

The IEP is the most important document existing for a student with a disability. For all practical purposes, view the IEP as a contract between the district and the student’s parents or guardians; courts have held in the past that failure to properly develop and implement an IEP can invalidate a program. A district that developed an IEP stating the student was to receive 90 minutes of language arts instruction five times a week, and ended up only providing three sessions a week with each lasting only 30 minutes, would be in violation of the law. It is important not only to develop an appropriate IEP for a student, but also to make sure it is being implemented. The IEP formalizes a student’s education, listing the educational and intervention services to be provided, and serves many purposes: instructional, communication, management, accountability, monitoring, and evaluation (see Figure 4.1).

