

Crafting Your Parent Input Statement

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Congress finds the following:

Almost 30 years of research and experience has demonstrated that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by...
strengthening the role and responsibility of parents and ensuring that families ...
have meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children at school and at home.



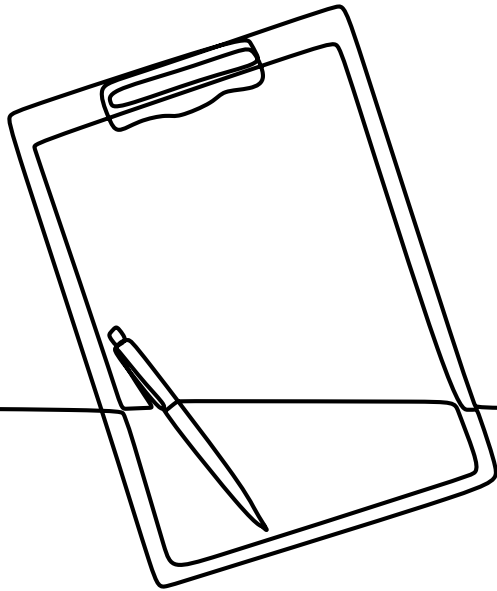
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

- Parent is a member of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team
- IEP team must consider:
 - Strengths of the child
 - Concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child
 - Results of the initial or most recent evaluation of the child
 - Academic, developmental, and functional needs of the child



Why Write IEP Parent Input?

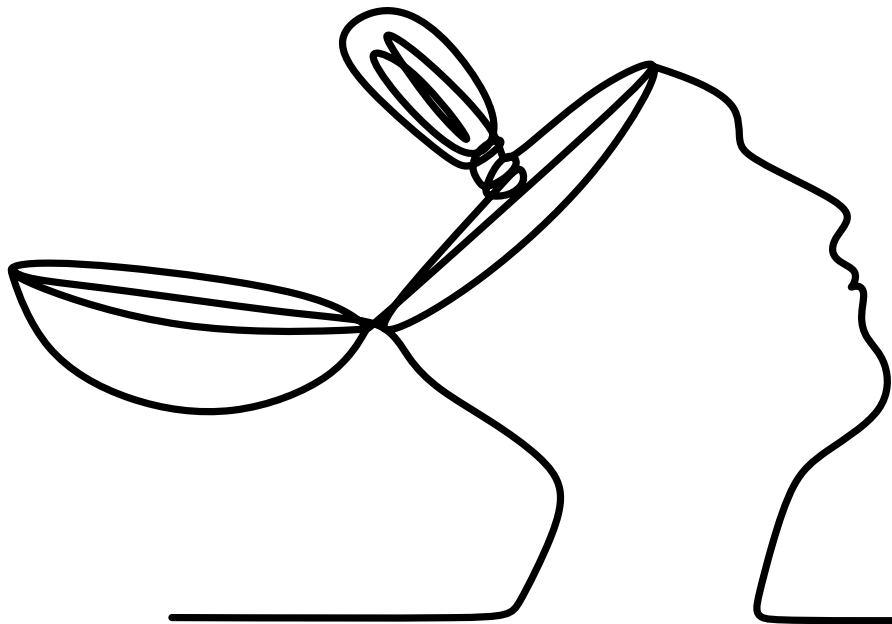
Your parent input in the IEP is your opportunity to make sure **all your child's needs** are considered by the team.



IEP is not based on medical diagnosis or eligibility category, but on your child's needs.

Your child's needs are documented in the present level of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP). The PLAAFP drives the other parts of the IEP.

