



Practical Guides & Toolkits

IEP Strategy Template

A complete, strengths-based template for building an Individualized Education Program – from present levels through sign-off.



Present Levels · Strengths · Goals · Services · Accommodations · Transition · Sign-Off

How to Use This Template

This template draws together the sections found across most IEP formats — present levels, measurable goals, services, accommodations, and transition planning — into one document, written with a strengths-based, neurodiversity-affirming approach throughout. It is a working draft for the IEP team to complete together, not a finished legal document on its own; always check it against your school or ministry's official IEP format and legal requirements before filing.

Before the meeting

- Share relevant sections with the family and, where appropriate, the student ahead of time — nobody should see this for the first time in the room.
- Start from strengths (Section B) before moving into support needs — it changes the tone of everything that follows.
- Write goals in plain language a parent or the student could read and understand without a glossary.
- Leave blank whatever doesn't apply yet (e.g. Transition Planning for a younger student) rather than forcing an entry.
- This template pairs with NeuroReHub's Daily Living Checklist and Behavior Management Plan toolkits — cross-reference them for Sections C, D, and H.

A note on language

- Favor what the student can do and what support makes possible, over deficit-only framing.
- Write goals around function and access (e.g. “will use a preferred communication method to request breaks”) rather than around suppressing traits (e.g. eye contact, stimming).
- Where possible, use the student's own words for their goals and preferences — see Section J.

A: Student & Team Information

Core details for this IEP cycle.

Student Name	
Date of Birth	
School / Grade	
Primary Disability Category (per assessment)	
Case Manager / Coordinator	
IEP Meeting Date	
Next Annual Review Date	
Next Reevaluation Due	

IEP Team Roster

Name	Role	Contact
	Parent / Guardian	
	Student (if appropriate)	
	Special Education Teacher	
	General Education Teacher	
	Related Service Provider(s)	
	School Administrator	
	Occupational Therapist	
	Speech and Language Pathologist	
	Physiotherapist	
	Social Worker	
	Medical Representative	

B: Student Strengths & Interests

Start here, before support needs – it shapes everything that follows.

What does the student enjoy, or feel confident doing?

Key strengths – skills, interests, or ways of thinking that stand out

What motivates the student?

In the student's own words: what would they like their team to know? (record directly where possible)

C: Present Levels of Performance

Academic and functional performance across key domains (PLAAFP).

Domain	Current Strengths	Current Support Needs	Impact on Participation
Academic / Learning			
Communication			
Social-Emotional & Regulation			
Motor			
Independence & Daily Living			
Sensory			

D: Annual Goals & Measurable Objectives

One goal card per target area – copy this page for additional goals.

Strategy: writing a strong goal

- Specific & measurable – name the skill, the setting, and how success will be counted.
- Achievable in one year, with a clear link back to a Present Level in Section C.
- Written in strengths-based language – build access and function, not compliance with neurotypical norms.
- Built with accommodations already embedded, not added as an afterthought.

GOAL 1

Goal Area

Baseline (present level this goal builds from)

Annual Goal (specific, measurable, strengths-based)

Short-Term Objectives / Benchmarks (e.g. by term)

How Progress Will Be Measured, and by Whom

Accommodations Embedded in This Goal

GOAL 2

Goal Area

Baseline (present level this goal builds from)

Annual Goal (specific, measurable, strengths-based)

Short-Term Objectives / Benchmarks (e.g. by term)

How Progress Will Be Measured, and by Whom

Accommodations Embedded in This Goal

E: Accommodations & Modifications

Accommodations change access, not the standard; modifications change the standard itself.

Setting	Accommodation / Modification	Why It Helps
Example	Extended time on written tasks	Reduces processing-speed pressure so output reflects knowledge, not speed

F: Special Education & Related Services

Direct and indirect services this IEP provides.

Service	Provider / Qualification	Frequency	Duration	Location
Example	Occupational Therapy	2x / week	30 min	Pull-out

G : Assistive Technology & Sensory Supports

Tools and environmental adjustments that support access.

Devices or tools currently used (e.g. AAC, timers, noise-reducing headphones)

Environmental / sensory adjustments needed

AT evaluation needed? Notes

H: Behavior Support Snapshot

A quick-reference summary – attach the full plan if one exists (see NeuroReHub's Behavior Management Plans toolkit).

Function of the behavior, if known (what need is it meeting?)

Early signs of rising stress or overwhelm

Regulation strategies that work for this student

Approaches to avoid

I: Transition Planning

Complete once the student is approaching a key transition (secondary school, adulthood) – see the Transition & Life Skills toolkit.

Post-school goals (education/training, employment, independent living)

Skills to build toward these goals

Agencies or services already involved, or needed

J: Family & Student Voice

Priorities from the people who know the student best.

Family priorities and concerns for this year

Student's own goals, in their words

What has NOT worked before, and should not be repeated

K: Placement & Least Restrictive Environment

Where services will be delivered, and why.

Recommended setting, and % of time in general education

Rationale for this placement

L: Progress Reporting Schedule

How and when progress on Section D goals will be shared.

Reporting Period	Date Sent	Method	Progress Summary

M: Team Sign-Off

Signing confirms attendance and input, not necessarily agreement with every detail — parents/guardians retain the right to consent, request changes, or seek an independent evaluation.

Name	Role	Signature	Date
	Parent / Guardian		
	Student (if appropriate)		
	Special Education Teacher		
	General Education Teacher		
	Related Service Provider		
	School Administrator		
	Therapist 1		
	Therapist 2		
	Social Worker		

Appendix A – Essential IEP Acronyms & Terms

A quick reference for meetings – plain-language, not legal definitions.

IEP	Individualized Education Program – the written plan of goals, services, and supports.
PLAAFP	Present Levels of Academic Achievement & Functional Performance – where the student is now.
Accommodation	A change to how a student accesses or shows learning; the standard itself stays the same.
Modification	A change to the standard or content expected of the student.
Related Services	Support services (e.g. OT, SLT, counseling) needed for the student to benefit from education.
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment – educating the student alongside peers to the greatest extent appropriate.
FBA	Functional Behavior Assessment – an evaluation of what a behavior is communicating or achieving.
BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan – the support plan built from an FBA's findings.
AT	Assistive Technology – any tool or device that increases a student's independence or access.
AAC	Augmentative and Alternative Communication – tools or methods that support communication.
OT / PT / SLT	Occupational, Physical, and Speech-Language Therapy – common related services.
Benchmark	A measurable checkpoint toward an annual goal, often set termly.
Case Manager	The team member coordinating the IEP's implementation and communication.
Reevaluation	The periodic reassessment of whether a student still qualifies for, or needs updated, support.
Transition Plan	Goals and services preparing a student for life after school.
Progress Monitoring	Ongoing data collection used to track goal progress through the year.

Appendix B — Strengths-Based Language Reference

A few examples of shifting a goal from compliance-focused to function-focused. Adapt freely — the pattern matters more than the exact wording.

Compliance-Focused	Function-Focused
Will make eye contact when spoken to	Will show active listening in a way that works for them (e.g. verbal response, orienting toward the speaker)
Will stop stimming during class	Will have consistent, discreet access to preferred self-regulation tools (e.g. fidget, movement break) during class
Will reduce off-task behavior	Will increase engagement using preferred supports (e.g. visual schedule, movement breaks)
Will use a normal speaking voice	Will use their preferred communication method (verbal, AAC, written) to be understood by their intended audience
Will sit still for the full lesson	Will access learning for the full lesson using the seating/movement option that supports their focus