



# Strategies to Strengthen Parent Voice at ARD Meetings

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PARENT INVOLVEMENT SERIES | LEVEL 3

# Improving Educational Results for Children

- IDEA has a purpose, spelled out by Congress
- IDEA has IEP Requirements
- IEPs require a PLAAFP and Services
- IEPs have Special Considerations



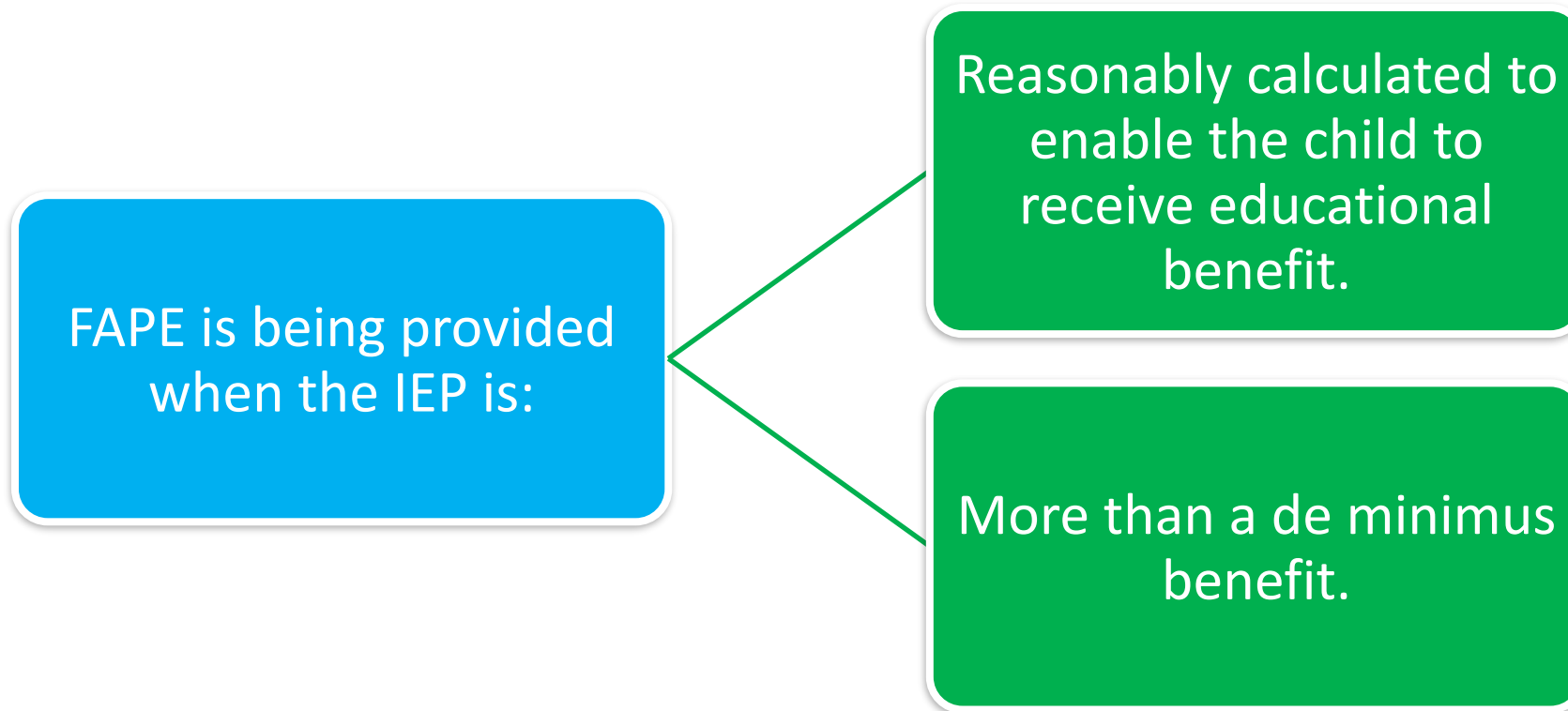
# USDOE Guidance

- Each child's IEP must be designed to enable the child to advance appropriately toward attaining his/her annual IEP goals and to be involved in, and make progress in, **the general education curriculum based on the State's academic content standards for the grade in which the child is enrolled.**
- IEP must include **behavioral interventions and supports** to a child that needs them.