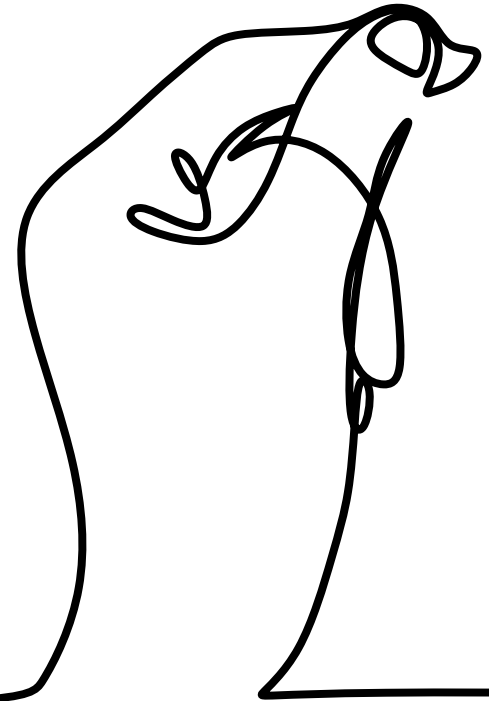
What should be included?



- Priorities for the upcoming year
- Your child's strengths
- Areas of need
- What works well for your child
- What doesn't work
- Concerns (academic, social, behavior, medical, food, independence, etc.)

Communication Tips

- Fact based statements
- Provide examples / data
- Use respectful language
- Prioritize – be concise
- Bullets are useful
- Keep it under one page
- Sleep on it

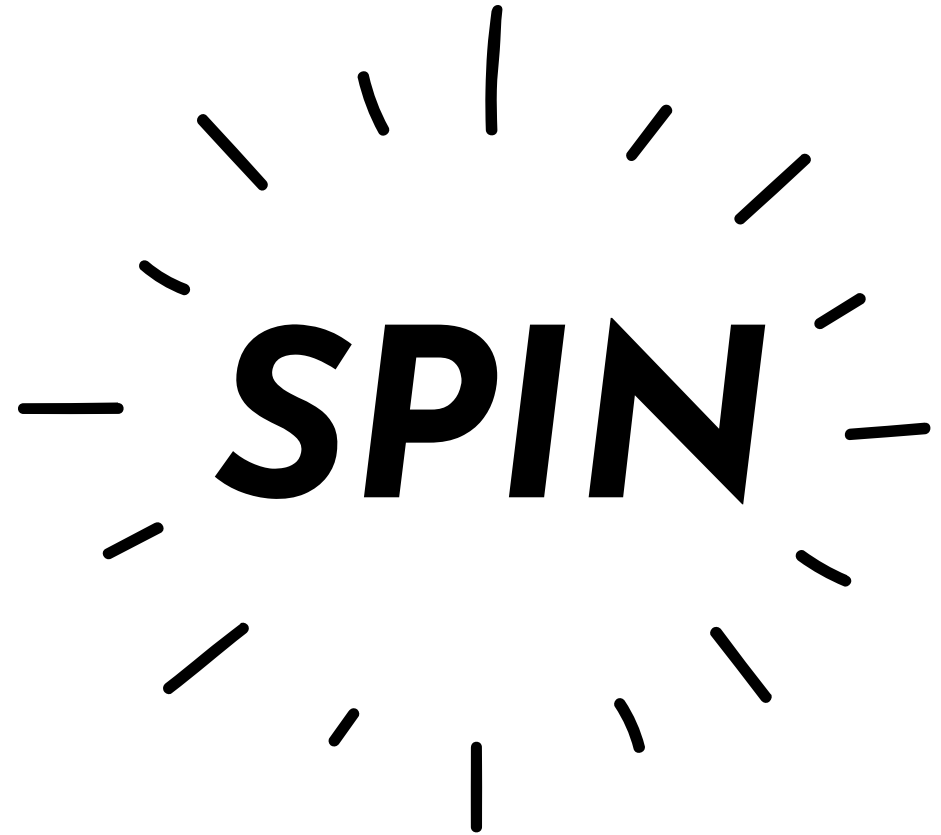


Keep the focus on your child

Staff Focused	Child Focused
Ms. Peacock is always talking to my teen like a baby.	I would like staff/teachers to have age-appropriate interactions with my child to help build independence.
Mr. Green is scattered and disorganized.	For my child to be successful, they need clear expectations and concrete written steps to complete work.

