

IEP Meeting Preparation Guide

Prepared for Maya Brooks family

North Valley Public Schools | IEP Meeting Preparation

All names, dates, schools, scores, and case facts in this sample are invented.

WHY THIS MEETING MATTERS

The district has proposed reducing Maya's speech-language service because she performs well during structured therapy activities. The record does not yet show that Maya uses the skill independently in the classroom, with peers, or with unfamiliar communication partners. Your goal is not to argue that services can never change. Your goal is to prevent a reduction before the team has evidence that the skill has carried over to daily life.

THE RESULT TO PURSUE

Maintain the current service while the team collects meaningful generalization data, defines the settings and level of independence that will be measured, and agrees on when it will reconsider the question.

Your opening statement

I want today's discussion to focus on whether Maya can use the communication skill independently outside the therapy room. I am concerned that the proposed reduction relies on prompted performance during structured sessions. Before I can agree, I need the team to show us the classroom, peer, and independent-use data supporting the change.

Your three meeting priorities

Priority	Evidence	What to ask for
1 Independent use	Therapy notes describe success with models and prompts.	Data showing spontaneous use without prompts.
2 Generalization	No classroom or peer observations were included.	Observation across at least two non-therapy settings.
3 Safe decision point	The draft reduces service immediately.	Maintain service while data is gathered, then reconvene on a stated date.

The point to keep returning to

Success in therapy is encouraging, but it is not the finish line. The purpose of the service is functional communication across Maya's day. The team needs evidence of independent carryover before it concludes that less service is appropriate.

Questions in the order I would ask them

1. What specific skill does the district believe Maya has mastered?
2. How often did Maya demonstrate it without a model, verbal prompt, visual cue, or correction?
3. In which classrooms, peer activities, and unfamiliar settings was the skill observed?
4. Who collected the data, on what dates, and using what definition of independent?
5. What data shows that the skill will remain available if direct service is reduced?
6. What alternatives to an immediate reduction did the team consider?
7. If the team proceeds, what written criteria and review date will trigger restoration of service?

If the school says she met the goal

I am glad Maya has made progress. Please show us whether the goal was met independently and across settings, not only during structured therapy. If the data is limited to prompted therapy trials, then the team has evidence of progress but not yet evidence that the need for the current service has ended.

Likely school responses and your reply

You may hear	Your response
She cannot stay at this service level forever.	I am not asking for forever. I am asking for a decision based on independent, functional data and a safe plan for measuring carryover.
The therapist believes she is ready.	Please identify the observations and data supporting that professional judgment and include them in the record.
We can monitor after the reduction.	What objective measure will be used, who will collect it, and when will the team reconvene if performance declines?
The classroom teacher has no concerns.	What structured opportunity was used to observe the specific communication skill, and was independence recorded?

What must be documented

- The exact proposal regarding service frequency and duration
- Every source of data the district relied upon
- The settings in which independence has and has not been demonstrated
- Any parent disagreement and the reason for it
- The alternative of maintaining service while collecting generalization data
- The final decision, responsible staff, dates, and reconvene point

Do not leave with

- We will keep an eye on it
- The therapist feels comfortable
- We can always revisit later
- A reduction with no defined measure, owner, or review date

Your closing question

Before we end, can we review each decision made today, what will be written into the IEP, who is responsible for each next action, and the date by which it will happen?

Follow up email prepared for you

Thank you for today's meeting. My understanding is that the team did not reduce Maya's speech-language service today. The current service will continue while staff collect data on independent use across the classroom, peer interaction, and one unfamiliar setting. The speech-language pathologist and classroom teacher will share the data by November 12, and the team will reconvene by November 19 to review it. Please let me know promptly if any part of this summary differs from the district's understanding, and please include this message in Maya's educational record.

Your one-page reminder

- Stay on independent use
- Ask for the actual data
- Separate progress from readiness to reduce service
- Require a decision and reasons in writing
- End with names, dates, commitments, and the reconvene date

You do not have to remember every sentence in this guide. Keep returning to one question: where is the evidence that Maya can use the skill independently in the places where she needs it?