# Rowley Significance

Students who require special education have a substantive right to receive FAPE.



# Andrew F. Overview

- Parents believed that his progress had stalled and that the strategies used to address his behaviors were insufficient to allow him to learn.
- Parents argued that he was offered essentially the same IEP each year and that the district needed to completely overhaul its approach.



# Andrew F. Decision & Implications

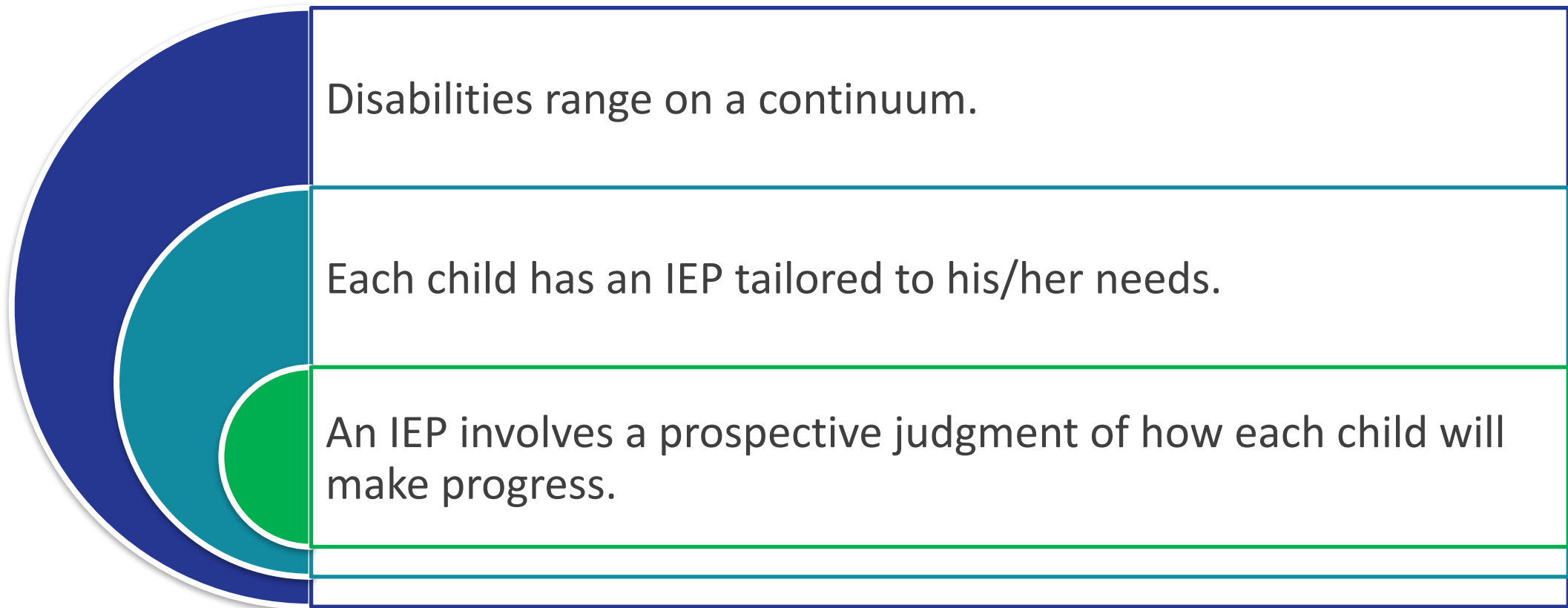
- Parents need to fully understand that their child is entitled to an IEP that enables their child to make **academic progress**.
- Every child should have the chance to meet **challenging objectives**.
- Clearly articulated a shift to **higher expectations** for children with disabilities.
- **Advocacy begins and ends with families** directly impacted and the family organizations that educate and support them.

“When parents and schools share high expectations, children with disabilities can achieve great things.”

Paula Goldberg  
*Executive Director, PACER Center*

# The Student

Consideration of the **individual** student.





# Making Progress

For a child who **cannot** progress smoothly through the regular curriculum:

- The IEP need not aim for grade-level advancement.
- The IEP must **be appropriately ambitious in light of the child's circumstances.**
- The IEP should be reasonably calculated to enable the child to achieve passing marks and advance from grade to grade.



# Effectiveness

An IEP must:

- Be reasonably calculated.
- Enable the child to receive meaningful educational benefits.
- Meet the “more than de minimus” standard.
- Afford the child the opportunity for significant learning.



