

For Parents: Ten Mistakes to Avoid During The IEP Meeting

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A goal is a dream with a deadline. – Napoleon Hill



Believe that the school team should do most of the talking and decision-making.

The **P** in IEP usually refers to "Plan" or "Program", but use it as reference to "Parent." You are an integral part of the IEP team, and your participation, input, and wisdom are critical-components to a successful IEP meeting.



Not ask questions when you are unsure.

The old saying, "There is no such thing as a dumb question", certainly applies to IEP meetings. Even if you've done the important prep work before the meeting, there's still so much information to process during the meeting. Speak up when you're unsure of what was said; ask questions until you're sure you understand!



Not involve your child.

Honor your child's voice and presence at the IEP meeting. Help your child embrace the self-advocacy philosophy, "Nothing about me without me."



Only listen to spoken words.

Listen carefully to the spoken words and hear the unspoken messages of the other team members' tone of voice and body language. Being able to *read* others allows you to communicate more effectively.



Not understand that parents can ask for more frequent progress reports.

Progress reports are often sent to parents on the same schedule as report cards. However, parents can ask for more frequent reports of their child's progress toward IEP goals. Make sure the schedule of progress reports is written in the IEP.



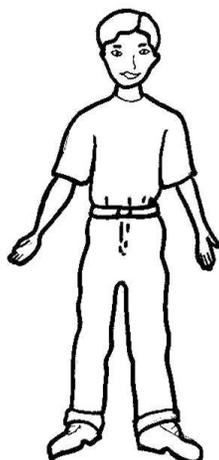
Accept goals that are not measurable.

Ask the school staff exactly what your child will have to do in order to meet the goal. If it is not clear, rewrite until the goal is specific and there is an objective way to measure your child's progress.



Not realize the importance of relationships with peers.

Your child can develop real friendships, share his interests and talents, and learn with and from peers when he is a full member in an age-appropriate general education classroom.



Focus on your child's body parts instead of the whole child.

Instead of having a separate goal for speech/language, motor skills, etc. write collaborative IEP goals. This type of goal focuses on target behavior (e.g. reading, written language), and multiple professionals contribute to each goal.



Not understand that training for staff can be written in the IEP.

In the related services and supports section of the IEP services are written not only for what your child needs, but also for the people who provide the services to your child.

Wanting to jump ahead and talk about placement at the beginning of the meeting.



The foundation of the IEP is built from your child's strengths/interests, needs, present levels of academic achievement and functional performance. These areas will drive what goals and accommodations will be identified. The goals and accommodations drive what types of services and supports your child will receive. Only after you have all of these parts of the IEP written can you decide where the least restrictive environment (placement) will be for your child.

Checkout additional helpful IEP resources on my website. [Click here.](http://www.visionsandvoicestogether.com/resources/ieps)
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