



SELF-ADVOCACY

For Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Second Edition

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LESSON 11

Practicing for an IEP Meeting: Participation

PURPOSE OF LESSON 11

This lesson describes the basic activities of an IEP meeting. This lesson also links learned personal and interpersonal skills to each step of the IEP process to support student participation.

EXPECTED LEARNER OUTCOMES

1. Learners will describe the sequence of events in a typical IEP meeting.
2. Learners will role-play self-advocacy skills that will help them actively participate in a practice IEP meeting.

Instructional Activities	Performance Activities	Materials
1. Warm-up activity: "Earning the Right"	Students read, react to short story	Worksheet 11a
2. Core material	Students take notes	Worksheet 11b
3. Learning activity: "Practicing an IEP Meeting"	Students develop, role play a practice meeting	Worksheets 11c, 11d
4. Summary, homework	Interview parent	Worksheet 11e

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONAL/ PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

1. Review main points of Lesson 10: Last time, we talked about how to prepare for an IEP meeting. We reviewed your last IEP/ITP and your goals after high school. You talked over your goals with a parent to be sure you were in agreement.

2. State today's goal: Today, we will discuss how to participate in your IEP meeting. We will look at the basic activities of an IEP meeting, consider how you can participate in your meeting, and then develop a practice meeting.

3. As a warm-up activity, ask students to read the short story "Earning the Right" on Worksheet 11a. Ask students to write down brief answers to the questions, and then briefly discuss with class.

4. Present Lesson 11 Core Material while students complete Worksheet 11b.

5. Provide practice with new information: Use Worksheet 11c to help students develop and practice an IEP meeting. Assign roles and ask students to develop each role according to directions. (Change roles as deemed relevant.) The teacher will want to advise and prompt as needed, depending on the extent of students' earlier experiences with IEP meetings. As time allows, rework this activity by rotating roles, giving all students time to play the student role, using their own goals if appropriate.

6. Discussion: Ask students to evaluate the practice meeting according to the checklist on Worksheet 11d.

7. Summarize, and assign homework: Today we learned from our warm-up activity that people need to participate in a project if they want it to turn out right. We also talked about how to actively participate in an IEP by learning the sequence of events in a typical meeting and practicing when to use our self-advocacy

skills in the meeting.

8. State topic of next meeting: Next time we meet, we will look at how to evaluate our participation in our real IEP meetings.

LESSON 11 CORE MATERIAL

As discussed in Lesson 2, most students with hearing impairment have an Individualized Education Program. This IEP must be reviewed and updated regularly; to do so, parents, teachers, and other persons involved in a student's education hold a meeting. Students themselves should attend these IEP meetings when they are old enough to understand what is going on, usually around the age of 14 or 15.

What happens at an IEP meeting?

Although it can be somewhat different for each student, depending on who attends and what concerns people have, an IEP meeting generally follows the format of the IEP form. [For the instructor: the sequence is pictured as a flow chart at the end of this section.] Fill in the blank boxes on Worksheet 11b as we discuss this figure.

1. Introductions. It is always appropriate to start out with introductions, even when people know one another well. And often, new people become involved in your education. Sometimes, attendees have not seen one another since the IEP meeting, so it helps to remind one another of people's names and jobs.

2. Updates. After introductions, people spend some time talking about the student's progress since the last IEP meeting. Teachers share their information about the student's grades and homework. Other people will also report: for example, the school nurse may talk about the student's health, the psychologist may talk about test scores, the speech-language pathologist may

talk about speech work, the audiologist may talk about hearing aids and assistive devices.

It can take a long time for everyone to have a chance to talk. Sometimes it may be hard to understand what people are talking about, especially when they talk about tests and scores. It is perfectly appropriate to ask a person to explain something.

3. Goals for the next year. At this point, each person at the IEP meeting recommends upcoming goals (often described as “at least one year of progress in a year’s time”). It may mean passing a writing class, or learning how to balance a checkbook, or working on speech goals.