# Let's Review

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Recap slides 2-9



# Roles of Professionals & Families

## New standard requires

- Prospective judgment by school officials that will be informed not only by the expertise of school officials, but also by the **input of the child's parents and guardians.**

## A reviewing court may fairly expect

- Authorities to be able to offer a **cogent and responsive explanation for their decisions** that shows the IEP is reasonably calculated to enable the child to make progress appropriate in light of his circumstances.

# ARD Committee Considerations

ARD committees need to consider:

- How special education and related services, if any, have been provided to the child in the past, including the effectiveness of specific instructional strategies and supports and services with the student.
- The child's previous rate of academic growth, whether the child is on track to achieve or exceed grade-level proficiency, any behaviors interfering with the child's progress, and additional information and input provided by the child's parents.

# IEP Considerations

- Have we ensured this IEP includes challenging goals?
- Why do we believe that this IEP will allow the child to progress academically and functionally?
- Have we considered performance problems from the past year?
- Are parent concerns included in the writing of goals and objectives, and assessing what services are needed?



# Developing the IEP

A child's IEP must:

- Include an individualized determination that is unique to the child.
- Aim to enable the child to make progress.
- Include consideration of the child's present levels of achievement, disability, and potential for growth.



# Reviewing the IEP

- At least annual review of IEP to determine progress.
- Periodic meetings throughout the year if warranted.
- If a child is not making expected progress, the ARD committee must revise, as appropriate, the IEP to address the lack of progress.
- Parents have the right to request an ARD meeting at any time.

# Let's Review

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Recap slides 11-15





# Key Concepts

- Chance to meet “challenging objectives”
- “Appropriately ambitious” IEP/educational program
- “The IEP is not a form”
- Schools must be held to a “markedly more demanding” standard than merely “more than de minimus”
- “For a child fully integrated in a regular classroom, an IEP typically should be reasonably calculated to enable the child to achieve passing marks and advance from grade to grade”
- “Cogent and responsive explanation for their decisions that shows the IEP is reasonably calculated to enable the child to make progress appropriate in light of his circumstances”



# Questions to Ask

Have we given careful consideration to:

- My child's PLAAFP, disability, and potential for growth?
- My child's previous rate of academic growth?
- Whether my child is on track to achieve or exceed grade-level proficiency?
- Any behaviors interfering with my child's progress?
- My input?

# Questions to Ask

- Are my child's objectives sufficiently challenging?
- Are my child's goals appropriately ambitious?
- How is this IEP reasonably calculated to enable my child to:
  - Achieve passing marks and advance from grade to grade?
  - Make progress appropriate in light of his/her circumstances?



# What Parents Can Do

- Become a “can do” parent!
- Be an active participant in your child’s education.
- Know what should be in the IEP.
- Don’t accept an IEP with the same goals and objectives year to year.
- Always remember that you’re an equal member of your child’s ARD committee.
- Don’t be afraid to ask questions.
- Ask for clarification when needed.

# What Professionals Can Do

- Provide professional development to staff and volunteers who assist families individually to ensure their awareness, understanding, and ability to apply the information in their individual assistance to families.
- Review current training materials on evaluation, IEP development, service delivery, etc. and make needed revisions to incorporate the key terms, phrases, and concepts.
- Review current state/district documents including parent guides, IEP “shells,” regulations and rules, to identify needed areas of change to comply with Endrew F.

# What Family Organizations Can Do

- Provide specific workshops on how Endrew F. raises expectations and the key concepts, terms, and phrases.
- Coach parents receiving individual assistance on how to use the key concepts, terms and phrases, and related documents (FAPE/IEP and discipline/PBS guidance, for example) in their individual advocacy.
- Work with families and concerned professionals to advocate for needed revisions to state regulations/rules, guides, documents, etc.



# Let's Review

Recap slides 17-22

## Additional Resources

### Partners Resource Network

[PRNTexas.org](http://PRNTexas.org)

### National PLACE

[parentsatthetable.org](http://parentsatthetable.org)








# Thank You

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 **Partners Resource Network**  
Offices in Lubbock, Houston, Austin, El Paso,  
and Dallas/Ft. Worth

 Toll Free: 1.800.866.4726

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 [PRNTexas.org](http://PRNTexas.org)



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