

IEP Meeting Script Discussing Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Using Federal Law

(Parents may read this directly if helpful.)

Opening Statement

“Thank you for meeting today. I want to begin by saying that I value the work everyone does for my child. My goal is not conflict—my goal is clarity and compliance with federal law. I would like our discussion of placement to be grounded specifically in the requirements of IDEA regarding Least Restrictive Environment and meaningful educational benefit.”

Clarifying the Legal Standard

20 U.S.C. § 1412(a)(5) and 34 C.F.R. § 300.114

“Under Title 20 of the United States Code Section 1412(a)(5) and 34 Code of Federal Regulations Section 300.114, children are educated in the regular classroom to the maximum extent appropriate. The law also states that removal occurs when education in the regular classroom with supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. So my question is: What data shows that my child can achieve education satisfactorily in this placement?” (Pause. Let them respond.)

Redirecting From Philosophy to Data

“I understand the value of inclusion. However, the legal standard is not philosophy—it is appropriateness. Can we review **specific, measurable data** showing:

- Progress on IEP goals

- Access to instruction
- Functional skill development
- Academic growth relative to my child's circumstances

How are we determining that this placement is allowing meaningful progress?"

Referencing Meaningful Progress (Endrew F.)

"The Supreme Court decision in Endrew F. requires that my child's program be reasonably calculated to enable progress appropriate in light of their circumstances. Can you explain how the current placement meets that meaningful progress standard?"

If the Child Is Several Grade Levels Behind

"My child is currently functioning several grade levels below peers. I need to understand: Are we prioritizing exposure to grade-level content, or are we prioritizing skill development? How is this placement addressing their instructional level rather than just their chronological grade?"

If Behavior Is Increasing

"I would like the team to consider whether behavior may be signaling a mismatch between demands and capacity. Before we attribute behavior to noncompliance, have we examined whether the current placement is appropriate under LRE standards?"

Asking About the Continuum

34 C.F.R. § 300.115

“Under Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations Section 300.115, the district must maintain a continuum of alternative placements. Can you outline what options exist along that continuum? What specialized settings are available, and why were they ruled out?”

If the Team Says “We Don’t Have That Placement” or “No Spot Available”

34 C.F.R. § 300.115

“Under Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations Section 300.115, the district is required to ensure a continuum of alternative placements is available. If no appropriate in-district setting exists, the district must locate and fund an out-of-district placement. Can we discuss what steps are being taken to meet that requirement?”

“Furthermore, the regulation requires that the continuum of placements **must include these specific options:**

- **Instruction in regular classes** (general education classrooms, with or without supplementary aids and services)
- **Special classes** (self-contained special education classes or programs)
- **Special schools** (separate special education schools or facilities)
- **Home instruction** (instruction provided at the student's home)
- **Instruction in hospitals and institutions** (services provided in hospitals, residential treatment centers, or other institutional settings)

If the Team Says “We Have to Try Inclusion First”

“Can you show me where federal law requires full inclusion before considering more specialized supports? My understanding is that placement

must be individualized based on my child's needs—not based on a required sequence.”

If Placement Is Framed as “Presuming Competence”

“I fully presume my child's competence and potential. That's why I'm asking how this placement provides instruction that is both appropriately ambitious and accessible at their current level.”

Bringing It Back to Appropriateness

“I want to be clear: I am not asking for a more restrictive environment. I am asking for the least restrictive environment in which my child can make meaningful progress. If the current placement is not resulting in measurable progress, then by definition, it may not be the least restrictive appropriate setting.”

If You Disagree With the Team

“At this time, I do not agree that this placement meets the standard of Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment. I am requesting that we:

- Review updated data
- Consider alternative placements on the continuum
- Document my disagreement in the meeting notes

I also request Prior Written Notice of the team's final placement decision and the reasons for it, including any options considered and rejected.”

Closing Statement

© ExposingSpecialEd.com

This worksheet is provided for educational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. It may be used by parents for their own child but **may not be sold or redistributed** without permission.

“I appreciate the team’s time and effort. I want to work collaboratively. My only goal is to ensure my child receives an education that is appropriate, individualized, and legally compliant. I am committed to making decisions based on data and federal law.”

Optional One-Sentence Reset (If Emotions Rise)

“I’d like to pause and return to the federal standard of meaningful progress and appropriateness so we can stay focused on my child’s needs.”