Advocacy Tips for an Effective IEP Team Meeting

By Miho Murai, Esq.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Before an IEP Meeting…** | **At the IEP Meeting…** | **After the IEP Meeting…** |
| * Request a copy of the student’s school records in writing (including grades, attendance, prior IEPs, assessments, and any disciplinary records)
* Review the school records and organize them chronologically in a binder
* Request a copy of the assessments and protocols five days in advance in writing and review them prior to the IEP meeting. If possible, speak to the assessors
* Review previous IEPs and identify areas where there is a lack of progress
* Request a copy of the service provider logs to verify frequency of services
* Talk to the student regarding current services, placement, academic progress, disciplinary issues, and any concerns that the child may have
* Review the grade level content standards and bring a copy with you to the meeting
* Advise the IEP team that you will be bringing an attorney/

advocate with you, if applicable* Advise the IEP team in writing that you will be electronically recording the IEP meeting
* Talk to the student’s teacher(s), school counselor, service providers, and school administrator, if friendly and appropriate
* Research the disability and related services
* Observe the student in the classroom
* Request in writing for an interpreter, if applicable
* Make sure that the student’s teacher has the proper credentials to teach the child
 | * Be proactive and ask questions
* Make sure that all the necessary people are at the IEP meeting (parent/

educational rights holder, regular education teacher, special education teacher, educational agency representative, assessors, and student, if appropriate)* Make sure that the educational agency representative who knows the program options and can encumber funds is present for the entire meeting
* Advocate for appropriate annual goals - make sure that they can be objectively measured and are appropriate for the child
* Identify and advocate for appropriate placement and related services, including extended school year and transportation – be sure that you are able to support your requests with specific information about the child
* Request for appropriate accommodations/modifications
* Advocate for a behavior support plan, if appropriate
* Make sure all oral promises are in writing in the IEP document.
* Make sure the pages of the IEP document are numbered, i.e. 1 of 12, 2 of 12, 3 of 12.
* Make sure that the IEP team considers the student’s unique needs
* Do not feel pressured to sign the IEP document on the spot. Advise the IEP team that you would like to review it at home.
* Observe the proposed placement before consenting to the IEP
* Request for a copy of the IEP document in your primary language, if applicable
 | * Request quarterly progress reports
* Review the IEP document carefully and make sure that it accurately reflects what was discussed at the meeting
* Do not sign and consent to the IEP if you do not agree with the services, placement, assessments, and/or eligibility
* Monitor the implementation of the services outlined in the IEP document
* Monitor the student’s social and academic progress – if the student is not making academic progress, request for another IEP meeting in writing
* File a compliance complaint, if necessary, if the school is not providing the agreed upon services
* File a due process hearing request, if necessary, if you do not agree with the district’s offer of FAPE.
* If the IEP team determines that the student is not eligible for special education, consider requesting a Section 504 plan
 |