Helping the team know your child

- **S**trengths
- **P**references
- **I**nterests
- **N**eeds





One-Pager

Name:

Today's Date:

My Strengths

excellent sense of direction
great eye for photography and lighting
thoughtful and kind
Great shopper
good memory
make good choices
Determination -I know what I want
creative problem solver
pay attention to details

My Interests

My dogs
My favorite class is Science
Like to swim
I love movies
Going to the zoo and farmer's market
I like to read
Space
Picnics
Ice cream

My Preferences

I don't like to be the center of attention
I would rather use my voice than my talker
time to watch before trying something new
Let me know when I am doing something right
Use my talker to help spell on the computer

My Needs

to know what to expect
information read aloud
extra time, please wait for me to respond
Let me know you understand me- I like when you repeat what I said so I know you got it. Ask for help or to use my talker if you don't.
a fidget and to move my body

Strengths:

- Loves attending school and working with her teachers and therapists
- Happy, helpful, playful, sweet kid who enjoys nothing more than communicating and interacting by playing games, reading books, playing with toys, or doing activities with friends and family
- Compassionate and empathetic, always asks others to play with her and how they are feeling, especially if they show a negative emotion like sadness, fear, anger, nervousness, etc. For example, I stepped on a dead turtle and was visibly distraught and she came up to me and gave me a hug, patted my back, and, in a soothing voice, said "It's okay mom. We all step on a turtle someday." Also, without prompting, she went up and told her sister "Don't worry! I'm here!" and gave her a hug when her sister was worried before a piano recital.
- Does not require a set routine at home, community, and therapy environments
- Fantastic imaginative play skills
- Open to trying new things and actively advocates for new experiences
- Loves movement and physical activity
- Not afraid of getting messy or sensory play
- Good memory for names and facts and quickly picks up things of interest
- Navigates technology well and can play preschool games and navigate apps on the phone or iPad

Concerns:

- The most important thing to student right now is increased social interaction and opportunities with peers and she advocates for this for herself on multiple occasions during every single hour that she is awake. She asks us to help her make friends and give her opportunities to play with them. As her parents, our number one focus is to support her self-advocating for increased opportunities to play with peers.
- No access to same age, typically developing peers in school which means she has no access to social, behavior, and language modeling of typical peers
- Combined impact of her hypotonia and bleeding disorder and the need for adult supervision in certain environments and situations with unfamiliar people
- Impact of Apraxia on academic skills, especially the alphabet and prereading skills
- Articulation issues limit social interactions and comprehension with peers and adults and often results in Clover feeling left out which sometimes results in frustration and a blow to her confidence
- Not feeling accepted by peers who she says are "too fast" when she attempts to play with them—usually in a playground setting where lots of different kids are yelling and running everywhere

History: Student is very protective of his diagnoses and doesn't want people to look at him only as a kid with disabilities. Student faced significant trauma at his elementary school. We were told by his therapist that he had PTSD symptoms from what happened at school, and he's worked very hard to overcome that trauma. However, he is still sometimes triggered, and his go-to response is to shut down and disassociate. He is mostly triggered when being confronted about something, especially when it's done in a loud, angry, or escalated manner. Sometimes he becomes very argumentative when he feels misunderstood, mainly because "getting in trouble" and the way discipline was handled at the old school led to this trauma.

Strengths: Student has an amazing sense of humor. He is kind, inquisitive and hard-working. Student is very self-motivated to succeed and will work hard to get his work done on-time and with excellent quality. Student will try over and over until he masters something even when he struggles along the way. He is so good at reflecting on any mistakes he makes if he is talked to about them 1:1 outside of the heat of the moment. He is the world's best apologizer (and will call out a poorly done apology from me or his dad, ha!). Student is very honest and will always own up to what he did when asked, even if it causes him to get in trouble.

Areas of concern: Student doesn't always use humor appropriately. Humor is his "go to" to be liked and fit in, but he doesn't always realize that kids can find that unpredictable and teachers can find it disruptive. Student has a difficult time staying organized when there is a lot of paperwork and hard copies of things. Since students cannot carry a backpack, he will not carry much beyond his Chromebook, charger and a notebook/pencil, which leads to papers being lost or misplaced. Student struggles to remember familiar rules without daily reminders. Student struggles with vague language and applying broad concepts to individual situations (ie., if he's told he can't chew gum in class he will not think about how he also shouldn't chew gum in the hallway). Student sees everyone who interacts positively with him as a friend, and doesn't have deep, meaningful friendships.

