

IEP & 504 MEETING CHEAT SHEET FOR PARENTS

A simple reference packet to keep the meeting focused on your child's needs

Keep coming back to this question: What does my child need to access, participate in, and make meaningful progress in school?

YOUR CORE RIGHTS

- You are part of the team. For an IEP, parents are members of the IEP team and must have a meaningful opportunity to participate.
 - You can request an evaluation. If you suspect your child has a disability-related educational need, you may request a comprehensive evaluation.
 - Good grades do not automatically mean a child does not need support. A student may be achieving academically while still experiencing substantial disability-related barriers.
 - Evaluation should consider the whole child. Educational impact can include academics, attention, executive functioning, behavior, writing, communication, sensory needs, social-emotional functioning, stamina, attendance, and other functional areas.
 - Ask for decisions in writing. For an IEP, if the district proposes or refuses certain actions related to identification, evaluation, placement, or FAPE, you can ask for Prior Written Notice explaining the decision.
 - You may bring support. At an IEP meeting, parents may invite someone who has knowledge or special expertise regarding their child.
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WHEN YOU HEAR...

“They’re doing fine.”

ASK...

“What data are we using to determine that?”

“They get good grades.”

ASK...

“Are we also considering how much time, effort, adult support, stress, or compensating is required to maintain those grades?”

“They don’t need that accommodation.”

ASK...

“What data show that my child can consistently access instruction without it?”

“We don’t usually provide that.”

ASK...

“Can we focus on my child’s individual need and discuss what support would appropriately address it?”

“That behavior is a choice.”

ASK...

“Could the disability be contributing to the behavior? What happened before it, and what skill, accommodation, or support may be missing?”

QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING THE MEETING

- What disability-related need are we trying to address?
- What does the current data show?
- Are we considering functional needs in addition to grades?
- Could the disability be affecting attention, organization, writing, stamina, behavior, sensory regulation, or emotional regulation?
- What exactly will this accommodation or service look like?
- Who will provide it?
- When will it be available?

- Where will it be available?
 - How often will it occur?
 - How will my child access the support?
 - Will my child have to ask for it every time?
 - How will implementation be monitored?
 - How will we know whether it is working?
 - When will progress or implementation data be shared with me?
 - Where will what we agreed to today appear in the written plan?
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ENSURE ACCOMMODATIONS AND GOALS ARE SPECIFIC

AVOID:

“Breaks as needed.”

CONSIDER:

“Student may independently request a brief break when disability-related symptoms interfere with participation. The student may leave and return discreetly, and the break will not be treated as disciplinary.”

AVOID:

“Extra time when necessary.”

CONSIDER:

“Student will receive 50% extended time on classroom tests, quizzes, and timed written assignments when disability-related needs affect completion speed.”

Every accommodation should answer:

WHO? Who is responsible?

WHAT? What exactly will happen?

WHEN? When does it apply?

WHERE? Where is the support available?

HOW OFTEN? How frequently can it be used?

HOW WILL WE KNOW? How will implementation and effectiveness be monitored?

Every goal should be measurable, specific, and should never be for reduction of tics.**AVOID:**

“Student will reduce tic frequency.”

CONSIDER:

“Student will independently utilize fast pass for breaks 80% of the time from a baseline of ___ as measured by teacher data collection.”

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

- Read the accommodations and services section carefully.
- Make sure verbal agreements are written into the plan.
- Confirm accommodations apply across relevant classes and settings.
- Discuss testing accommodations.
- Discuss specials, electives, transitions, lunch, recess, field trips, and other settings when relevant.
- Confirm how substitute teachers and other staff will know what supports are required.
- Confirm who is responsible for monitoring implementation.
- Confirm when the team will review progress.

- If a request was refused, ask that the refusal and rationale be documented through the appropriate notice process.
 - Request a copy of the completed plan and related notices.
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USEFUL PHRASES

“I don’t think we have finished discussing that concern.”

“Can we go back to the data?”

“Where will that be documented in the plan?”

“Who will be responsible for implementing that?”

“How will we know whether it is working?”

“Is that a written accommodation or an informal classroom strategy?”

“What is the educational reason for denying that request?”

“Please include my concern in the meeting documentation.”

“Please document that decision and the reason for it.”

THE 5-MINUTE PLAN CHECK

Before the meeting ends, make sure the team can answer:

1. **NEED** - What disability-related need are we addressing?
 2. **SUPPORT** - What exactly will the school do?
 3. **IMPLEMENTATION** - Who will do it, where, and how often?
 4. **DATA** - How will we know whether it is working?
 5. **FOLLOW-UP** - When will the team review it again?
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REMEMBER...

- Accommodations are not an advantage. They provide access.
- A child does not have to fail before disability-related needs are taken seriously.
- “Capable of doing it” and “able to access education consistently without disability-related barriers” are not the same.
- The goal is not to create the longest IEP or 504 Plan.
- The goal is to create the right plan for your child.