As your teachers and parents discuss their ideas for upcoming goals, you also start participating in the meeting by discussing what you want to do as well. You are ready to discuss your own goals for the next year and for your transition to college or a job after high school, because you have already had a lot of practice thinking about and talking about the goals you have identified for yourself. Your last homework lesson required you to talk these over with your parents, and you have rehearsed them with friends in class. You could bring your worksheets from Lesson 10 to help you remember what you want to talk about.

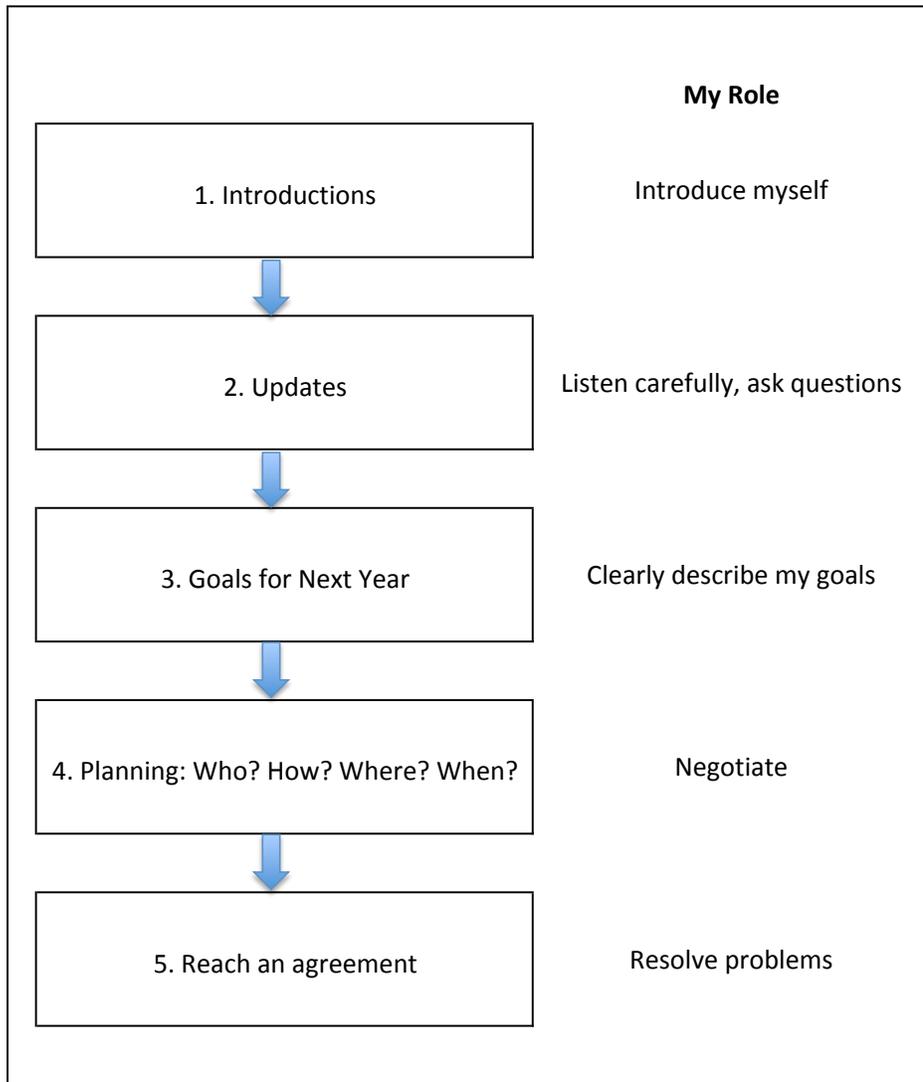
4. Planning: Who? How? Where? When? Here is where the planning occurs. After all the goals have been identified, the IEP team (which includes you) talks about how to meet those goals. It is often just a matter of assigning certain people certain tasks, for instance, asking a counselor to work with you to obtain information about college admission requirements, or a teacher might work with you to contact a vocational

school for information on training programs. If the student wants experience in using assistive devices, the audiologist or speech-language pathologist may be able to organize information and materials, and so on. You can be expected to be actively involved with the planning.

