



Things to Think About!

Don't Toss That Last Year's IEP!

By Linda Jorgensen

An IEP is an important source document that provides proof of onset and diagnosis, continuation of diagnosis and continuing need for assistance and care. Medical records are also an excellent proof but are often sometimes hard to obtain years later. An IEP is directly handed to the parent each year at an annual IEP meeting, contains most basic diagnostic information, and is easily stored for comparison and later use. Many programs and agencies request or accept an IEP as a source document proving the existence of a handicapping condition.

I spend a great deal of time slogging my way through applications required for various services and benefits, both military and civilian, for our daughter. One of the most commonly used documents I have at my disposal is our daughter's Individual Education Plan or IEP. I have kept the majority of IEP forms and documents we received starting when she was in preschool all the way to her graduation over four years ago. These documents have been invaluable.

The following is only a short list of situations where a copy of an IEP may be needed:

Civilian

- Many insurance companies request an IEP as a proof document attached to an authorization for medical equipment and some therapy services
- Approval for Medicaid services
- Proof document for Social Security benefits
- Proof for Special Needs services at college/university
- Source document used for disability determination prior to court cases i.e.: Guardianship, custody or sufficiency hearings, etc.
- As part of a Proof of Disability packet for court ordered benefits and services.

Military

Obtaining military documentation often requires more than a single form. An entire packet consisting of an

application plus documents of proof must be submitted for a wide variety of benefits and services. A current IEP and sometimes a FIRST IEP are required as part of an application process. This may include:

- TriCare benefit authorizations. We had to keep a current IEP on file with TriCare ECHO management while on Active Duty. We updated it every year.
- EFMP enrollment
- DEERS enrollment
- VA enrollment (proof of dependency)
- As part of a Dependency Determination application
- Substantiate a Medical Sufficiency Letter
- Permanent Change of Station (PCS) assignment requirements for specific educational or medical services not available on every base
- Required as a proof document for an ID card both for Active Service (all branches) and Retired Service Member dependents (Last year we had to use our daughter's last IEP which is now 5 years old. We needed it anyway.)
- Veteran's Benefits ~ We have been asked 4 times now to submit a packet containing our daughter's first IEP (age 3), a letter of Medical Sufficiency, her last Disability Determination, and court Incapacitation and Guardianship order as part of the benefits determination process. This is important for enrollment as a dependent of a retired Veteran.

Keeping each year's IEP in a safe file will allow quick access to needed documentation and speed up most application processes. Don't shred them, you'll still need them.

If there is anything that is not discussed in our newsletters and you would like to see it discussed, or you would like to be added to our newsletter mailing list, please contact us at snrproject@hotmail.com