

Checklist/Decision Tree for Supporting Highly Mobile Students with IEPs

Who is this tool for?

Anyone supporting students who have or might need an IEP, and are now or were recently: experiencing homelessness, in foster care, moving out of juvenile justice settings, moving with family for work, or otherwise have had to move frequently or unexpectedly.

Why is this needed? Isn't someone already responsible for this?

There are indeed many people whose work supports highly mobile students – too many to list and keep this toolkit short. Each one of those people is also managing many other demands, and that reality, combined with the frequency of moves, and the complicated layers of needs and services for highly mobile students means it takes a team to catch everything. You might find that you can quickly check off all these questions for most students you serve, and then you'll find one that has somehow fallen off the radar. Once you and others have spotted the need to update plans, it takes time to follow the process through. Having a team of people keeping an eye on it will help make sure each student is set up as best as possible for success – even if they have to move again. You can help the next team by taking good notes, and checking to be sure all decisions about special education evaluation, eligibility, placement and services are reflected in [Prior Written Notices](#).

This checklist includes the following questions and sample letters:

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Does this student have an IEP?

Yes

No

I don't know

Yes/I don't know: Even if you think you know, confirm by requesting and reviewing records. **See sample request for records.**

No: If you find out the student does not have an IEP, but there is reason to think they might need one, make a written referral or request for a special education evaluation. **See sample request for special education evaluation below.**

Once you have a copy of the records, check to see if they are up-to-date.

Does this IEP cover the current time period?

Yes

No

Yes: check for a match between the services described in the IEP and the student's actual current or most recent services and schedule.¹

No: begin working to schedule an IEP meeting ASAP. At the same time, **consider whether an early re-evaluation may be needed** to understand current needs and "present levels" (where they are at now with academics, behavior, communication or other areas of service). **See sample letter requesting IEP meeting.**

Checking Start/End dates of an IEP

Every IEP should cover a full calendar year. IEP cover pages generally include a table showing dates when the current IEP starts and when it expires. They also show when the most recent evaluation was completed, when the next re-evaluation is due.

Does this IEP reflect the services that the student is actually receiving now?

Yes No I can't tell

Yes: That is good news. But, if you are hearing that the student is still struggling, continue to the next question.

No/I can't tell: work on **scheduling an IEP meeting**. Consider whether a re-evaluation may be needed to understand current needs. **See sample letter requesting IEP meeting.**

Is the student struggling even with an up-to-date IEP and services?

Yes No I'm not sure

Yes/I'm not sure: Take some time to **talk with others familiar with the student. Look for more insights and information** in these records:

- recent IEP Annual Goal Progress Reports
- recent Prior Written Notices
- the most recent Evaluation Report

Ask for an IEP meeting to review concerns. If you have identified particular areas of concern, highlight those in the request for the meeting.

No, the student is not struggling, they're doing ok at school: Excellent! Celebrate and mark your calendar to check in down the road.

Does the team need a re-evaluation to understand this student's current needs?

Yes No, I don't think so I'm not sure

Yes/I'm not sure: If there's more you think a team would need to know in order to really understand how to meet this student's learning needs right now, consider requesting a re-evaluation. **See sample letter requesting a re-evaluation.**

Check for a Match between the IEP Service Matrix and Student's Daily/Weekly Schedule

Check the summary of services matrix that shows the amount, area, frequency and location of special education and related services a student receives. Note the overall amount of time in general education and special education.

Review the student's current or most recent daily school schedule to see if it includes the minutes reflected in the service matrix (no more, no less).

Note: If concerns relate primarily to behavior, you could ask the team to consider a targeted Functional Behavior Assessment. It is often helpful, however, to take a broad look at what might be influencing behavior, so a team can consider whether an updated look at academic needs, communication, sensory profiles, or other areas might also be needed.

No, I do't think so: make a plan to check back in as the team works on implementing new strategies and tracking progress to see if things improve. Review and revisit options as needed.