Sometimes the planning can get complicated, especially if the IEP team is not accustomed to having students actively participate in their meetings. They may be in the habit of making all the decisions, without considering the student's ideas. We learned in Lesson 8 how to negotiate with people who have ideas that are different from our own. This is where you will want to use your negotiation strategies: create options, put yourself in the other person's shoes, and use "I-first" language and assertive listening.

5. Reach an agreement. An IEP meeting should not end until everyone agrees to the student’s educational plan. Occasionally there are problems that do not get resolved at first, but you have four problem-solving strategies to use: stay calm and unemotional; ask "why," ask "what if," and say “thank you.” Most often, the meeting goes smoothly and is productive; that is, everyone feels like a lot was accomplished. Problems are most likely to occur when communication is poor, expectations are not clear, or people are upset about something else, unrelated to meeting. Most of these problems can be addressed with your interpersonal skills.

Once all problems are resolved, everyone (including you) signs the IEP form. Your signature means that you agree to what the IEP team has written and that you will do your part to meet the IEP goals.



Worksheet 11a

“Earning the Right”

Every November, Metro High School holds a dance for all students at the end of the football season. The student council sponsors the dance, and in September volunteers are recruited to help plan and run the program. It takes many hours of work, and it always feels like the volunteers will run out of time, but thanks to a lot of hard work, the gym is ready and everyone who worked so hard looks forward to having fun.

This year, as the dance got started, two students walked up to the ticket booth and bought their tickets. Marta took one step inside the gym and immediately started to laugh at the decorations, insisting she had seen better ones at other schools. Her date, Omar, made fun of the band that had been hired and said he had never heard such awful music. Even though they ate several plates of food, both Maria and Omar said that they hated the refreshments. They talked loudly about the ideas they had that would have made the dance better.

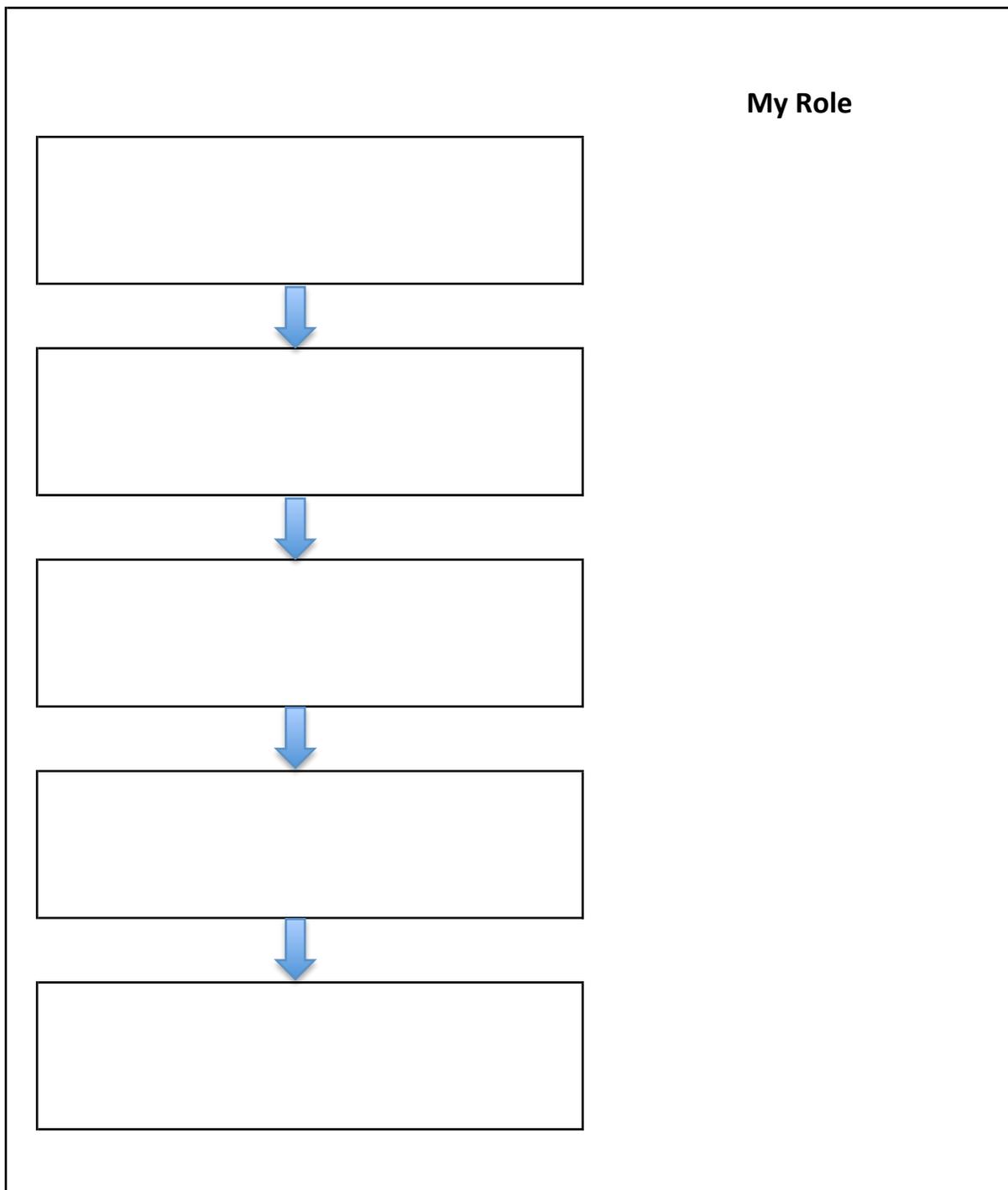
They complained so loudly that even the parent chaperons could hear them. Finally, Mrs. Adams walked over to them and said, "Marta, Omar, you obviously have a lot of opinions about this dance. I heard someone calculate that the dance committee volunteered a total of 100 hours to get this pulled together. That's the same as 2½ weeks at a full-time job. So ... how many of those hours did you contribute?" Marta and Omar looked at each other and shrugged. Omar said, "Well, none. We just paid for our tickets."