How to support:

- The key to student is to build a relationship where he feels safe. If student feels that you care about him, he will be so much more successful, academically and behaviorally. Asking questions about his interests, like mountain biking, basketball, and any current professional sports can help to build a relationship.
- If student uses inappropriate humor/blurts out/etc, it helps to keep your reactions to a minimum. Teachers in the past would just smile, nod and move on without addressing it further (when possible; I know that's not always the case). This really helped to eliminate the outbursts since student got little to no reaction. In the last couple of years, he almost "tests" the teachers (I don't think this is a conscious decision) to see if he'll be safe in the class and how they'll respond to him.
- If student needs to be talked to about behavior, it is best to do so away from other students. One on one he is usually so much more receptive. When he's talked to the principal, counselor or RP facilitator he has been extremely responsive and owns mistakes he's made. Student is very good about owning up to things he's done wrong once he understands the impact that his actions or words have had on another person or the class environment.
- Student benefits from very direct language. For instance, instead of saying he's disrespectful, it helps if you name the behavior and say why it was problematic and how it affected you. Tell him what he did that was disrespectful - talking in class, blurting out, etc. He will own it if he did it. Student can also have a hard time applying a broad concept to specifics so terms like "disrespect" seem vague to him.

Closing thoughts: He is so smart, really wants friendships and to fit in, and wants to do well academically and socially. He wants to be liked.

We, student's parents, are always willing to talk things through and provide suggestions. While you don't have to make us aware of every single situation, please feel free to call or email if something needs to be addressed and we will make sure to support you as well as talk things through with our student.

Thanks so much for your support of our student this year. We are looking forward to a successful year.

Strengths:

- very empathetic
- very social towards peers
- strong visual short-term memory
- steady vocabulary acquisition
- adept at figuring out and using technologies
- participating in physical activities
- reading – she wants to read everything right now

Weaknesses:

- hand strength and fine motor coordination
- organizing and expressing her thoughts clearly without mixing in a lot of side thoughts
- controlling impulsive reactions – words, hitting, etc.
- poor working memory
- decoding words
- hard time controlling behaviors when time is unstructured and open to more “free choice”
- weak auditory memory without significant repetition
- tired by the afternoon

Helps Student Learn:

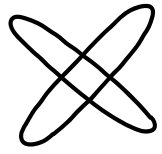
- clear, direct, simple instructions, often using visual instructions
- information broken down into smaller steps
- bigger print for reading
- Small group work with peers
- sitting close to teacher for instruction and participation
- lots of repetition
- extra time to think and respond to a question
- using manipulatives and visuals in math
- incorporating math into everyday classroom/living activities

Makes it Hard for Student To Learn:

- lots of background noise and overstimulating distractions
- too much information at once
- written instructions without verbal direction

Parent Concerns:

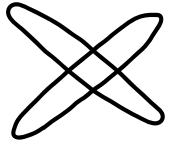
- Student is only reading at a Kindergarten (Fountas & Pinnell C) level in 3rd Grade – reasonable to catch up 1 year in 1 year of school?
- Student really struggles with math and we are not certain where exactly she is in the curriculum
- How do we get appropriate grade level materials for math and reading for Student at this school in her classroom?
- Legibility of hand writing and speed at which she can write clearly
- How to get content ahead of time so that Student can better participate in relevant conversations/experiments in Science and Social Studies
- What is the impact of taking MiAccess instead of the MStep?
- We want to progressively scale back the aide in areas that Student is successfully working independently and participating in school – some behavioral plan suggestions recommend doing the opposite
- How do we help Student to control her impulsive behavior – especially the impulse to hit
- Possible supports during nonacademic school activities



My child is good at:

Child is good at reading and memorizing.

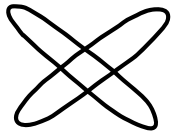
Child also is good at learning with visuals and hands out tasks.



