

Tips for the IEP Meeting

- ❖ Get a copy of the last IEP, discipline referrals, and evaluations from the school if you do not have copies available. Read these and talk to advocates and professionals (teachers, therapists, doctors, and psychologists, for example) about your child's disability and educational needs. Ask the professionals to write a short letter supporting their recommendations for your child's IEP meeting. If your child is transitioning from an early intervention program (FIT) to school, your FIT Service Coordinator should attend the IEP meeting.
- ❖ **Write up a list of concerns that you will bring up at the IEP meeting.** For example, list what category of eligibility you believe your child should be placed in, the kinds of related services you think are needed, such as speech and language services, number of hours of direct or indirect services, the kinds of evaluations that you believe are needed to assess your child, transportation, behaviors related to the disability, a disagreement with an alternative placement, the amount of time in regular education, whether an educational assistant is needed one on one with your child, and kinds of discipline that are appropriate for your child.
- ❖ When the team is introducing everyone and beginning to discuss the purposes of the meeting, read to them or **give them a copy of your list** so that at some time during the meeting these concerns can be addressed. You can also just use it to make sure the team has covered all the issues you want addressed.
- ❖ If it helps you before the meeting, write down your reasons for wanting services and pull it out during the meeting to read to the committee. Think ahead of time what you believe is non-negotiable and what you might be willing to compromise on.
- ❖ **See if an advocate, a friend, or a family member can attend the IEP with you.** You may want to consider taping the IEP meeting. You should let other members of the IEP team know you are taping the meeting and give them an opportunity to also tape the meeting.
- ❖ Take copies of current articles and resources about your child's disability to share with the IEP committee.
- ❖ **If a regular member of the IEP team (such as a therapist) is unable to attend the IEP meeting, he/she must submit a written report prior to the meeting.**
- ❖ If you believe that there is conflict within the IEP that you cannot resolve, ask to take a break to reconvene the meeting at a later time. During the break time get support and more information that may help resolve the issues of concern. The school must have a "prior written notice" (PWN) document in the IEP that lists the issues where there maybe a conflict between the school and the parent. Be aware if the school rejects a proposal you have made. Beware if the PWN only says, "Parent requests an aide." Or staff will monitor student all day". That does not mean the school will provide an aide.

- ❖ **Do not sign the IEP if you do not agree with the IEP**, or sign that you do not agree with the part that you do not agree with. **READ THE IEP CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU SIGN IT.** In some cases it may help to take the IEP home with you to read over with someone who knows about special education rights, before you sign it.
- ❖ After the annual IEP meeting is held, minor changes can be made to the plan without calling another IEP meeting as long as you and the school agree to the change. Make sure you get a copy of the changed IEP.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the following agencies:

Disability Rights New Mexico (Formerly Protection and Advocacy System)
1720 Louisiana Blvd., NE, Ste. 204
Albuquerque, NM 87110
(505) 256-3100
1-800-432-4682
Website: www.drn.org
Email: info@drnm.org

Parents Reaching Out (PRO)
1920 B. Columbia SE
Albuquerque, NM 87106
(505) 247-0192
1-800-524-5176
Website: www.parentsreachingout.org
Email: nmproth@aol.com

Families-Advocacy Support and Access Project (Families-ASAP)
3232 Candelaria NE
Albuquerque, NM 87107
(505) 292-7414
1-888-292-7415

New Mexico Family Network
1101 Cardenas Dr., NE, Ste. 202
Albuquerque, NM 87110
(505) 256-0430
1-800-273-7232

Educating Parents of Children with Special Needs (EPICS Project)
1600 San Pedro Dr., NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110
(505) 767-6630
1-888-499-2070
Website: www.epicsproject.org
Email: jeanettet@epicsproject.org