



## Gordon Educational Advocacy

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### Parent Tips for a Successful IEP Meeting

*School meetings can be stressful, overwhelming, and anxiety provoking for parents! There are many professionals using educational jargon which can feel like they are talking in code. In addition, the discussion often lends itself to hearing about your child's needs and weaknesses often leaving parents feeling helpless. Try these tips to help prepare and advocate for your child.*

#### Before the IEP Meeting:

- Ask for drafts of all documents a week prior to the IEP meeting.
- Make a list of the points you want to discuss at the IEP meeting. What are your observations and concerns? This can help so that you don't forget when you may be nervous or distracted during the meeting.

#### During the IEP Meeting:

- Bring a friend or advocate.
  - Choose someone who knows your child and their learning style. A lot of information is presented at meetings and having a second pair of ears can help recall information later.
  - Out of courtesy, let the school team know who you will be bringing. This helps to foster a collaborative team approach.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions.
  - Many educational terms are used during meetings and educational professionals may forget that others may not know what it means.
  - Ask questions to ensure you understand what is being said, what decisions are being made, and what you are agreeing to.
    - Ex) Can you explain more about....?
    - Ex) What do you mean when you say.....?
- Discuss your specific concerns and request action.
  - Ex) My child seems to be struggling with..... What can you do in school to address this need? What can I do at home to help?
  - I'm concerned that.....How can we address this in school?

#### After the IEP Meeting:

- Monitor your child's progress
  - Maintain regular communication with your child's teachers and therapists.
  - Ex) Weekly emails, daily communication logs, etc.
- Know your options if you are not comfortable with the outcome of an IEP meeting
  - Read your procedural safeguards. If you don't have a copy, ask the school for one.
  - Reach out to your school team and administration to let them know your continued concerns that are not addressed in the IEP.
  - Reach out to an educational advocate for guidance and support.