

IEP MEETING TIP SHEET



BEFORE the Meeting

There is no IEP team without YOU:

As the parent your full participation is **important** in creating your child's IEP. You have a say in the services your child is to receive and what areas the school will work on with your child.

Understand what is in your child's special education records:

You have a right to get copies of your child's records before the meeting. All documents should be translated in the language you most understand. You also have the right to have all of your child's educational information fully explained to you, including all evaluation results either before or at the meeting. Read all the documents that the IEP team will look at **before** the meeting and you have the right to ask for more time to review the records.

Your child's records should include the current and previous IEP's, evaluations, report cards, any letters or emails between you and school staff (teachers, providers, administrators).

Keep an organized binder:

Once you have your child's records, put them in a binder. Bring the binder to **every** IEP meeting so you have all the documents you may need to refer to when advocating for your child.

Prepare your "evidence":

Often if you want to change your child's services you will need to prove that you child needs these services. Collect the documents that help show your child needs these services and bring them to the meeting in your binder along with a copy for the team.

If your child's doctor/therapist/teacher/counselor supports the services you are asking for, have her/him write a letter or participate in the meeting in person or by phone. *If you do not share this information with the team, you may not be able to use this information later to challenge the team's decision.*

Make a list of the things you want the team to consider or change in your child's IEP. List at least three goals you would like the school to work on with your child for the coming year. If you have a child 14 or older, the IEP team needs to think about your child's **transition** to life after high school. You should think about what the school can do to help with your child's transition.

Find someone to support you at the meeting:

Have a friend or family member attend the meeting with you. Their presence can be calming and very helpful. They can take notes of the meeting, freeing you to concentrate on the conversation. They can also help remind you of issues or concerns you want to discuss, or questions you want to ask.

At the IEP Meeting

Speak up:

You do not have to agree or accept any recommendations and you should let the team know that you disagree and explain why. Signing the attendance form is not the same as agreeing to the recommendations. The attendance form is just documentation that you were there.

You have the right to have an interpreter at the IEP meeting if you do not understand English or if English is not your primary language. Make the request before the meeting.

The services your child needs must be on the IEP:

A school cannot refuse to add a service your child needs to an IEP simply because they do not offer that service in their school. Any service and/or support your child needs to make **meaningful progress** must be put in writing on the IEP and provided by the school your child attends. If the school refuses you can challenge it through mediation or an impartial hearing.

After the Meeting

Right to challenge school's decisions:

If you disagree with the recommendations of your child's IEP team, and you do not believe that your child is receiving appropriate services, you have the right to challenge that decision through **mediation** or an **Impartial Hearing**. You can also ask for a new IEP meeting but the school does not have to give you one.

Placement offer:

The school will send a letter after the meeting summarizing the recommendations for your child. If the letter recommends a new school for your child, you should visit the school before you make the decision. On your visit make sure to learn as much about the school and the program before you decide if you will turn it down.

Helpful resources: <https://www.understood.org>
<https://www.includenyc.org/>

If you need **legal help**, please contact **Legal Services NYC** citywide hotline: **917-661-4500**.