

LIFE

PROGRAM

How to Organize Your Child's IEP Binder

Information originally from www.understood.org

Making an IEP binder is a great way to keep information organized and at the ready when you need it. An IEP binder can help you prepare for IEP meetings and stay up to date on your child's progress. This powerful tool can also help you communicate and collaborate with teachers and your child's IEP team. Here's what you need to get started:

- A three-ring binder
- Six tabbed section dividers
- A three-hole punch

Download and print these documents for your IEP binder:

- IEP binder checklist (<https://u.org/2PuG7js>)
- School contact sheet (<https://u.org/2RkZOOo>)
- Parent-school communication log (<https://u.org/2GX8WVR>)
- IEP goal tracker (<https://u.org/2ETz3u4>)

Organizing an IEP binder with your child's evaluation reports, IEP, report cards and other paperwork may sound like a lot of work. But this guide walks you through what to gather and where to put it.

Start With the IEP Binder Checklist



Print the IEP binder checklist and put it in the very front of your binder. The checklist has details about what you can put in each of the tabbed sections in your IEP binder.

The checklist has another very important purpose: You can update it as you add new paperwork. As your binder grows, this checklist will help you see what you've updated and when you updated it.

Label the Tabbed Section Dividers

Label the tabbed dividers for each of the sections of the checklist: *Communication, Evaluations, IEP, Report Cards/Progress Notes, Sample Work and Behavior*. Keep in mind that if you're just starting the special education process, you may not have much to put in each of these sections yet. Over time, here's what you'll be putting in each section—and why:

Tab 1: Communication

Print and fill out a school contact sheet and put it in the front of this section. The contact sheet will help you quickly find and reach out to key people with questions or concerns.

Next is the parent-school communication log. Print one out and use it to help you keep track of meetings, phone calls, emails and other important interactions you have with your child's teacher and school. As you fill out each entry, be sure to note what was discussed and what was decided.

The rest of this section is for letters and important emails. Put the newest ones on top, behind the communication log. Why keep printed copies of emails? Having a paper version in your binder means you'll

have it on hand for meetings, so you can easily find and reference what was said.

As you file letters and emails in this section, remember to include a brief summary of each one in the communication log.

Tab 2: Evaluations

Start this section with the request or referral for evaluation. After that put in your consent to evaluate. Keeping these two documents together can help you see if the school completes the evaluation in a timely manner.

Next comes the school-based evaluation report. (It's handy to have this in the same section as your request for evaluation, so you can match up each request with the evaluation results.) If your child has had a private evaluation, include that here too.

Down the road, your child might have another school-based evaluation. If so, file it as a trio that includes the new request or referral and the new consent form. Put this new set of documents on top of the previous set.

Also, in this section, you may want to consider flagging key information with paper clips or sticky notes. Come up with a system that can help you quickly find what you want to discuss with the IEP team.

Tab 3: IEP

It's a good idea to start this section of your IEP binder with a copy of your rights and procedural safeguards the school gives you. That's because whenever you go to an IEP meeting, the IEP team will offer another copy. It's important information. But if you show the school you already have it, you can avoid taking home another big stack of paper!

In this section, file your child's IEP and the prior written notice for each meeting related to the IEP. Many schools attach meeting notes to the prior written notice form. Keep those notes here as well as your own notes from the IEP meeting.

The IEP needs to be updated annually. But you may have more than one meeting a year. And if changes are made to the IEP, put the newest plan and prior written notice on top, behind the procedural safeguards.

Tab 4: Report Cards/Progress Notes

The federal law, the Individual with Disabilities in Education (IDEA), says you have to be updated on your child's progress toward his IEP goals at least as frequently as you get progress reports on his general education. Keep these progress notes and report cards in this section.

And if you want to keep track of your child's progress on your own, print and use this IEP goal tracker. It can help you monitor your child's progress toward each annual goal in the IEP.

Tab 5: Sample Work

Use this section to file samples of your child's homework or classwork that show signs of progress or concern. (This is especially important for work that's noted on the goal-tracker form.)

It's a good idea to file samples at least monthly. And just like in the other sections of your IEP binder, put the newest stuff on top to help you find the most up-to-date information.

Tab 6: Behavior

In this section, file a copy of the school's code of conduct. If your child is in middle or high school, his teachers may have also sent home class-specific behavior plans and rules. Keep copies of these here, too.

Next comes your child's behavior intervention plan or behavior contract, if he has one. This is also the place to file disciplinary notices, if your child receives any. Why keep these in your IEP binder? Because your child has additional rights and protection if the behavior he's disciplined for could be related to his disability.

Consider Including a Supply Pouch

Since your IEP binder will come to IEP meetings with you, you may want to add a zippered supply pouch. Stocking it with some pens and an extra set of sticky notes means you'll have one less thing to worry about during your IEP meeting.

And last but not least, remember that organizing your child's IEP binder may take some time at first. But once the initial steps are done, it's easy to maintain! When it comes to overseeing your child's IEP, the less time you have to spend hunting for paperwork, the more time you can focus on questions to ask before and during the IEP meeting.

Bullying: It's Not Okay!

Information originally from Healthychildren.org

Bullying or cyberbullying is when one child picks on another child repeatedly. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or social. It can happen at school, on the playground, on the school bus, in the neighborhood, over the Internet, or through mobile devices like cell phones.



