



How to Prepare for the IEP Meeting

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is crucial, as it outlines personalized goals and support for students with disabilities. As a parent, preparing for your child's IEP meeting is key to ensuring they receive the right support and opportunities to thrive in school. Here's how you can navigate and effectively prepare for your child's upcoming IEP meeting.

1. Review the Evaluation Report

When you receive your child's evaluation report, it might seem like a lot to digest. Take your time to read through it carefully. Highlight parts that stand out to you—areas where your child is doing well and areas where they might need extra help. Understanding this report helps you see the big picture of your child's strengths and challenges. This knowledge is crucial because it forms the foundation for deciding what support your child needs in school.

2. Identify Accommodations

Accommodations are tools or strategies that help your child learn better or more comfortably in school. Based on the evaluation report, think about what specific accommodations could benefit your child. For example, if your child struggles with reading, you might suggest extra time for tests or using audiobooks. If your child has difficulty staying focused, you could propose preferential seating near the front of the class or the use of fidget tools to help them concentrate. For children with sensory sensitivities, accommodations might include noise-canceling headphones or a quiet space for breaks during the school day. Being specific about these accommodations and explaining why you think they're important helps the school team understand your child's unique needs.

3. Prepare Documentation

Gather all the papers and documents related to your child's education: their current IEP, recent progress reports, grade reports, and any notes from teachers or therapists. These documents provide evidence of your child's progress and challenges. Bringing them to the meeting shows that you're informed and prepared to discuss your child's needs effectively. They also are evidence to justify that your child needs the accommodations that you are proposing.

4. Resolve Issues Ahead of Time

Before the meeting, think about any questions or concerns you have. For example, if you want to tape-record the IEP meeting, make sure to disclose in advance that you will be doing so. It's also helpful to talk to teachers or therapists beforehand to clear up any confusion. This way, when you

sit down with the school team, you can focus on making decisions rather than dealing with surprises or uncertainties.

5. Prepare Questions and Concerns

Imagine you're preparing for a big presentation. Writing down your questions and concerns beforehand is like preparing your notes. It helps you stay organized and ensures you won't forget anything important during the meeting. This way, you can advocate for your child effectively.

6. Invite Support

Sometimes meetings can feel overwhelming. It's okay to ask for support! You might invite a friend, family member, professional, education attorney, or advocate to join you. They can provide moral support and help you throughout the meeting. Having someone by your side can make a big difference in feeling confident during the meeting.

7. Set Goals

Setting goals for your child's education is like setting a roadmap. Think about what you want your child to achieve, both academically and personally. For example, complete a science project independently with minimal assistance, improve self-regulation by using calming techniques during stressful situations, or develop the ability to write complete sentences independently. These goals guide the development of the IEP and make sure it's tailored to your child's specific needs and aspirations.

8. Communicate Your Child's Needs

You know your child best. Prepare a short description of your child —what they're good at, what challenges they face, and how they learn best. This helps the school team understand your child as an individual. Including examples of their work and evaluations from outside activities gives a complete picture of their strengths and areas needing support.

9. Stay Informed

Understanding your rights and options in the IEP process is empowering. You have the right to request to see the school's evaluations and proposed goals before the meeting. This knowledge helps you participate more confidently and ensures that you're making informed decisions for your child's education.

10. Keep Your Child's Best Interest at Heart

Ultimately, the IEP meeting is about what's best for your child. It's natural to feel passionate and sometimes emotional about their education. Stay focused on what will help them succeed academically and thrive socially. Your active involvement ensures that your child receives the support and opportunities they deserve.

By following these steps, you're not only advocating for your child effectively but also ensuring that the IEP meeting is productive and focused on your child's individual needs and strengths. Each step plays a crucial role in crafting a plan that supports your child's educational journey and sets them up for success. If you have any questions or need help navigating this process, reach out to us at hello@loveyourschool.org! We want to help!

More Resources:

[The Short-and-Sweet IEP Overview - Center for Parent Information and Resources](#)

[The IEP: A Primer for Parents New to the Process - Smart Kids with Learning Disabilities](#)

[How to prepare for IEP Meetings - FindLaw.Com](#)

[Download: Anatomy of an IEP - Understood.Org](#)

[How to Organize Your Child's IEP Binder - Understood.Org](#)

[IEP Meetings: Must Ask Questions - Smart Kids with Learning Disabilities](#)

[6 Keys to Winning Over Your Child's Team - Smart Kids with Learning Disabilities](#)

[12 Tips for a Successful IEP Meeting - ADDitude Magazine](#)