Special Education IEP Cheat Sheet For Parents

By JoAnn Collins

Are you the parent of a child with autism, a learning disability or a physical disability? Are you preparing for your child's annual Individualized Educational Plan meeting? Would you like a short list of important items that need to be discussed at your child's IEP meeting? This article will discuss 15 issues that need to be brought up at your child's IEP meeting to ensure that all important issues are brought up.

Issue 1: Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance need to be discussed and put in your child's IEP. Academic and functional levels should be results of tests given to your child, and not teacher observation.

Issue 2: Educational strengths and weaknesses of your child. All weaknesses should be discussed and needed educational services should be discussed and written in your child's IEP.

Issue 3: District and State Wide testing that your child will be included in. Standardized testing is critical to keep special education personnel accountable for teaching your child; keep copies for future use.

Issue 4: Extended School Year (ESY) needs to be discussed and written in your child's IEP. Specific services your child is to receive, as well as amount of minutes per week, and amount of weeks given.

Issue 5: Assistive Technology Services that your child requires in order to benefit from their education.

Issue 6: If your child has negative behavior that interferes with their education ask for a qualified person to conduct a functional behavioral analysis and develop a positive behavioral plan.

Issue 7: Placement must be decided and put in your child's IEP.

Issue 8: Related Services must be discussed and placed in your child's IEP. Related Services are: PT, OT, Speech/Language, Transportation, etc.

Issue 9: Make sure all special education services offered are listed in the IEP; check minutes and make sure it states whether the service is direct or consultative and individual or group.

Issue 10: If your child is 16 years or above a transition plan needs to be developed which includes transition services your child needs to get a job or pursue education.

Issue 11: Date of graduation needs to be on the child's IEP. Make sure that the date that is listed goes until your child's 22nd birthday as IDEA requires.

Issue 12: Important methodologies need to be included as well as amount of minutes that the methodologies will be given per week.

Issue 13: Any evaluations that were conducted on your child. Below average test scores are often stated as average. Check all test scores; if below age and grade appropriate peers, make sure services are given to remediate the difficulty.

Issue 14: Make sure that the eligibility page for your child states that they are eligible for special education services.

Issue 15: Pre and post testing of your child's academics next school year. Pre testing given at the beginning of the year, post testing given at the end of the year. This will help you prove if your child has made progress or not during the school year.

Also remember to always read your child's IEP before you leave the meeting. Ask for changes if you find something that you do not agree with. By discussing these 15 issues you will help your child receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE).