



# WORKING WITH FAMILIES DURING THE NEW IEP ROLLOUT



- **Communicate:** Build trust with families by communicating early and often throughout the school year.
- **Collaborate and build relationships with families as partners, not just PPT participants.**
- Investing time and effort in building trusting relationships with families will make it easier to work through challenges throughout the school year.

## Proactive Communication:

- Send an introduction letter with your contact information and announcement of the new IEP (for a sample, visit <https://cpacinc.org/whats-new.aspx>).
- Share a list of resources for families to learn about the new IEP form (for a suggested list, visit <https://cpacinc.org/whats-new.aspx>).
- Let families know when they can expect their student's IEP to transition to the new form.
- Communicate that you are learning a new system and you will communicate if any issues arise.
- Include contact information about Connecticut's Parent Training and Information Center, the CT Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC) in your introduction letter (for more information, visit <https://cpacinc.org/whats-new.aspx>).

## Responsiveness to Challenging Situations:

- If there are challenges such as delays in finalizing the IEP, communicate with the family immediately, providing the update and expected timeline (avoiding communication can make things worse).
- Use Prior Written Notice and/or the Optional Meeting Summary to document the decisions of the PPT for the family to review and understand while they wait for the finalized IEP document.
- Clearly communicate the implementation (or lack) of the IEP services if finalizing the IEP form is delayed.

**Scenario:** The team is having challenges with CT-SEDS and the IEP will not be finalized and shared with the family within the timeline. The family emails to ask why they have not received it yet.

## Examples of Helpful Responses:

- Immediately notify the family that the IEP is going to be finalized behind schedule.
- Apologize for the delay and give the expected timeframe. "I apologize for the delay as we are having some challenges with the system. The IEP won't be ready today, but I do expect it will be ready by Friday."
- Refer the family back to Prior Written Notice to review the decisions of the PPT.
- "I know the IEP form itself is still being finalized, but the decisions about changes to the IEP were documented in the Prior Written Notice and those services will be implemented as planned."

## Some things to consider when building trusting relationships with families:

1. Even if you don't know when the IEP will be ready or don't yet have an answer for a family, a response letting the family know that you are working on it can go a long way to building trust.
2. Meeting a family's frustration with frustration or ignoring the request can undermine a trusting relationship.
3. Having patience and meeting each other with grace during this time of learning can go a long way in building trust.