What would Mrs. Adams say about these students' attitudes?

Do people who did not participate in a project have a right to complain about how it turned out?

Worksheet 11b

Flowchart of Activities During an IEP Meeting:



Worksheet 11c

Following is a list of members in a practice IEP team. Choose a role from the list below and work with the rest of the team to develop each person's role. Then sit around a table to act out meeting, following the sequence of activities from Worksheet 11b. Ask your teacher for direction if you are not familiar with IEP meetings. Help the "student" participate as much as possible.

Student	Decides on a post-high school goal
Parent	Supports the student's goal.
Administrator	Moderates meeting (makes introductions, moves discussion forward)
High school counselor	What updates will she provide?
Audiologist	What updates will he provide?
Favorite teacher	What updates will he provide?
Unfavorite teacher	Will she have objections to student's goal?

Worksheet 11d

Checklist for IEP Meeting

While group presents practice IEP meeting, evaluate:

Were introductions made? _____

Were updates presented? _____

Were goals clearly stated by student? _____ By adults? _____

Did the team make plans to help student make his/her goal? _____

Did the student participate with negotiating strategies?

Create options? _____ Put self in others' shoes? _____

Use "I-first" language? _____ Use assertive listening? _____

Did the student use problem-solving skills:

Stay calm, unemotional? _____ "Tell me why?" _____

"What if? _____ "Thank you" _____

Did the student sign the IEP? _____

Worksheet 11e

Summary

1. IEP meetings follow a predictable sequence of events: introductions, updates, goals, planning, and reaching an agreement.
2. Students can use their personal and interpersonal skills to actively participate in their IEP meetings.

Homework

Describe your practice IEP meeting to a parent. It's quite likely he or she has been attending IEP meetings for several years. Ask for comparisons: how did your practice meeting compare to your parent's real experiences? What have they learned from these experiences? What else might you anticipate? What advice do they have?

