

Tips for Getting Quality Education Services

Before You Meet:

✓ Gather information from a variety of sources:

- Talk to your child, teachers and other professionals on the team.
- Review your child's records, highlight important information, request any assessments that might be needed.
- Make sure you are not hearing anything for the first time at the IEP meeting – request evaluations and a draft IEP before the meeting.
- Review your child's school work; observe your child at school or home.
- Be familiar with the general education curriculum and expectations for typical peers.
- Think about how your child's disability will impact his/her experience in the general education environment, both curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- Be clear about your vision for your child and prepare a statement to share with the team.
- Be clear about the agenda and what you would like to accomplish at the meeting; share your agenda with the school team before the meeting.
- Let the school team know in advance if you are requesting something different and find out if they will accept or reject your request.
- Find out who will be at the meeting, just because they are invited doesn't mean they will come.

✓ Get organized:

- Get all your things in one place, bring your file.

✓ Read your procedural safeguards manual before the meeting.

At the IEP Meeting:

- ✓ Use the buddy system; it is good to have an objective set of eyes and ears.
- ✓ Consider having your child present for at least part of the meeting, as appropriate.
- ✓ Share your information (written statement) about your child's talents, interests, needs.
- ✓ Put your agenda on the table.
- ✓ Don't be afraid to ask questions: who, what, when, where, and how.
- ✓ Remember: No jargon, it's the law.
- ✓ Remember the process: Evaluation and Assessment ►► Discussion of your child's current level of performance ►► Goals ►► Objectives ►► Placement (LRE first!) ►► Instruction ►► Identify supports and Related Services (contingency plan) ►► Monitor.
- ✓ Only accept goals and objectives that are measurable.
- ✓ Remember there is not a single correct answer to issues, be open minded and creative.
- ✓ Consider tape recording the meeting for your future reference and clarification.
- ✓ Take notes to be clear about what actions were discussed and accepted or refused by the team.
- ✓ Stay focused on your agenda and don't be rushed.

After You Meet:

- ✓ Follow-up – written and in person.
- ✓ Follow through – remember, this is where most things fall apart.
- ✓ Carefully read the IEP (and minutes, if your district uses them) and make sure it reflects what was discussed at the meeting.
- ✓ Continue to be an active participant on the team – attend meetings, volunteer, ongoing communication with all team members is critical for success.



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