What the current records do and do not prove

Record statement	What it supports	What it does not prove
Maya achieved 80 percent accuracy in therapy trials.	Maya can perform the task under the conditions used in therapy.	That Maya uses the skill spontaneously in class or with peers
The therapist reduced prompts during recent sessions.	Maya may be becoming more independent in that structured activity.	That no prompting is needed across people, places, and activities
The teacher reports no major concern.	The teacher may not be seeing an obvious breakdown.	That the specific communication skill was deliberately observed and measured
Maya met the written goal.	Maya satisfied the wording and measure of that goal.	That the underlying functional need has ended

The missing bridge

The school is moving from success under structured therapy conditions to a conclusion that less service is appropriate. The missing bridge is evidence that Maya independently uses the skill throughout the day, with different people, and when no one reminds her to use it.

The data collection plan I would request

Setting	Opportunity	Independence measure	Recorder
General education class	Requesting clarification during instruction	Spontaneous, one cue, multiple cues, or not demonstrated	Classroom teacher
Peer activity	Entering, maintaining, or repairing interaction	Successful use without adult model or prompt	SLP or trained staff
Unfamiliar adult	Explaining a need or misunderstanding	Message understood on first attempt or after repair	School staff
Less structured period	Responding to an unexpected communication breakdown	Independent strategy selected and used	Assigned observer

How long to collect it

The team should collect enough observations to avoid treating one successful or difficult day as the answer. I would ask for repeated opportunities across at least two weeks, a shared definition of independent, and the actual observation record before the reconvened meeting.

Your meeting map

Order	What we address	Decision we need
1	The exact service reduction being proposed	Frequency, duration, start date, and reason
2	The data relied upon	Which observations show independent use outside therapy
3	The missing generalization evidence	Who will collect it, where, how, and by when
4	The safe interim plan	Current service continues while evidence is gathered
5	The reconvene point	Date, participants, data to review, and decision criteria

How I will keep the meeting from drifting

If the discussion turns into general praise for Maya, opinions about scheduling, or predictions about what might happen, I will bring it back to the proposal and the evidence. The question is not whether Maya is wonderful or has made progress. The question is whether the record supports this specific reduction now.

Words for pressure and disagreement

If they ask you to agree immediately

I am not prepared to agree to a service reduction until I review the data the team is relying upon and understand how independence was measured across settings. Please document my disagreement and the reason for it.

If they say the team has already decided

I understood that today's meeting was to consider the proposal as an IEP team. Please explain what remains open for team discussion and identify the data supporting the proposed change.

If you feel overwhelmed

I need a brief pause so I can review what was just said and make sure I understand the proposal. Before we continue, please restate the decision the district is asking the team to make.

If the answer keeps changing

I have heard several different reasons for the reduction. Please identify the district's actual reason, the records supporting it, and the exact change being proposed so the team can respond to one clear proposal.

The commitments sheet

Commitment or decision	Owner	Due date	Where it will appear
Current service remains in place during data collection	Case manager	Immediately	Service page and meeting notes
Collect independent-use observations in three settings	SLP and teacher	November 12	Shared data record
Provide the observation data to the parent	Case manager	November 14	Email and educational record
Reconvene to review the evidence	District	November 19	Meeting notice
Issue the final decision and reasons	District	After reconvened meeting	IEP and written notice

The protection this creates

A commitment without an owner, date, and written location can disappear after everyone leaves the meeting. This sheet turns the conversation into work the family can follow and verify.

How I would review the revised IEP

1. Confirm the service was not reduced before the agreed data review.
2. Verify the meeting notes accurately describe the parent's disagreement and the reason for it.
3. Check that the independent-use data plan names settings, measures, staff, and dates.
4. Confirm the reconvened meeting date and purpose are documented.
5. Compare any later reduction with the evidence and criteria the team agreed to use.

If the draft leaves something out

Thank you for sending the draft. It does not yet reflect the team's agreement to maintain Maya's current speech-language service while independent-use data is collected, and it does not include the November 19 reconvened meeting. Please add those commitments and the parent's stated concern that the existing data reflects prompted therapy performance rather than independent use across settings.

The relief you should leave with

You should not leave the meeting trying to remember who promised what or wondering whether you accidentally agreed. You should leave with the decision, the evidence, the open questions, the responsible people, and the next dates made unmistakably clear.