My child struggles with:

Sharing information (I don't know how the day goes or what they learned)

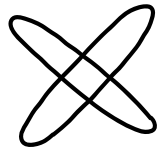
Making friends



I am concerned about:

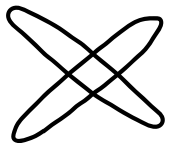
Does child need an aide?

Are they understanding concepts?



Questions about my child's education:

How can we help my child improve in areas below grade level?



I would like to see my child make progress in:

We would like to see our child make progress in reciprocating conversations with peers and answering questions about their day.

1. Our biggest concern for *Student* is always the development of social skills. We would like to see continuation and even an increase in peer-to-peer support, since the newest research has demonstrated that this is the single most effective intervention for students on the autism spectrum.
2. Will *Student* participate in all or part of the IEP? We would like to see at least one goal for self-determination or self-advocacy, and we value *Student*'s input to their IEP.
3. Ms. Geography has advised us that *Student* has a low comprehension of the social studies course content, and we see the same thing when helping with homework. Do they need further modifications to the curriculum?
4. As part of *Student*'s social skills development, can you suggest any extra-curricular activities or sports at school that may be a good fit? Is there a way to observe some of the extra-curricular activities before deciding?
5. We are open to suggestions regarding how we can help *Student* have the best school experience possible. We will be working with them all summer long, and we appreciate your guidance and support.

Thank you for making this a wonderful school year for *Student* - it's been an amazing period of personal growth for them.

Here is an example of the parent input section in high school- note parent input emphasizes what student wants:

Student would like to work on his feelings, his language with social skills, and focusing in class for this upcoming school year.

Reading and language comprehension and soft skills were identified in a meeting with his MRS counselor recently.

Student feels that his strengths are Chemistry and Algebra.

Strengths

- visual learning
- whole word reading
- follows one-step directions well
- sensitive to feelings of others
- resilient
- curious
- puts effort into making friends and keeping them
- great Coping skills
- able to use words to express needs
- able to participate in conversations with family, friends and strangers at my own level
- can match sounds and letters
- loves drawing

It is our vision for our child is that she will be fully included with her nondisabled peers in the least restrictive environment. We want her to live a life of choice. We examine accommodations and modifications that can be put in place to help compensate for her challenges. Furthermore, it is our vision that everyone she comes in contact with holds her to a standard of high expectations and supports her shortcomings instead of limiting her due to them.

Weaknesses

- generalization of information
- low muscle tone
- planning and prioritizing
- organization
- paying attention
- working memory
- cognitive flexibility
- tracking time
- self esteem



Enjoys spending time outdoors and growing things
Learns technology quickly
Strong preference to express personal style
Willingness to try new things that are interesting

Sometimes seems disengaged or uninterested
Will say "yes" because it is easy and expected
Often lets others help more than is needed

Vision for What I Want

Physical and financial security
Establishing and maintaining relationships with people of choice, not being forced
Expressing wants, needs, opinions and thoughts to people who respect them. Listening to others with respect
Know how to ask to help, when help is needed, and that everyone needs help

What I Don't Want

Being "babied" because of misconceptions about capabilities
Being alone, not engaging with others
Poor health



Our student prepares to wrap her first year of high school, we wanted to take a moment to express our gratitude for many of the positive accomplishments we've seen over the past year and offer input for her upcoming sophomore year.

Some of the highlights we have noticed or are otherwise aware of are:

- Frequent and relevant communication from IEP Case Coordinator
- Student seems to have a solid understanding of where things are in the school and can get from place to place without substantial direction or assistance.
- A "secret life" where she is independently visiting people in the school, checking in, and getting candy.
- An overall increase in communication at home, extending beyond conveying wants / needs, or asking people to follow along with dialogue in videos / movies. (Is this happening in school, as well?)
- Working with students and others in school for assistance in classes
- Unprompted singing at home when there are familiar songs on the TV or radio.

