



LEA Rep Training Program Description and Goals

Julie Weatherly, Esq. of Resolutions in Special Education, Inc. and Dr. Timothy S. Havard with Auburn City Schools and Havard Educational Consulting have co-developed LEArn & LEAd—a one-day (in-person or virtual) training program designed for those who serve as IEP Team “LEA Representatives,” including local school building administrators. Based upon the combined experiences of a long-time special education legal expert and an educational leader, this program was developed in order to train LEA Representatives on their important legal and professional job duties as the IEP meeting’s “process leader.”

This interactive, information-packed training day provides LEA Representatives with suggested aids and strategies, as well as a video demonstration of their use in an IEP meeting. These strategies are designed to assist LEA Reps to more effectively:

- Fulfill their roles and responsibilities as the IEP meeting’s “process leader” in support of the Team’s “content leaders” and other members;
- Ensure that all IEP Team members, including parents, are provided the opportunity for meaningful participation and input;
- Use visual aids, checklists and other strategies to help prepare for and guide the IEP meeting process, keeping it on track and ensuring that it remains properly focused on the individual student and student needs;
- Use communication and conflict prevention and management strategies to respond to difficult behaviors and conversations that may occur during meetings;
- Assist IEP Teams in reaching consensus in decision-making and to appropriately respond when consensus cannot be reached; and
- Ensure that organized, efficient and legally compliant IEP Team meetings occur.

It is the LEArn & LEAd goal that participants will walk away with immediate strategies they can use to improve their IEP meetings and their knowledge and skills to support collaboration between parents and school staff, while also avoiding misunderstandings, distrust and anxiety that can often lead to special education legal disputes.

Data Collection and Analysis

Before and after the training, participants will be surveyed to assess how they view their skills and knowledge as LEA Representatives, and the data is subsequently analyzed. Data from hundreds of sessions conducted since 2014 reflect that over 90% of participants report a significant increase in their knowledge and feel more confident and satisfied with their ability to appropriately serve as the IEP meeting’s process leader after having been trained. Data collection and evaluation results are provided after each training session.

Program Logistics & Room Set-up

The LEArn & LEAd program is a full-day session (generally from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. or 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.). Whether in-person or virtual, participants should expect to be actively engaged and prepared to interact with others in the session’s activities.

Number of participants per session

Each LEArn & LEAd session (in-person or virtual) is limited to a total of up to **60 participants** in order to facilitate effective small and large group interaction, discussion and activities.

Checklist for training room set-up and other requirements

In-person/on-site training sessions

When held in-person, the ideal training room size is at least 40' x 60' and set up as follows:

- ✓ **Tables** (preferably round) **set for no more than 5 participants at each table;**
- ✓ Pens, highlighters and small post-it notepads on each table;
- ✓ One worktable and two chairs for trainers (set to the side at the front of the room);
- ✓ Two easels at the front of the room with large chart paper tablets (preferably those that are self-stick and can be posted on the wall) with different-colored markers;
- ✓ **Power point capabilities with a projector and screen set up to be viewed by all participants (trainers will bring laptop if necessary or presentation on jump drive if applicable) with capacity for good sound/video replay for IEP meeting video demonstration;**
- ✓ Two microphones for the trainers, if needed (depending on room size/acoustics); and
- ✓ Snacks/water/coffee for participants, as appropriate.

Lunch Break: Host district/agency usually provides lunch or encourages participants to bring their lunch, depending upon the circumstances. Participants may also leave and come back from the lunch break but are expected to be back promptly. (Note: the time for the lunch break will be determined by the host district/agency but is typically an hour).

Virtual training sessions

While in-person training and interaction is preferred, virtual LEArn & LEAd sessions were developed in response to COVID circumstances and continue to be provided upon request via the Zoom meeting platform. All participants are individually provided a link to enter the session via the Zoom desktop app on their individual devices, as well as instructions for participation. Although the program is virtual, Zoom features such as reaction and answer buttons, group break-out rooms, polls and the chat box are utilized so that the session is engaging and interactive. Participants are asked to individually download the Zoom desktop App and use the most updated version when they individually sign on and participate. Participants enter into the session from a waiting room based upon a list of registrants provided by the participating agency/district and an agency/district representative will be made co-host for that purpose.

Training Manuals and Daily Schedule

LEArn & LEAd Training Manuals will be printed and delivered to the host district/agency. A detailed Daily Schedule for the trainees to follow during the day will also be emailed to the district/agency contact ahead of time, as well as the Pre- and Post-Surveys.

Pricing

The all-inclusive cost of the one-day session includes all time and cost related to preparation, travel (if required) and presentation of one trained, experienced educational leader/IEP meeting process leader and one trained, experienced special education attorney, as well as the printing and delivery of the training Manual. Obviously, the cost will depend upon whether the session is virtual or in-person and other relevant costs and considerations. For more information, please contact Julie Weatherly at 251-607-7377 or JJWEsq@aol.com.