided by me or a general education teacher?
- [ ] Have I collaborated with the ELD and general education teachers to build a schedule that guarantees a dually identified student receives their full legal entitlement to both special education and ELD services without overlapping or missing critical instruction?

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