Some areas we would like to see more focus on:

- Working on decision making to increase independence. Potentially in the context of "Would you like A or B?" where C, D, and E are also options, and less in the context of "Would you like X? Yes, or no?"
- Potentially broader considerations of cause and effect in decision making. (Example: "Should I buy this thing? If I buy this thing, I won't have enough money to buy something else.")
- Increased engagement overall with peers to foster building relationships and friendships.
- Collaboration and appropriate modifications in general education classes to ensure that the class work is meaningful, challenging, and attainable. Color-coding has been working well, for example.
- Continuing to stay on top of speech services to reinforce verbal communication. (Example: Student still has tendency to shorten words when she is comfortable with people around her – even though she knows and is capable of verbalizing complete words.)
- When we first began the transition to high school, there was some discussion about use of a daily planner and being able to summarize what she did for the day. At the time, the team understandably wanted an opportunity to get to know her better. When can this begin?

Question / Concern:

- How can we make sure that our child is truly included in her educational program?

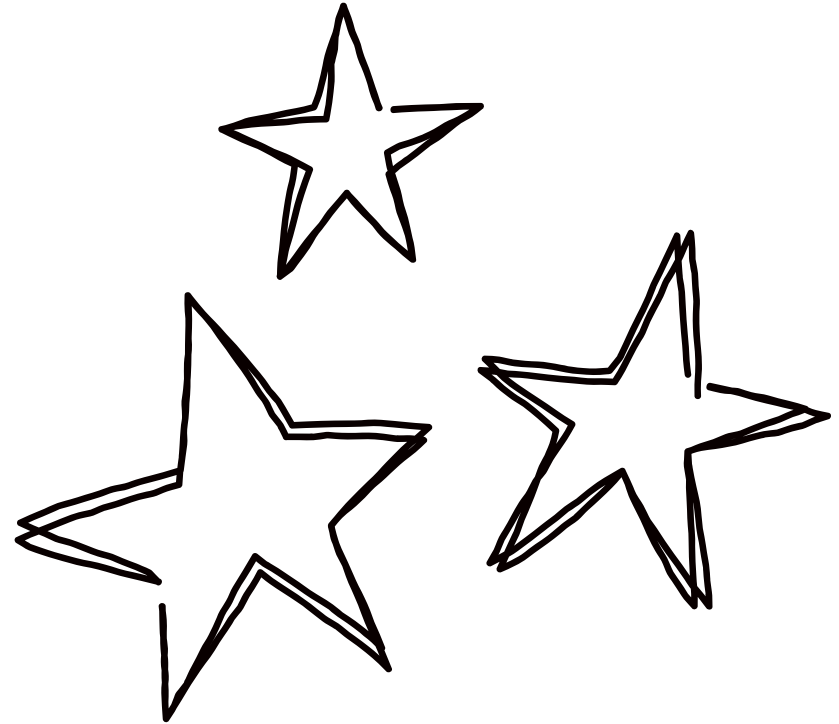
My primary goals for *student* 2022-2023 school year are to

- successfully transition from Elementary School to Middle School, including planned visits and photos
- make progress within the general education classroom and curriculum
- move forward with using her augmentative communication device
- find more opportunities to participate in school and afterschool activities with peers
- have quality accommodations/ modifications to all classroom assignments to allow for full participation. When she is fully engaged in what everyone else in class is doing, there are fewer behavior concerns.

*Our dream is for*student* to become as independent as possible,
to be social and have friends, contribute to society,
to be an accepted member of the community, and to be happy and safe.*

What are good surprises?

- A. Surprise all expenses paid vacation
- B. Surprise dinner is ready without you having to do anything
- C. Surprise information in a meeting you have never heard before



Before the Meeting

- Share your input with the other members of the team
- Ask for a draft of the IEP to review
- If draft will not be ready, ask for their input
- Request copies of current evaluations to review in advance



At the IEP Meeting

- Bring your concerns and take notes on the discussion



Concern	✓	Action	Who is Responsible	Next Update

Questions for Understanding?

- What would that look like?
- How will we know if this plan is working?
- What are some other options?
- Would you please explain____?
- I think I heard you say_____. Is that correct?
- I notice ____ at home. Are you seeing that at school?
- Can you give me a copy of the policy?



