

This guide is designed to align with the CCR IEP 5 beliefs and 5 step process. This guide is meant to be used as a tool to facilitate positive IEP meeting conversations and offer schools strategies to engage with families during the IEP process.

**General Tips when working with families:**

- Be sensitive to families relative to where families may be in the grieving process.
- Strive to understand the whole child and family.
- Focus on descriptions, not labels.
- Connect school with learning at home.
- Use active listening.
- Ensure all communications are in a language families understand and communication is two-way.

**Prior to meeting**

- Ensure that families have input into the time and place that the meeting will be held
- Ask the family if a pre-meeting between the family and a trusted staff member is needed so that information can be shared in a comfortable environment.
- Co-construct an IEP meeting agenda with the family. Once the agenda is developed, send it out in advance of the meeting.
- Invite student when appropriate
- Share a form, such as the [Family Student Snapshot](#) or [My Snapshot](#), with both staff and families asking for thoughts/ideas/concerns that would benefit the upcoming meeting and to allow for a better understanding of the student.
  - Share the forms in a way that is meaningful and relevant to the family.
  - Offer assistance to family and students to fill out
  - When you give this form to the family, acknowledge the family as the expert on their child and that you value their input.
- Make sure that the family has a copy of the most current IEP. Encourage the family to review before the meeting. Send any reports prior to the meeting so they are able to review and prepare questions.
- Connect with family to address any family questions regarding reports, logistics, etc.
- Share resources with families that will help them prepare for the IEP meeting, such as [Preparing for the IEP Meeting](#) or the [WI FACETS IEP Checklist](#). Encourage family's independence and advocacy by sharing additional special education resources such as [An Introduction to Special Education](#) and [Special Education in Plain Language](#)

**Day of the meeting -Make the family feel welcome**

- Prepare office staff to welcome the family and to direct the family and agency partners.
- Prepare name tags for all members.
- Greet everyone and call them by their preferred name.

- Have water and tissues available.
- Be aware and responsive to the unique culture and circumstances of the family.
- Consider projecting the IEP form onto a screen so that all team members can view and write the draft of the IEP as discussion takes place
- Introductions, Celebrations - As IEP members introduce themselves, have them share a strength, positive experience or an accomplishment of the student to build positive relationships among the team
- Overview - purpose of meeting, establish norms/time parameters
- Convey to families how important their presence and input will be to developing a comprehensive IEP. Families are equal partners in the process.
- Take some time to explain the [Communication Options for Families](#) form

### **IEP Development: Using the Five Step Tables**

[CCR-IEP Family Engagement 5 Step Table](#)

[WSPEI CCR-IEP Family 5 Step Table](#)

**Provide a draft copy of the IEP to the family before ending and thank everyone for their participation.**

### **Follow up to meeting**

- Review completed IEP with the family to ensure full understanding. Ask the family if they are satisfied? Overwhelmed?
- Provide parents a copy of the student's schedule with times and places.
- Share a list of community agencies that offer support to families of children with disabilities.
- Make positive phone calls and send positive emails to family
- Check in with the family on their perspective of progress, how things are going.
- Follow up with ways that the family can support goals at home throughout the year

Additional resources to have available for families:

[Communication Options for Families - English](#)

[Communication Options for Families - Spanish](#)

[Communication Options for Families - Hmong](#)

[Reading Survey for Families](#)

[PTA Parents Guide to Student Success](#)

[Acronym List](#)

[Annual Goals](#)

[Accommodations / Modifications](#)

[How Will I Know if My Child is Making Progress?](#)

[CADRE Engaging Parents in Productive Partnerships](#)

[Andrew F. Advocacy Toolkit](#)