

IEP Checklist for Parents

The following is a checklist for parents who are preparing for their child's IEP meeting. The list was prepared and presented by Lori van Schmeling and Leslie Lipson from the Georgia Advocacy Office at a March 2004 "Better all Together: Inclusion Conference."

Before the Meeting:

- ☑ Do your homework. Walk into the meeting fully prepared and informed. Have your priorities numbered and come ready to negotiate.
- ☑ Request a copy of all evaluation results. Call the school psychologist (or evaluator) with any questions. This saves time and gives you information you need to make decisions later regarding your child.
- ☑ Bring information from private professionals that work with your child: tutors, therapists, whoever that can support your position.
- ☑ Write down your child's strengths and weaknesses. These should be noted in the IEP with the strengths being focused on.
- ☑ Think about related services your child needs such as therapies, assistive technologies, or transportation and how those should be achieved.
- ☑ Write down a list of IEP goals.
- ☑ Either invite someone to go with you and/or tape the meeting to help remember what was discussed.
- ☑ If the student is attending the meeting, prepare the student about their role and the format of the meeting.

During the Meeting:

- ☑ Be confident, ask questions and introduce yourself to anyone you don't know in order to find out why they are attending your child's meeting.
- ☑ Determine as a group, what your child's goals should be, and make sure that s/he has the appropriate educational opportunities and activities to work on those goals.
- ☑ Determine as a group, what extra supports or modifications the student needs in order to achieve his or her goals.
- ☑ If the student is to be removed from the general education setting, discuss, in detail, why the student cannot be educated in the general classroom. Make sure this is documented in the meeting minutes.

- ☑ Sign the IEP only if you are in agreement with it. It is OK to take time to think about it before signing.
- ☑ Review the meeting minutes to make sure they accurately reflect what occurred during the meeting. Make any changes or additions as appropriate.
- ☑ If you do not complete the IEP after 2 hours, reschedule another date to finish it. This will make better use of everyone's time and energy levels.

After the Meeting:

- ☑ Relax, before thinking about all the things you forgot to say or add to the IEP. Most parents agree that IEP meetings are stressful regardless how well the meeting goes. You can always call another IEP meeting to make changes if necessary.
- ☑ Review the minutes and the IEP- if important discussions are missing- write a letter "thanking" the school for their time and noting the information the school "forgot."
- ☑ Be proactive in making sure that your child's teacher will have the information and supplies she needs to adapt the curriculum.
- ☑ Think of ways that you can reinforce what the teacher will be working on with your child.
- ☑ Follow-up with the school to communicate when you are pleased with or worried about the implementation of the IEP.