

## IEP Review Guide for Parents

### Understanding Your Child's Educational Support Plan in Dubai

Walking into an Individualised Education Plan (IEP) meeting can feel overwhelming, especially when you are presented with educational terminology, assessment reports, and detailed planning documents. Many parents leave meetings wondering whether they asked the right questions or fully understood what was discussed.

This guide has been designed to help parents review and understand their child's IEP with greater confidence.

The information in this guide is based on inclusive education principles commonly used in Dubai schools and aligns with the collaborative approach encouraged by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA). It is intended as a practical reference tool rather than a legal or regulatory document.

A high-quality IEP should be clear, measurable, and meaningful. Most importantly, it should help everyone involved in your child's education work towards shared goals that support learning, participation, independence, and wellbeing.

Use this guide before, during, or after school meetings to help you understand the key components of an effective educational support plan.

#### 1. Understanding Current Performance

Before a school can plan meaningful educational goals, it must first understand your child's current level of functioning.

This section of the IEP is often referred to as the student's "Present Levels of Performance" or "Current Levels of Achievement."

The information included here provides the foundation for all future goals, accommodations, and support strategies.

## Review Checklist

- The document clearly describes what my child can currently do independently.
- Information is based on observations, assessments, classroom data, or professional reports rather than opinions alone.
- Academic strengths are included alongside areas where support may be beneficial.
- Communication, social, behavioural, emotional, and independence skills are considered where relevant.
- Information reflects recent assessments and professional recommendations.
- The description accurately represents my child's current abilities.
- My child's interests, strengths, and motivators are included where appropriate.

## Parent Note

A strong IEP should provide a balanced picture of your child. Understanding strengths is just as important as identifying challenges. Effective educational planning builds on what a child can already do while supporting areas that require further development.

## 2. Reviewing Goals

Goals are one of the most important parts of an IEP.

They help schools, families, and support staff understand what skills will be prioritised and how progress will be measured.

Well-written goals should be specific enough that everyone involved can clearly understand what success looks like.

Many schools use the SMART framework when developing educational goals.

SMART goals are:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant

- Time-bound

### Review Checklist

- Each goal focuses on a clearly defined skill or area of development.
- Success can be measured objectively.
- A timeline for review is included.
- The goal is realistic and appropriate for my child's current level of development.
- The goal supports meaningful participation in school life.
- The goal reflects my child's educational priorities and support needs.
- Progress can be monitored consistently throughout the term.

### Examples of Goal Writing

#### Less Specific Goal

The student will improve classroom participation.

The student will improve reading skills.

#### More Measurable Goal

During whole-class activities, the student will cooperate with group instruction in 4 out of 5 opportunities across four consecutive weeks.

The student will accurately read 20 high-frequency sight words with 80% accuracy by the end of Term 1.

### Parent Note

The purpose of an educational goal is not to create pressure. Goals provide direction and help everyone supporting your child focus on meaningful areas of development.

## 3. Reviewing Support Strategies and Accommodations

Support strategies explain how the school plans to help your child access learning and participate in the educational environment.

Some students require minor adjustments, while others may need more structured support.

Support strategies should be practical, clearly described, and relevant to your child's needs.

## Review Checklist

- Classroom accommodations are clearly described.
- The document explains how support will be provided during lessons.
- Any assessment accommodations are documented.
- The strategies are realistic within the school environment.
- Visual supports, sensory supports, communication supports, or organisational supports are included where needed.
- The plan identifies any assistive technology that may be used.
- Accommodations help my child access learning without creating unnecessary barriers.

## Examples of Accommodations

- Additional time during assessments
- Visual schedules
- Simplified instructions
- Preferential seating
- Access to sensory tools
- Movement breaks
- Alternative ways of demonstrating learning
- Organisational support

## Parent Note

Not every child requires the same accommodations. Effective support should be individualised and reviewed regularly to ensure it remains helpful.

## 4. Understanding Team Roles and Responsibilities

An IEP is most effective when everyone understands their role.

The document should clearly identify who is responsible for implementing strategies, monitoring progress, and communicating updates.

When responsibilities are clearly defined, support is more likely to remain consistent across the school year.

### Review Checklist

- The key members of the support team are identified.
- Staff responsibilities are clearly described.
- Any learning support staff involvement is explained.
- External professionals are referenced where relevant.
- Progress monitoring responsibilities are identified.
- Communication procedures are outlined.
- The review schedule is clearly stated.

### Questions Parents May Wish to Ask

- Who will monitor progress towards each goal?
- How often will progress be reviewed?
- Who should I contact if concerns arise?
- How will information be shared between school and home?
- How will substitute teachers access important information?

### Parent Note

Consistency is one of the strongest predictors of successful implementation. Understanding who is responsible for each aspect of support helps create continuity across school settings.

## 5. Home-School Communication and Collaboration

Strong communication between families and schools is one of the most valuable components of an effective IEP.

Parents and educators each bring different perspectives and expertise. When these perspectives are shared openly, planning becomes more meaningful and responsive.

The IEP should explain how communication will occur and how progress updates will be shared.

## Review Checklist

- A process for regular communication is included.
- Parents are informed about review meetings and progress updates.
- Opportunities for collaboration are identified.
- External reports can be shared with the school where appropriate.
- School staff are open to discussing concerns and questions.
- Communication methods are practical and realistic.
- Educational goals align with broader developmental priorities where appropriate.

## Examples of Communication Methods

- Scheduled review meetings
- Email updates
- Communication books
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Progress reports
- Collaborative planning meetings

## Parent Note

Parents know their child better than anyone else. Sharing observations from home can provide valuable information that complements classroom observations and assessment data.

## Questions to Consider Before an IEP Meeting

Before attending a meeting, you may find it helpful to reflect on the following questions:

- What are my child's greatest strengths?
- What areas currently cause the most difficulty?
- Which goals are most important for daily life and school participation?
- Have I seen progress since the previous review?

- Are there concerns that have not yet been discussed?
- Are the proposed goals meaningful and achievable?
- Do I understand how progress will be measured?
- Do I understand the support strategies being recommended?

### **When You Need More Clarification**

It is completely reasonable to ask questions if any part of an IEP feels unclear.

You may wish to request clarification if:

- Goals are difficult to understand.
- Progress measures are not explained.
- Support strategies are vague.
- Responsibilities are unclear.
- Recommendations do not appear to match your child's current needs.

Additional discussion can often help ensure that everyone has a shared understanding before the plan is finalised.

### **Final Thoughts**

An Individualised Education Plan should help create a clear and practical roadmap for learning and inclusion.

The most effective IEPs are built through collaboration between families, educators, support staff, and, where appropriate, external professionals. They focus on strengths, identify meaningful goals, and provide clear guidance for supporting progress over time.

No checklist can replace professional expertise or individualised planning. However, understanding the key components of an IEP can help parents participate more confidently in discussions about their child's education.

At Small Steps Big Dreams, we work alongside families, schools, and professionals across Dubai to support educational planning, developmental progress, and successful participation in school life.

If you would like support reviewing your child's educational plan, understanding recommendations, or preparing for a school meeting, our team is here to help.

**Book Consultation:** [Click Here](#)

**Guide to understand IEPs in Dubai :** [Click Here](#)