

Extended School Year

Copied from Special Education in Plain Language

If the child may need extended school year (ESY) services, the IEP team needs to discuss it. The IEP team decides if a child needs ESY services. ESY is not just for children with certain disabilities. A child may need ESY services one year and not the next. The IEP team looks at all appropriate factors. The IEP team considers whether the child's gains made during the regular school year are threatened if the LEA does not give ESY services. Each child is different. The IEP team should look at:

- the extent of the disability;
- the extent of the skills lost or that may be lost;
- the time needed to relearn skills;
- whether parents can help;
- how quickly the child learns;
- skill just being introduced;
- the child's behavior and physical needs;
- emerging skills; and
- other appropriate factors.

This list is not all the things for the IEP team to consider. A child does not have to meet all of these items. Not one item controls the decision. ESY services are:

- not always the same as regular school year services;
- sometimes just related services such as occupational therapy or physical therapy, and
- given in a variety of places such as home, school, or community.

The IEP team writes the ESY services into the IEP.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Introduction

Parents and schools have a "built-in" partnership with the child as the focus. This partnership will grow when parents and school staff work together. Disagreements may happen, but disagreements can also help to make the child's education better. Disagreements that get solved happily make the parent/school relationship stronger.

INFORMAL MEETING

What to do when issues arise?

- When issues arise, talk directly with the people involved as soon as possible.
- First, you can call to schedule an informal meeting to discuss the situation.
- Second, you can prepare for the meeting by making a list of issues and some possible solutions.

What can you do in the meeting?

- See if you can agree on the issue(s) that must be addressed.
- Listen actively to understand the other person's perspective.
- Communicate your concerns clearly. Use notes to keep you and the meeting on track and focused on the child.
- Ask questions or restate so you and others are clear in your understanding.
- Work together to suggest some possible options to resolve the issue(s).
- Analyze all of the options to see if you can find areas of agreement.
- Discuss what should happen next.

What about dealing with emotions in the meeting?

- Try to explain your emotions calmly, and describe what your concerns are about the future to the other participants.
- Ask someone to come with you to the meeting to help you stay focused positively.
- If, by chance, you make a mistake or cause offense, say you are sorry. An apology can go a long way to resolving the situation.

What if the issues are not fully resolved in the meeting?

- Consider scheduling another informal meeting with different or additional people.
- Call others for suggestions on possible future action.
- Call the Wisconsin Special Education Mediation System, 888-298-3857 (toll-free voice) or 262-538-1618 (TTY) or seek information on the WSEMS website at: <http://www.wsems.us> A facilitated IEP meeting or mediation could be helpful.

Next Steps: What can be done if informal ways of solving problems don't work?

Parents and the school can use one or more of the formal problem solving methods. Schools must tell parents about these formal ways to solve problems:

- Independent Educational Evaluations (IEEs),
- Facilitated IEP,
- Mediation,
- IDEA State Complaints, and
- Due process hearings.

These formal ways to solve problems can help the school and the parent to talk together. Schools and parents should try the informal methods first and should use the formal methods if the informal methods don't work. Before using any of these formal problem-solving methods, parents should understand how they work and with which types of problems they work best. Other parts of this book give information about independent educational evaluations, special education mediation, IDEA State Complaints, and due process hearings.