

Tips for participating in your child's IEP meeting

Prior to the meeting

1. Obtain and study all school records including private assessments, medical records, prior IEPs, progress notes, report cards, teachers notes, disciplinary notes, awards etc..
2. Talk with your child's teachers and others who have worked with or evaluated your child to see how they think your child is doing
3. If you need more information, speak to your pediatrician
4. Review the present IEP (if there is one) to see if you think the goals have been met
5. Make a list of your child's present level of functioning based on your observations and the above in:
 - a. Academics or developmental skills
 - b. Motor skills
 - c. Speech and language skills
 - d. Social skills
 - e. Self help skills
 - f. Vocational skills
6. Consider observing your child in the classroom
7. Make a list of goals you feel your child should have and consider how these goals can best be met
8. List services your child may need
9. if you have questions to be resolved or issues of concern for a few staff members, try to work, them out before the IEP meeting. You should have an ongoing dialogue with your child's teacher and open communication all year long so issues can be resolved as they arise.
10. You are allowed to record the meeting. Some parents may find this to be helpful

During the meeting

- Remember that you have an equal role on the IEP team
- Insist that the services listed on the IEP are based on your child's needs and not on the availability of services or funding
- Observe your child's program to ensure that services are being provided and monitor your child's progress
- Take a friend to the meeting with you and, if necessary, have a friend speak for you
- Learn and use assertiveness skills, but stay calm
- You have a right to disagree with the IEP and you do not have to sign it. You may sign the IEP but write out an explanation of why you object to certain parts of it
- Always remember that the educational placement of your child is determined by his or her IEP
- Everything on your child's IEP should be written in a style and manner that you can understand. Be sure you understand the words used, all the test results, and the new goals that are suggested
- Get a copy of the plan for your records
- You may request a review of your child's IEP at anytime during the school year
- Ask for a copy of the IEP meeting minute and send back a copy of an corrections that should be made in them
- Remember that your child's IEP is the centerpiece of his education. Do not feel rushed to approve and sign the IEP so that the meeting can be ended by a certain time. Do not hesitate to request more time to read and study the IEP more carefully or to obtain professional advices, even if this means that another meeting will have to be held
- If you get angry or upset, ask that the meeting be put off to a later time