After the IEP Meeting

- Read the full IEP document

Is your parent input included?

Is everything from your notes reflected?

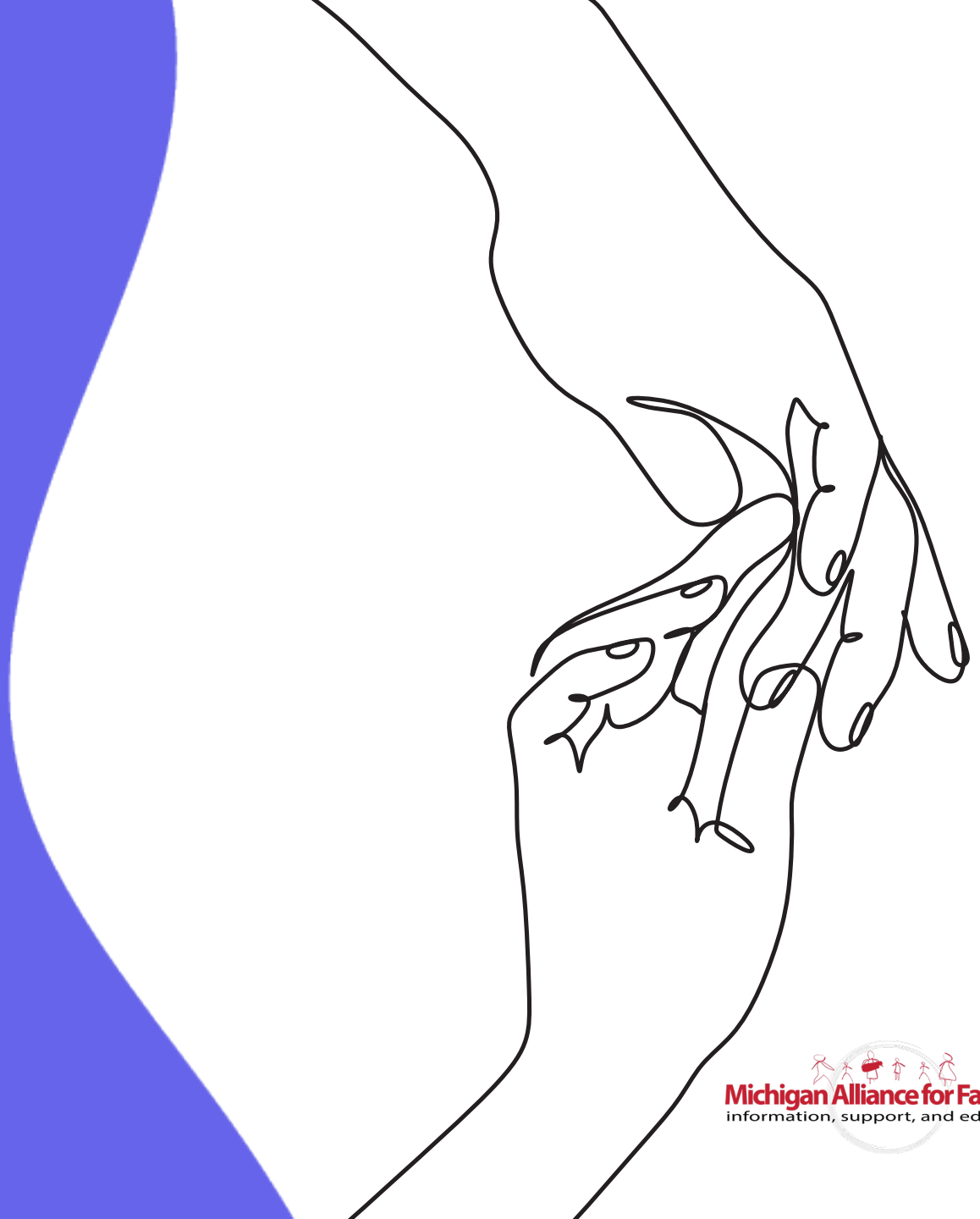
Notice – Options Considered, but not selected



All Human

Be kind

Thank team members for
their time and input





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Michigan Alliance for Families

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