

**ALL NEW!**

## NEW year, NEW logo, & NEW look to our NEWSLETTER!

As we roll out the new year, we are so excited to also roll out our new logo along with our new newsletter—ACCESS NEWS! As always, your thoughts are very important to us! Tell us what YOU think of the new look to the newsletter. You can send your thoughts, concerns, or suggestions to us at [info@askresource.org](mailto:info@askresource.org).

Coming up...Keep an eye on our website at [www.askresource.org](http://www.askresource.org) as that will also have a whole **NEW** look very soon!

Though much has changed, one thing will always stay a constant here at ASK Resource Center and that is our on-going commitment to provide meaningful, timely information, resources and support to the families of Iowa!

# Communication That Works

## What Families Need to ASK

**Family engagement matters for student success!** A growing body of evidence in current research is proving this statement is true for all students. Family engagement improves school readiness, student achievement, and social skills. Family involvement is also linked to more successful outcomes as our young adults transition to post high school living, learning, and working.



Family engagement does not happen on its own. It takes the committed action of both families and schools working together to support student success. Attending parent-teacher conferences is one of the meaningful ways your family can support your child's learning. The Harvard Family Research Project published an article sharing effective ways to participate: "Parent-Teacher Conferences: A Tip Sheet for Parents". To access the article, go to: <http://askresource.org/pdfs/Harvard%20Article%20-%20Parent%20Teacher%20Conferences%20Tip%20Sheet%20for%20Parents.pdf>

# IEP Progress Reports

IDEA requires that schools provide regular progress reports to parents of students with IEPs. For example, if schools issue report cards every nine weeks, progress reports on student's IEP goals should also be issued. The report should contain information about the student's progress on each annual goal in the IEP and whether the student is likely to reach the goal within the IEP time frame. This data is documented at the bottom of each IEP goal page.



The best way to avoid miscommunication about progress reports is to specify in the IEP how, when, and in what format it will be delivered. Common formats for progress reporting are:

## Compilation forms

All information is listed on one sheet and includes data on IEP goals. It may include other relevant information such as assessment scores or effectiveness of accommodations in the general education classroom.

## Graphs

Data must be collected and recorded (most often graphed) for each goal on the IEP. In Iowa, graphs can be created right in the web-based IEP and copied for parents. This information may also be transferred to a progress report card (page H) in the IEP.

## Narratives

A written explanation of the student's progress is often used, especially to explain instructional changes or specific circumstances. Progress reporting data must accompany the narrative.

## **During the IEP meeting, it is important that parents understand and give input on these considerations:**

### **How are the annual goals written?**

Parents say some goals are not specific. For example, they may be written in terms of reaching a grade-level score, which can be confusing for parents if they don't know the skills of that level. To illustrate, here is an annual goal created for one student:

*Danny will increase his written expression skills to the beginning fourth-grade level.*

After a discussion at the IEP meeting about third-grade and beginning fourth-grade writing expectations (based on grade-level curriculum), the special education teacher changed Danny's annual goal to describe the actual writing skills to be learned.

### **For more information:**

[http://www.askresource.org/Publications/IEP\\_Checklist.pdf](http://www.askresource.org/Publications/IEP_Checklist.pdf)

<http://nichcy.org/schoolage/iep/iepcntents/progress>

[http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1608&Itemid=2387#Progress2](http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1608&Itemid=2387#Progress2)

<http://www.greatschools.org/special-education/health/1000-making-progress-toward-iep-goals.gs>

<http://www.greatschools.org/special-education/health/1000-making-progress-toward-iep-goals.gs>

[http://ldanatl.org/aboutld/parents/special\\_ed/iep.asp](http://ldanatl.org/aboutld/parents/special_ed/iep.asp)

### **How often will we receive progress reports?**

Schools must meet a minimum standard but the team may decide that more frequent reports are necessary.

### **What will the report look like and will it be clearly marked?**

The team should consider parents' preferences regarding the type of information and format of the report. For example, parents may not know how to interpret graphs without a written explanation.

### **How will the report be delivered?**

Parents often get progress reports at parent-teacher conferences. However, they may also request a mailed copy or other method of delivery.



