



IEP

Tips for Participating in Your Child's IEP Meeting

Parents have an equal role as a member of the IEP team. You hold knowledge about your child that no one else on the team does. Here are some things parents should do prior, during, and after an IEP meeting so that they are able to participate and effectively advocate for their child.

Before the Meeting - Be Prepared

- Know the purpose of the meeting. Review the meeting notice and the participants. What is going to be discussed at this meeting? Are your items on the agenda? If not, send a letter that lists the topics you would like to be added to the agenda. Who is going to be at the meeting? Is anyone missing? If so, invite them and let the school know. Remember, you have the right to invite and bring others to the meeting. Bring someone for support.
- Do your homework. Review your child's IEP, records, evaluations, work samples. If you have reports or other information that you want to share with the team, make sure you have copies for everyone.
- Make a list of all the key points you want to discuss. Fold a piece of paper in half the long way. On one side of the fold, write all the key points that you want to discuss. While at the meeting, write on the other side of the fold what was discussed or decided, who will do it, and by when.

During the Meeting

- Be on time. If there are people in the room you do not know, ask for introductions and about their role.
- Acknowledge what's working well. Start the meeting off on a good note by talking about what is working well.
- Ask questions about anything you don't understand. Don't be afraid or shy to ask people to explain words, terms, roles, and responsibilities, what is being asked of you, or what is being decided about your child.
- Do your best to follow the agenda. If there are issues that come up during the meeting, it may be necessary to schedule another meeting to discuss them.

- Make sure you get a copy of the minutes or other documentation discussed at the meeting. Also, if appropriate, don't leave until a follow up meeting has been scheduled to discuss any new items or to follow up on what was decided at the meeting.
- If at any point you get too upset or angry, ask that the meeting be stopped and reconvened at a later date, or ask for a short break.
- Take your own notes or bring someone with you to help. While others are presenting their reports and discussing your child's progress, take notes on the points that you agree or don't agree with and any questions you have so you can discuss them later.

After the Meeting

- Review the minutes. The minutes of a meeting are very important. Compare the minutes to any notes that you may have taken. Do they accurately reflect the conversation that took place and capture what is to be done? Are the decisions and next steps listed? If not, make the make corrections and send them back to the school with a letter asking that your corrections be added to your child's official file.
- Note any follow-up that should occur and who is responsible for what. Make sure that you do whatever you said you were going to do.