

Career and College Ready IEPs- School Nurse Role-Need for Documentation WASN 2022

Since 1965 there have been federal laws protecting the rights of students with disabilities access to education. Child Find requires schools to identify and evaluate eligible students who reside within the school district boundaries (both public and private).

Some students may be eligible for protections, services, and educational accommodations under section 504 alone. Others may be found in need of specialized instruction and modifications through the Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) with latest revision in 2004.

Before determining whether the student is a student with a disability (meets the criteria for a disability category and needs specially designed instruction), document and carefully consider information from a variety of sources, including aptitude and achievement tests, parent(s) input, teacher recommendations, information about the student's physical condition, social or cultural background, and adaptive behavior. This will assist the IEP team in determining whether the student has or continues to have a disability and the content of the student's IEP, including information related to enabling the student to access, engage, and make progress in the general education curriculum. The evaluation report must be sufficiently comprehensive to document the IEP team's determination of the disability category and need for specially designed instruction.

Evaluation is Required to be Documented

Eligibility determination for special education services requires an individualized educational evaluation. This evaluation must draw upon a variety of sources and ensure that all information obtained is documented and carefully considered. Additionally, IDEA mandates that individuals with appropriate expertise in the area of concern should conduct the evaluation and determine additional data needed.

IDEA federal law requires that ALL information is documented. Also note that the law requires that individuals with appropriate expertise should conduct the evaluation (and document the findings).

A student is to be assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, as appropriate:

- health
- vision
- hearing
- social and emotional status
- general intelligence
- academic performance
- communicative status
- motor abilities

(IDEA 34 ,C.F.R. § 300.304)

Note that the law does specifically mention to assess health, vision and hearing. If you have done a recent screening you can use those findings. The exam does not have to be by a professional eye

care professional unless there are specific concerns The point is to make sure that (health) vision and hearing is not a barrier

Under special education law, two-part test to be considered a “child with a disability”

First, does the child meet the educational eligibility impairment criteria for one of the disability areas that adversely affects his/her educational performance? And, as a result of the disability, does the child need specially designed instruction?

Need BOTH so must document BOTH! This is key. So there needs to be documentation that both have been assessed and considered.

In order to identify a student as meeting educational eligibility for an impairment, the IEP team must find the student’s learning and educational performance is adversely affected.

So how the student’s learning and educational performance is adversely affected must be documented.

“Adversely affecting educational performance...”

Educational performance may include:

- Cognitive performance, including academic and pre-academic skills.
- Communication skills.
- Personal/Social skills.
- Sensory processing and motor planning skills.
- Adaptive skills, including self-help skills and activities of daily living.

School nurses document in all and any areas for which you (or team) have information.

What to document for IEP

The following health related information should be documented in the IEP:

- The student’s present level of performance
findings that address the severity and nature of the health condition and how it affects the student’s engagement and progress in age or grade level general education curriculum
- Effects of disability
identifies how the student’s disability affects academic achievement and functional performance.
- Supplemental aids and services
 - information to support allocation of resources, including services such as nursing
 - medical or health accommodations
 - program modifications and supports for school staff (e.g. training, and accommodations)

Where to document for IEP

School nurses may document in these sections of IEP:

- Information From Existing Data (ER-1)
- Information from Additional Assessments and Other Evaluation Materials (ER1)

- Determination of Disability Category and Need for Specially Designed Instruction (ER 1)
- Functional Performance (I -4)
- Effects of Disability (I-4)
- Summary of Disability-Related Needs (I-4)
- Measurable Annual Goals (I-4) School nurse may or may not document goals.
- Statement of Supplementary Aids and Services (I-4)
- Related Services Needed to Benefit from Special Education (I-4)
- Program Modifications or Supports for School Personnel (I-4)

*Note best practice by the school nurse profession, is not to include a student's Health Plan as an official (attached) part of the IEP document. The reason for this recommendation is if anything in the Health Plan changes (time student checks blood sugars etc.) then the IEP team needs to re-convene to make that change or an I-10 form needs to be completed.

In the Program Modifications or Support for School Personnel section a statement such as "School nurse develops and maintains an Individualized Health Plan (IHP-nursing care plan), Health Plan, or Emergency Action Plan (EAP) that addresses student health needs and the plan(s) is/are on file in the health office" could be included. School nursing and school health services provided should be documented under the Related Services section.

References

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