



# The IEP Advocate

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## What You Absolutely Must Know About The McKay Scholarship

By Pam Lindemann, The IEP Advocate

1. A child must have an IEP or a 504 Plan and be present in school for two consecutive FTE counts in October and February. Usually during the first or second week of October and again in February, school districts are required to count the number of children who are enrolled in each school. In order for a child to be “counted” they must be in attendance at least one day during FTE week in October and February.
2. A child must have a current IEP or 504 Plan in place when the parent decides to pull them out of public school to use McKay.
3. If the child is not attending full time, for example if they’re going to school partial days or are on the hospital homebound program, they will not be eligible for the full scholarship amount. They will only be eligible for a portion of the scholarship that is equal to the amount of time they were actually in school.
4. Once your child leaves the public school system, the matrix is “locked in” and the funding amount cannot change.
5. School districts can change the matrix without notifying parents. Districts are scrutinized by the Florida Department of Education to make sure they are scoring the matrix correctly and sometimes they change the matrix if it is not in compliance with state guidelines.
6. The IEP and the corresponding matrix that is used to determine the dollar amount of the McKay Scholarship is the one that is in place at the time the parent pulls the child out of the public school system. Some parents think that when they go online and register their intent to use the scholarship, the IEP that is in place at that time is the one used to calculate the scholarship dollar amount. It is not.
7. A child in pre-K who has an IEP, does not qualify for the full scholarship amount until they have a “kindergarten IEP” in place. Therefore parents should not pull their child out of public school to use McKay until the child has a kindergarten IEP.
8. If a parent chooses a private McKay school, the public school system does *not* provide transportation to the school.
9. Technically, an Individualized Education Plan, also known as an IEP, is a document that is created by the public school system for children who qualify for special education services in public school. Private schools are not mandated by law to have an IEP and they are not required by law to follow the IEP the student had in public school before they came to the private school with the McKay Scholarship. However, many private schools do create an individualized education plan for the student, but it is their *choice* to do so.
10. Parents are not allowed input into how the matrix is scored. The matrix is scored *after* the IEP is completed and the IEP meeting is over, usually by the staffing coordinator or other school official. The matrix should be updated immediately when the IEP is changed.

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