

IEP TIPS AND TRICKS FOR PARENTS

Lori Benson Adams, MEd

STEP 1: PLAN

- Make notes ahead of time. What's most important to you? One year from today, what are the **THREE** most important skills you'd like your child to have. Sometimes it's helpful to write or share with a friend what a perfect school day for your child would look like. This often helps narrow down the scope of what matters most to you.
- Find out who will be in attendance. Reach out to participants with any questions you may have before the meeting. This helps make sure you have all the information ahead of time and keeps the meeting flowing.
- If reports have been conducted and will be discussed, make sure you receive and review copies ahead of time.

STEP 2: PARTNER UP

- Take someone with you. Meetings get long and there is a lot of information flowing. It's helpful to have a second set of ears to help go over things later.
- Enter meetings with a collaborative intention. Working together is always more productive than fighting against.
- If your child has non-school professionals such as tutors, counselors or private therapists, include them or feedback from them at the meeting. Share what specific goals are being worked on, and make sure releases are signed so all can communicate freely with one another.
- Keep things strengths-based. IEPs focus on what a child needs and can often feel like all we see are problems. Your child is not a problem. Your child has **LOTS** of strengths and unique gifts. Make sure those are represented. Using strengths to address areas of need is the best approach.



Additional Resources

BrainWorks Online & Printed Kits

Parent & Educator Courses

BrainWorks iOS App

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STEP 3 PERSIST

- The IEP meeting is just the beginning. Establish who on the team will be your primary contact. Request a follow-up team meeting for 60 to 90 days later to review what is and isn't working. Parents have the right to request an IEP meeting at any time, so this is well within your ability. The IEP is your child's road map to success....review often to make sure you're on the right path!
- Keep track of what efforts you're making at home. Schools want to partner with you, and sometimes only see the finished results without the effort behind the scene (ie, think of the hours it took to complete the homework, etc.) Help demonstrate what's being done on the home front to make success happen.

REMEMBER: YOU KNOW YOUR CHILD BEST

- No one knows your child like you do!
- Wait and see is not an answer. By the time you get to an IEP, you've already waited and seen.
- If a key decision-maker isn't in attendance, you can table (pause) the meeting until they are. It's better to reschedule than let something slip between the cracks.
- You are THE MOST important person at an IEP meeting, because you directly represent your child. Your voice is equal. Things cannot happen without your consent. Ask questions, ask again if you're unclear, and keep asking until you understand the process.



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