When to Re-Evaluate?

Per special education rules, it is time to do a re-evaluation when:

- **The district sees that the needs of the student warrant a re-evaluation;**
- **The parent or teacher requests one;**
- **Or at least every 3 years, unless a parent and district agree it is not needed;**
- but not more than once per year, unless the parent and district agree

Re-evaluations do not have to mean new testing in every area. The team can start by reviewing the information it already has in records, progress data, and other sources and decide whether and what new testing is needed.

Sample Request for Special Education Records

To: District special education department

Cc: IEP Case Manager

Re: Please forward me a Copy of IEP, Evaluation, etc. for Student [initials]

I am working with [STUDENT] and their family. Please send me copies of this student's:

- Current IEP, including the Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) if there is one;
- Most recent Evaluation Report;
- Prior Written Notices from the current and previous school year (if there are any in addition to the one following the annual IEP meeting); and
- The most recent IEP Goal Progress Report

Thank you,

Sample Request for Section 504 Plan

To: School counselor, principal and/or Section 504 Coordinator for school or district

Cc: school counselor, principal and/or Section 504 Coordinator for school

Re: Please forward me a copy of the Section 504 Plan for Student [initials]

I am working with [STUDENT] and their family. Please send me copies of this student's:

- Current Section 504 Plan and
- Section 504 Evaluation report/information

Thank you,

Sample Request for Records if Student has no IEP or 504 Plan, but might need one

To: special education department, district Section 504 Coordinator (of current and/or former district)

Cc: principal

Re: Request: Records re Prior Referrals for Special Education for Student [Initials]

I am working with [STUDENT] and their family. The family has/I have/their teachers have concerns about their progress and think they may need individualized supports due to a disability. We want to know if they have ever been referred for an IEP evaluation or a 504 Plan before. Please check to see if there has been a prior request for an evaluation or consideration for services.

If so, please forward me

- A copy of the written notice on the decision of whether or not to do an evaluation; and
- A copy of the evaluation report if an evaluation was completed.

Thank you,

Sample Request for IEP Meeting, Consideration for Re-evaluation

To: IEP Case Manager

Cc: principal and other members or likely members of IEP team, special education supervisor

Re: Request to schedule IEP Team Meeting as soon as possible for Student [initials]

I am working with STUDENT and their family.

[REASON FOR REQUESTING IEP MEETING]:

It has just come to my attention that [STUDENT]'s IEP is out of date. OR

I have just had the chance to review STUDENT's IEP and notice it has not been updated yet to reflect their current services. OR

I am working with STUDENT and their family and am hearing that STUDENT is struggling, especially with _____.

We would like to meet as soon as possible to review and update the IEP. OR

We would like to meet as soon as possible to review how things are going and consider possible changes to the IEP.

[IF YOU WANT TO HAVE TEAM CONSIDER POSSIBLE RE-EVALUATION]

I have looked at the most recent evaluation report and see that it was completed on _____.

The student has experienced many changes since then. AND/OR

I see that the most recent evaluation did not cover _____(behavior, math,

communication, social emotional)___and I am hearing that the student is currently struggling in this area.

Please be sure to invite a school psychologist to this meeting so we can discuss, and move forward if appropriate, with a re-evaluation.

Thank you,

Sample Request for Initial Special Education Evaluation

To: Special Education Supervisor, Principal

Cc: parent, teacher, other team members

Re: Request for Initial Special Education Evaluation for Student [Initials]

I am working with STUDENT and their family and I am writing to refer this student for a special education evaluation.

The family has concerns...

I have concerns....

Their teacher has concerns.....

[IF RELEVANT AND AVAILABLE]

The student has been diagnosed with _____.

I know that the parent's consent will be needed, and here is how to contact the [parent](#).*

I can be available to join you for a meeting to discuss this request on: _____

Thank you,

*If needed, identify the person acting as "parent" for special education decisions, consistent with the special education rules at [WAC 392-172A-01125](#).