

The Role of Parents in the IEP Process

Your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed at the IEP team meeting. This is the time for you to share your ideas and concerns about your child's education. School personnel will contact you about the meeting. You might receive either a written notice or a phone call, and you will be notified early enough to make sure you are able to attend. The meeting should be scheduled at a time and place agreeable to you and school personnel. You are entitled to have anyone you select who is familiar with your child present at the meeting. The team may be made up of yourself, your child (if appropriate), the classroom teacher, the school principal, a representative familiar with special education from the local education agency, and possibly others such as therapists, nurses, home school coordinators and case managers from various agencies. IEPs must be reviewed and revised at least once a year. You may request an IEP meeting during the year if you think changes are needed, and school personnel may call an IEP meeting for the same reason.

Knowing what will be discussed at the IEP meeting

If you are aware of the contents of the IEP, you can prepare your questions and concerns in advance. All IEPs must address:

- your child's present level of performance.
- goals that relate to your child's educational needs that he or she can reasonably be expected to learn during the year covered by the IEP. The IEP must indicate how goals will be measured and how progress will be reported.
- needs for related services such as physical, occupational or speech therapy, as well as the frequency and duration of each service.
- how your child will participate in statewide assessments.
- transition services (not later than age 16) that focus on your child's needs related to employment, training and/or independent living skills upon graduation.
- a behavioral support plan (if needed) to outline positive behavioral interventions.
- whether your child is eligible to attend extended school year.

How to prepare for the IEP meeting

- Review what must be contained in the IEP, and consider how each of these points affects your child.
- Gather information about your child that will be helpful at the meeting, such as reports from school, your observations or doctors' reports.
- If your child is already in school, you might want to observe him or her in the classroom. You will need to call the school office to schedule a time.
- Watch and record your child's behavior at home.
- Write down what your child can and cannot do, likes and dislikes, and how your child interacts with other children and family members.
- Find out what your child's feelings are regarding home, school and friends.
- Keep records of your child's work, parent conferences and progress reports. Use this information to monitor your child's progress and to prepare for future IEP meetings.
- Check the IEP notice to determine who will be attending the meeting. Call school personnel with any questions you have about the meeting.
- Notify school personnel as soon as possible if you will not be able to attend the meeting as scheduled. Try to schedule an arrangement that is convenient to everyone.

Questions you might want to ask during the IEP meeting

- What do the tests and observations show about my child?
- What are my child's strengths?
- Are the evaluation results the same or different from what the teacher has observed?
- Is integration at the local school district with nondisabled peers appropriate?
- What goals are realistic for my child? ➔

- How do these goals lead to my child's future plans for adult living and work?
- How will my child's progress be measured and reported to me?
- Is there a need for supplemental aids or services?
- How can I help at home with my child's educational program?
- Is my child ready to participate in the development of his or her IEP?
- Does my child need a positive behavioral support plan?
- Does my child need assistive technology?

How to deal with concerns about your child's education program

When you have questions or concerns, talk with the staff at the school. You should first discuss your concerns with your child's teacher. You may also refer your concerns to the school principal. If you are unable to resolve issues at the local school level, you should call your area director. The phone number for the area office is available from the school. In the event that contacting the school and area office does not resolve the situation, you should then call Central Office.

You also have the option of contacting either of these offices for assistance:

- **Special Education Compliance Section**
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Phone: (573) 751-0699
TTY: (800) 735-2966
Online: <http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced>
- **Missouri Parents Act (MPACT)**
Phone: (800) 743-7634
Online: <http://www.ptimpact.com>

Parent Focus

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Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled
P.O. Box 480
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480

Charlie Taylor,
Superintendent



The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to Department programs may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Title IX Coordinator, 5th Floor, 205 Jefferson Street, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-751-4212.

Information concerning other available resources, programs, etc., is not to be construed as an endorsement by Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled for any specific product, organization, or philosophy.

State Board Visits Kirchner School

By Bob Campbell, Building Administrator at Kirchner School

One of our schools, H. Kenneth Kirchner, was honored with a visit by the State Board of Education on Thursday, Sept. 11, 2008. Members David Liehti, Peter Herschend, Russell Thompson, Deborah Demien, Sybl Slaughter and the Rev. Stan Archie were accompanied by D. Kent King, commissioner of education; Bert Schulte, former deputy commissioner and current interim commissioner; and Jim Morris, DESE director of public information. The group was welcomed to Kirchner by Archie Derboven, assistant superintendent, and given an overview of the school program by Darlene Baugher, Area II director. Bob Campbell, building administrator, led the group on a tour of the building, grounds and classrooms, introducing staff and students along the way.

The visit to the classrooms offered the opportunity for board members to observe students at work, enter into discussions and ask questions of the staff. In preparation for this tour, Campbell asked of staff only that they continue on with their important work in the caring, professional manner they do each and every day.

This visit was a first for several board members. They were impressed with the personalized attention that students are receiving in school.



Members of the State Board of Education and DESE administrators learn about Kirchner School during a visit in September 2008. Seated around the table (from left to right): David Liehti, Peter Herschend, Russell Thompson, Deborah Demien, D. Kent King, Sybl Slaughter and the Rev. Stan Archie.

