

## **IEP 101: TOP TEN TIPS FOR YOUR NEXT IEP!**

**1. RECORD! RECORD! RECORD!**

Give 24 hours email notice. You can use your smartphone. No need to listen, just put the file on a flash drive or hard drive.

**2. KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE.**

There is no substitute for having a specific goal. Do you want a private school placement? ABA services? More speech therapy? Know what you are after, and if you don't know yet – ask someone. There are many good educational psychologists that can test your child and give you the direction you need.

**3. PREPARE!**

You know your child better than anyone else, now you need to learn her or his file. Make a list of all deficit areas and think about goals for each. If you want more services or a private school placement, be prepared to show that your child has not made progress by using all of the data at your disposal (goal baselines from year to year, assessment results, etc.).

**4. BE RESPECTFUL BUT FIRM.**

Because you are recording, emotional rants or blunt accusations do not help your case.

**5. ASK A THOUSAND QUESTIONS.**

No question is silly or unimportant! You may know your child, but they know her in the classroom and you need to know what they know. Do not feel rushed! You have the right to participate.

**6. ASK TO RECEIVE ALL SCHOOL REPORTS BEFORE THE IEP.**

If at all possible, do not receive district reports for first time at the IEP. Request all reports 72 hours in advance. Be prepared to cancel the IEP if needed.

**7. “APPLES TO APPLES” RE: GOALS.**

One of the most important data points on the IEP is the goal baseline. It must be accurate, quantifiable and match the measurable goal. For example: If the goal states, “Student will transition from one activity to another with no more than one prompt in 4 out of 5 transitions, 4 out of 5 days per week,” the baseline must indicate how many prompts the student needs NOW in 4 out of 5 of his transitions. Add one goal for every deficit and be “aggressive” about what you want your child to accomplish in a year.

**8. BRING AN “EXPERT” IF YOU POSSIBLY CAN.**

It really helps to have a professional third party (speech therapist, educational psychologist, etc.) to help explain the needs of your child.

**9. NEVER SIGN THE IEP AT THE MEETING.**

You have plenty of time to review it before you sign. Read it carefully and ask questions if needed.

**10. DRAFT A PARENT ADDENDUM AFTER EVERY IEP (90% of the time anyway...)**

Correct the notes, specify your exceptions to the offer, request IEEs, etc.