



Communication with the IEP Team and Data Collection **During the Pandemic: A Brief Guide for Parents #3**

School districts are responsible for collecting and reviewing data to ensure that your child receives a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Be sure to hold the IEP team accountable in collecting and reporting this data. The school is still responsible for collecting this data during virtual learning, but, as your child's parent, you may find it helpful to collect data of your own. Data simply means information. Find some tips below on collecting information on your child's behavior and academic progress to help determine if your child's IEP is appropriate or if additional or different services are needed.

IF you have concerns about your child's IEP or distance learning, you can:

1. Request an IEP meeting.
2. Discuss your concerns with the team.
 - A. When discussing your concerns, be clear and provide concrete examples.
 - B. If you have collected data, share this with the team and ask them to consider how to respond to the concerns you have documented. Ask the team members to share their observations and any data they have collected.

TIPS on Collecting Behavioral Data

1. Observe what your child does during distance learning and write down your observations. Is your child able to sign on to the computer independently? Remain on-task without help from you?
2. Take basic notes about your child's behavior before, during, and after distance learning.
3. Be honest with the school team about all that you observe.
4. Example of behavioral data collected by parent: On Tuesday, my child became frustrated in math, turned off the computer, and refused to re-engage in school for 45 mins.

TIPS on Collecting Academic Data

1. Review the main goals of the IEP and track your child's progress.
2. Note if your child has been making progress on their goals, staying the same, or regressing.
3. Questions to ask yourself:
 - A. Is your child doing or learning more/less?
 - B. With what accuracy is your child completing their work? Has this changed recently?
 - C. Example of academic data collected by a parent: My child is not completing their assignments and is overwhelmed. They are missing assignments in math and failing the class.

IF you believe what the IEP team is offering your child is inappropriate, you can:

1. Share your concerns with the IEP team and ask that your concerns be documented.
2. Make requests based on the observations you've shared with the team and what you think your child may need and ask the team to document your requests.
3. Ask the team members how they plan to address your concerns.
4. Carefully review the prior written notice (PWN) the school provides after the meeting to ensure that it accurately reflects the discussion.
 - A. If you made a request that the school refused—be sure that the PWN reflects your request AND the school's refusal.
 - B. Request an amendment or attachment if the PWN is incorrect or does not accurately reflect everything discussed in the meeting.
5. If you still disagree with the team's decisions, you can appeal by:
 - A. Filing an MSDE Complaint
 - B. Requesting a Mediation
 - C. Filing for due process

What is Prior Written Notice?

A document that the district is required to provide to explain the reasons for any proposed changes or any refusals to change your child's educational program. This form should note all the evaluations or other information the school system is using to make its decisions, as well as all other options the team considered and the reasons why those options were rejected by the team.

The IEP team MUST send you the PWN within five business days after the IEP meeting.

For more information on prior written notice and the appeals process, see [DRM's Special Education Handbook](#).

This is the third in a series of brief guides for parents to address education issues during the pandemic. The first two guides, [Special Education during COVID19 Guide](#) and [IEP Modification or Continuity of Learning Plans Guide can be found here](#). Please feel free to contact Disability Rights Maryland's intake line at 410-727-6352 with questions or concerns or if you need this document in an alternative format.