Summer Day Camps and Activities for 2009

Location	Organization/Contact	Information
St. Louis Area	The Recreation Council of Greater St. Louis (covering the city, county and St. Charles) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (314) 772-2299 • http://stlouis.missouri.org/501c/reccouncil/ 	Visit the Web site or call to obtain a copy of the "2009 Summer Opportunities Guide." This includes details on day camps and summer activities for children and teenagers with developmental disabilities.
	Easter Seals (13975 Manchester Road, Manchester) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (636) 227-6030 or (800) 664-5025 • http://mo.easterseals.com/ 	Call for detailed information on the full- and half-day programs.
	Camp Independence (Webster Groves Recreation Center, 33 E. Glendale, Webster Groves) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (314) 454-2642 • http://www.stlouischildrens.org/content/medservices/CPSSportsRehabilitation.htm 	This is a sports-intensive day camp managed by pediatric therapists from St. Louis Children's Hospital. The camp is offered 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday from June 8 through July 31 (no camp the week of June 29). The camp is open to children ages 7-18 who have cerebral palsy, are able to function at a first-grade level, can understand one-step commands and have use of at least one arm.
	YMCA of Greater St. Louis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (314) 436-1177 • http://ymcastlouis.org/ 	Call the office or visit the Web site for details on programs at Festus, O'Fallon, Potosi, St. Peters, Washington and other sites. These locations offer an inclusion program that can accommodate kids with developmental disabilities. Provide details of your child's needs; allow time for the specialist to ensure there is adequate staff for your child.
Joplin	G.O.A.L.S. Summer Camp (CSS Activity Center, 2312 Annie Baxter Ave., Joplin) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah Royer: (417) 624-4515, Ext. 115 • http://cssmo.org/ 	This summer camp is open from July 6-30 for children ages 6-21 with developmental disabilities. Hours are 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. Cost is a one-time \$10 payment for children living in Jasper County and \$70 per week for children outside Jasper County.
Kansas City Area	Rainbow Center (900 N.W. Woods Chapel Road, Blue Springs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (816) 229-3869 • http://www.rainbow-center.org/ 	Call for detailed information. This center offers full- and half-day camps.
	Concerned Care Inc. (320 Armour Road, Suite 101, North Kansas City) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Whalen: (816) 474-3026 • http://www.concernedcarekc.org/ 	Call for detailed information. Families must live in Clay County; campers must be referred by the Kansas City Regional Center. (Web site is currently under construction.)
	YMCA of Greater Kansas City <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karen McDonald: (913) 345-9622 • http://www.ymca-kc.org/ 	Call for information on available inclusion programs that can accommodate children with developmental disabilities.
	Camps for Kids (1080 Washington, Kansas City) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (816) 559-4622 • http://campsforkids.org/ 	This organization provides scholarships to children with special needs attending day or specialty camps, and it might be able to refer parents in other cities to available programs.
	Child Care Source (626 Minnesota Ave., Kansas City, Kan.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (913) 573-2273 • http://childcaresource.org/ 	Use the Web site or call to locate appropriate summer programs or providers that accept children with special needs.

For families living in other areas, check with your home school coordinator or school building administrator for available summer programs and activities. Details are available at <http://dese.mo.gov/divspced/stateschools> (click on *For Parents* and then on *Residential Camps*).

Results from the MSSD Parent Survey

Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled (MSSD) sent out a survey to parents who have children attending one of our schools. We are interested in obtaining your opinion on the operation of our program. The chart below outlines the results that were received. If you were unable to respond to the survey, you may still do so online at <http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/stateschools/ParentSurvey.html>. You can complete the survey on-screen and click the *submit* button to send it via e-mail, or you can print it and return it to the school.

A total of 217 surveys were returned. Highlights include:

- 93 percent of respondents agree that the school recognizes and acknowledges their child’s achievements and successes.
- 93 percent of respondents agree that the school promotes an environment of respect and dignity for their child.
- 95 percent of respondents agree that the building administrator or their child’s teacher is available and willing to talk about their child whenever needed.

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
The school recognizes the success of my child.	0	15	202
The school promotes an environment of respect and dignity.	1	15	201
The school respects the differences among students and their families.	2	17	198
I can talk to my child’s teacher or building administrator whenever I need.	0	10	207
I know how well my child is doing at school.	1	17	199
The school encourages the parents to be involved.	1	18	198
My teacher challenges my child to learn new skills.	4	19	194
My child is safe at school.	2	16	199
My child likes to attend school.	2	17	198
Behaviors at my child’s school are handled fairly.	4	25	188
MSSD appropriately manages my child’s behavior.	5	28	184
MSSD provides positive alternatives to inappropriate and challenging behaviors.	4	42	171
My child’s communication skills improved at MSSD.	6	58	153
The skills my child is acquiring will prepare him/her for life after graduation.	8	70	139
Skills my child uses at MSSD are also being used at home.	9	24	184



MISSOURI SCHOOLS FOR THE SEVERELY DISABLED
 Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Web site: <http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/stateschools>

NOTE: If you have items of interest for Parent Focus, please call (573) 751-0706 (Missouri Relay (800) 735-2966) or forward them to Debbie Stover, Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; e-mail: debbie.stover@dese.mo.gov.