## ***“How do I know how my child is doing?”***

Keeping up on a student’s progress towards meeting their IEP goals can save valuable time. Be sure that you know how each goal will be monitored and when instructional changes should be made. To learn more about progress monitoring, go to:

<http://www.parentcenternetwork.org/assets/files/national/all13.pdf>

[http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1609:progress-monitoring-procedures&catid=811:iep](http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1609:progress-monitoring-procedures&catid=811:iep)

## **EXPLORING ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION**



When faced with a conflict in a special educational setting, remember that there are a variety of options available to come to a solution that works best for everyone involved, and, most importantly, for your child. It might help to think about conflict resolution as a series of activities that start with a solid foundation and build—like a pyramid—to a peak. To be most successful, everyone should be working to resolve differences at each level. Many conflicts can be resolved easily with efforts to communicate better, some go to the next level, fewer still on to the next, and so on. Most conflicts never need to reach the upper levels of the pyramid because they can be settled informally. If this model is followed, those disagreements that go through each step and still remain unresolved at the top will be few and far between.

Investing energy in this type of “grassroots” problem solving helps make everyone a winner. It helps build and maintain good relationships between parents, teachers, and school administrators. It keeps expensive, adversarial processes to a minimum, and it maintains the focus on the needs of the student, not the disagreements of others.

Learn more about the pyramid of conflict resolution and the different options available to help resolve conflict in special education disputes <http://askresource.org/pdfs/Becoming%20Part%20of%20the%20Solution%20-%20Adapted%20from%20article%20From%20the%20Ground%20Up.pdf>

To explore the Iowa Department of Education’s resources for special education dispute resolution, go to : [http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1280&Itemid=2279](http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1280&Itemid=2279)

## **Extended Year Services**

Extended School Year Services (ESYS) are special education services provided beyond a normal school year. ESYS is provided to a child with a disability and in accordance with the IEP at no cost to the family. (281 – Iowa Administrative Code 41.106.)

To find out more information and whether your child meets the eligibility criteria, go to:

[http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1615:extended-school-year-services&catid=811:iep](http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1615:extended-school-year-services&catid=811:iep)



# Questions Parents Should ASK & Discuss

# Tips & Tools

## Regarding Strengths & Weaknesses

**ASK:** What do you see as my child's strengths, weaknesses— academically, behaviorally, and socially?

**DISCUSS:** Your own thoughts about their strengths, weaknesses, interests, what motivates your child, what behaviors you see at home, and how your child feels about him/herself as a learner.

## Regarding Grade Level Skills

**ASK:** What skills/knowledge is my child expected to master in core and content area subjects? (Core— basic reading, writing, math; Content— social studies, science) How is my child doing in comparison with the rest of the class?

**DISCUSS:** What is done to support kids who don't achieve skills; what is done to challenge and accelerate the learning of kids who do? Talk about the use of accommodations to "level the playing field" when the child has a strength or interest in a content area but can't show knowledge on a test because of a reading/writing disability.

## Regarding Grading

**ASK:** How are grades determined in both core and content area subjects?

**DISCUSS:** What can be done at school and/or home to increase low grades; what is preventing success in a subject?

To better serve the entire state of Iowa, and to accommodate the busy schedules of families, we are bringing our trainings to the comfort of your own home. We now offer FREE evening teleconference training! For dates and details, watch your email or call us at 515-243-1713



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We are going "Green" and making some changes to our newsletter. We welcome your feedback as well as your ideas of topics you would like to see in future newsletters!

Help us to reduce costs and put more money toward direct services! Sign up to receive your newsletter online by emailing us at:  
[info@askresource.org](mailto:info@askresource.org)

Contact us if you need a hard copy of the articles in this newsletter in their entirety.

**Got Questions? Just ASK!**



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# Access News

*Access for Special Kids, Access for All*

ASK BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Mary Jankowski (President), Kim Whiting, Al Takemoto, Lisa Arechavaleta, Amy Thoms-Starr, Fred Venable III, Jenna Luksetich Garcia, Linda Biermann, Mary Larson

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