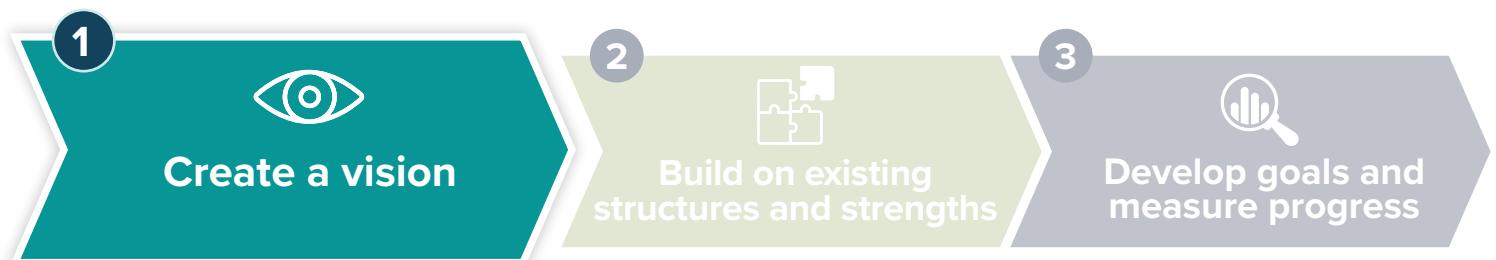


# Empowering Every Voice: Building Meaningful Participation Throughout the IEP Journey

Through meaningful participation, we create opportunities that reinforce belonging and value individual contributions to co-create and work towards a shared vision. Meaningful participation is essential throughout the Individualized Education Program (IEP) journey to both meet procedural and substantive legal obligations, as well as achieve a shared vision to support our students with disabilities. Follow the pathway below to cultivate meaningful participation in your local educational agency (LEA):

Let's get started!



Begin by **creating a vision** for how meaningful participation and engagement will look, feel, and occur. Formulating your team's vision can support your site/LEA in creating clarity, a sense of direction, alignment of efforts and promoting equity.

## Directions:

Conduct a group discussion with multiple voices represented (e.g. families, students and educators) to gather team members' ideas about what meaningful participation during the IEP journey would look like. Use the space below to create a vision around meaningful participation for families, teachers, administrators, and students. Sample sentence starters have been provided, but your group may have other considerations based on your local context.

When the team meets to finalize the vision statement, consider the following equity questions:

1. *Does the vision statement reflect our deepest aspiration of what meaningful participation will look like in your school/LEA?*
2. *Will this vision statement resonate with families of all student groups?*
3. *Does this vision statement include a role for all participants?*
4. *Will this vision statement serve as an inspiration for all participants?*

## What do you envision meaningful participation will be like for our families, students and educators?

### Families will...

feel:

know/understand:

be able to:

### Students will...

feel:

know/understand:

be able to:

### Educators will...

feel:

know/understand:

be able to:

## It's time to build on our existing structures and strengths!



### Directions:

Gather evidence and reflect on the degree of participation of families, students and educators that currently exists in the IEP process. Use the information from the Identified Needs column to create goals, if applicable, in section 3 of this document.

Questions to Consider	Evidence We Have	Additional Evidence to Gather	Next Steps for Gathering the Evidence	Identified Needs
How do we engage with our families before, during and after the IEP meeting?				
Are there differences in the degree of engagement between different groups of families (e.g. grade levels, schools, etc.) during the IEP process?				
How do we engage with our students before, during and after the IEP meeting?				
Are there differences in the degree of engagement between different groups of students (e.g. grade levels, schools, etc.) during the IEP process?				
How do we engage with our team of educators (e.g. general education teacher, providers, etc.) before, during and after the IEP meeting?				
Are there differences in the degree of engagement between different groups of educators (e.g. grade levels, schools, etc.) during the IEP process?				

## It's time to develop goals and measure progress!



Before creating your school/LEA's goal(s) to increase meaningful participation during the IEP journey, *what barriers do you anticipate*, if applicable?

**Directions:**

Identify anticipated barriers that might be encountered when creating a culture of meaningful participation throughout the IEP process for families, students, and educators. Once the anticipated barriers have been identified, brainstorm potential strategies to mitigate those barriers for each group. These strategies can be tested to identify ways to increase meaningful participation throughout the IEP process.

Anticipated Barrier:	Applicable group(s):			Potential Strategies:
	Families	Students	Educators	

*This resource has been adapted from the California Department of Education. (2017). Family Engagement Toolkit: Continuous Improvement Through an Equity Lens. Sacramento, CA.*

## What goal(s) has the team identified to promote meaningful participation throughout the IEP journey?

### Directions:

Use the space below to document your overall goal(s) and related activities to support accomplishing them. Include ways to measure progress.

<p><b>Goals</b></p> <p><i>What will families, students, and/or educator need to know and be able to do?</i></p>	<p><b>Activities</b></p> <p><i>What activities will support in accomplishing these goals? Who will be responsible? Timeline?</i></p>	<p><b>Progress Indicators</b></p> <p><i>How will we know if the activities are happening and how effective they are? Examples can include: surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations, etc.</i></p>

*Don't forget to communicate your plan to promote meaningful participation!*