

IEP CHECKLIST

FOR PARENTS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION CHILDREN

As a tool to help parents receive the best IEP, the following is a general check list to be used by a parent in preparation for an IEP meeting. Legal advice may be required for specific circumstances (deadlines for notices may have statutory requirements).

- Confirm with the school district the meeting day and time of the IEP, a date and time that is agreeable to you and anyone you want to attend the IEP meeting.
- Provide the school district with written notice, via mail and fax, that you will be taping the IEP meeting (at least 24 hours prior to the IEP meeting).
- Request in writing, a copy of your child's entire educational file (everything!).
- Request in writing that you be provided with all new assessments, prior to the IEP meeting (otherwise be prepared to re-schedule the IEP meeting).
- Attempt to make an appointment to observe your child in his/her classrooms, sometime prior to the IEP meeting.
- Review all IEPs, all assessments (past and current); identify comments within the previous IEPs. Summarize test scores and trends that support any requests that you make on behalf of your child.
- Make a written list of your concerns.
- Write down your child's strengths.
- Know what you want in terms of placement, services and goals and why you want each item and what objective and subjective data/information supports what you want (put all of this in writing as part of your own confidential notes). Know your bottom line.
- Be organized. Have copies of all pertinent documents in a binder (ideally, at least one binder for IEPs and another binder for assessments)
- During the IEP meeting, maintain a positive and "controlling" attitude. Take a leadership role in the IEP meeting.
- During the IEP meeting, clearly state what placement and services you want for your child (including frequency and duration). For each request, state the objective and subjective evidence supporting your request (e.g., observations, assessments, test results). Make certain that your request and supporting

evidence are referenced in the IEP notes.

- If during the IEP meeting, someone states something supporting changing the IEP in your child's favor, concisely repeat what was stated and request that the other person's statement be reflected in the IEP notes.
- If someone makes a statement during the IEP meeting that you do not understand (e.g., is confusing); ask for clarity.
- Ask questions during the IEP meeting (for example, how many times did you observe my child and for how long).
- If during the IEP meeting, someone states something different from you want stated, then politely acknowledge the "opposing" statement and state your disagreement and why you disagree.
- Discuss how much progress has been made on goals from the last IEP, which goals will need to be continued, and which will need to be modified. Ask for specific examples of how progress has been measured on the current IEP.
- Review the IEP before leaving the IEP meeting, making certain that key concerns and statements have been reflected in the IEP notes.
- Remember the school district is generally only responsible for what's written in the IEP, so make sure that what is agreed upon is reflected in the IEP and get a copy before you leave.
- Generally, do not consent to the IEP until you have had time to review it at home (treat the IEP as if it is a binding contract).
- Remember, the power to say No! You can disagree as to all educational offerings within an IEP or agree in part and disagree in part. With very few exceptions (e.g., by a court order), a school district cannot unilaterally change your child's current educational program without your consent. However, at this point of a disagreement with a school district you may want to seek legal counsel.

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