When Your Child Is Bullied

- Alert school officials to the problems and work with them on solutions.
- Teach your child to be comfortable with when and how to ask a trusted adult for help. Ask them to identify who they can ask for help.
- Recognize the serious nature of bullying and acknowledge your child's feeling about being bullied.
- Help you child to learn how to respond by teaching your child how to: (1) Look the bully in the eye (2) Stand tall and stay calm in a difficult situation (3) Walk away.
- Teach your child how to stay in a firm voice: (1) "I don't like what you are doing." (2) Please do NOT talk to me like that."
- Encourage your child to make friends with other children.
- Support outside activities that interest your child.
- Make sure an adult who knows about the bullying can watch out for your child's safety and well-being when you cannot be there.
- Monitor your child's social media or texting interactions so you can identify problems before they get out of hand.

When Your Child is the Bully

- Make sure you child knows that bullying is never okay.
- Set firm and consistent limits on your child's aggressive behavior.
- Help your child learn empathy for other children by asking them to consider how the other child feels about the way your child treated them. Ask your child how they would feel if someone bullied them.
- Be a positive role model. Show children they can get what they want without teasing, threatening or hurting someone.
- Use effective, non-physical discipline, such as loss of privileges
- Focus on praising your child when they behave in positive ways such as helping or being kind to other children as opposed to bullying them.
- Develop practical solutions with the school principal, teachers, school social workers or psychologists, and parents of the children your child has bullied.

When Your Child Is a Bystander

- Encourage your child to tell a trusted adult about the bullying.
- Encourage your child to join with others in telling bullies to stop.
- Help your child support other children who may be bullied.
- Encourage your child to include those children in activities.

A Recap: Link n' Learn: An Overview of Child and Adult Systems

On December 10, 2018, an overview of Bucks County child and adult systems was held. A team of systems representatives presented information to parents, caregivers, and professionals. If you weren't able to make it to the event, visit this link to view the power point presentations: www.lifeinbucks.org/photos-video/

Calling all Parents!

Calling all parents and caregivers! Would you please take a moment to fill out this 2 minute survey to help Bucks County LIFE plan activities and events for families and youth who have challenges? All answers are completely anonymous and confidential. Your feedback is very much appreciated! Visit <https://bit.ly/2H1APfo>

Bucks County LIFE on Social Media



Twitter: [@accessservicespa](https://twitter.com/accessservicespa)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/accessservices

Instagram: [@accessservicespa](https://www.instagram.com/accessservicespa)

Check out our website www.lifeinbucks.org and join our email list to receive updates on monthly parent/professional workshop trainings, youth events, and family community events.

Valley Forge Special Kids Camp EXPO

What: Valley Forge Educational Services is hosting Special Kids Camp Expo! You will have the opportunity to explore 30+ camps and programs for children and adults with special needs.

When: Saturday, January 26
1:00–4:00 pm

Where: 1777 North Valley Road
Malvern, PA 19355

Learn more at www.vfes.net/Page/976

Special Kids
**CAMP
EXPO**

A Way to Give Back!

Information shared from Magellan Behavioral Health of Pennsylvania



Have you or your child received behavioral health services? Do you care about the quality of behavioral health services people receive?

There is an opportunity for you to help make the behavioral health system better. You can serve on a **Complaint or Grievance Panel**, which allows you to have a voice in the behavioral health system.

As a member of a **Complaint or Grievance Panel** you will be part of a team that includes Magellan members, providers, Magellan staff and county staff. Learn more about the roles and responsibilities by visiting <https://bit.ly/2slaJK5>.

For more information please contact John Bottger at 215-504-3900.



2019: Volume 1

***Our Mission** is to build strong, resourceful families and resilient children by sharing knowledge, resources, referral to services, direct support and training; with a focus on building a culture of parents and youth as mentors, partnerships within the community and collaborations with systems of care.*

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....And More!

How We Can Help:

- Parent and mentorship support
- Helpful resources for you and your child
- Referral to other services as needed
- Training and information
- Specialized care

Bucks County Life:

Courtyard at Ivyland
882 Jacksonville Road, Suite 203
Ivyland, PA 18974
1.888.442.1590 (toll free)
215.259.1974 (fax)
BucksLife@accessservices.org
www.accessservices.org
www.LifeInBucks.org

News from NAMI Bucks County

Information originally from www.namibuckspa.org/education/family-to-family-2/



NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI offers no cost support groups for peers, families, and loved ones looking to gain hope and insight into the challenges of living well with mental health conditions.

New to NAMI Bucks County this year, is the option to pre-register for classes that will be held in the Spring of 2019. One of the classes, NAMI Family-to-Family is accepting pre-registration applications with the option to select the area of Bucks County most convenient for you to attend the class.

What is NAMI Family-to-Family? NAMI Bucks County Family-to-Family is a free, 12-session educational program for family, significant others and friends of people living with mental illness. It is a designated evidenced-based program. Research shows that the program significantly improves the coping and problem-solving abilities of the people closest to an individual living with a mental health condition.

NAMI Bucks County Family-to-Family is taught by NAMI-trained family members who have been there, and includes presentations, discussion and interactive exercises.

Learn more about this opportunity by visiting www.namibuckspa.org/education/family-to-family-2/.