

Making Preschool Inclusion Work

Strategies for Supporting Children, Teachers, and Programs

Managing the IEP: suggestions for parents

Prior to the meeting

Attend an IEP or advocacy workshop if this is going to be your first IEP.

If you are interested in seeing any assessment reports before the meeting, ask for them.

Let your case manager know about any changes you may be asking for before the meeting so there are no "surprises."

Invite a friend or another parent to come with you for support.

Ask to discuss draft goals for your child with the appropriate service provider before the meeting.

At the meeting

Try not to come in either "on the defensive" or "ready to attack"!

Try the first meeting without an advocate; not every IEP needs one (but do bring a friend, a family member, or another parent).

Ask for a break during the meeting if you need to reorganize your thoughts.

If you feel strongly that you want an inclusive setting for your child, be clear in expressing this.

If you feel strongly that a more restrictive setting (like a special education classroom) would be a better fit for your child's needs, be clear in expressing this; you can let the team know that you may want (or not) to explore a more inclusive setting in 6–12 months.

Clarify the type of supports your child will have in whatever setting he or she will receive services.

Remember that "more" (services, supports, etc) may not always be "better."

If you meet resistance to placement or services at a meeting, try asking team members what their concerns are about your request.

Ask for specific names and contact information of people at the meeting.

Ask that all requests and agreements or disagreements be logged in the meeting notes; be sure to read the notes prior to signing the IEP.

Know that it is okay to leave an IEP meeting with an unsigned IEP if you want to re-read it first.

After the meeting

Do contact key team members if you need to discuss actions following the meeting (e.g., school visits, agreed-upon assessments, etc.).

Do review and return the IEP with signatures (if you agree) in a timely manner so the team can begin implementing it.

Remember that you can call another meeting at any time if you feel that the team needs to reconvene to discuss any part of your child's plan. Any team member can do this!

