



# Advocacy Essentials

Being a Mama Bear at School

# About Me

**I'm a SPED MOM—  
Just like you!**

**Mom to 2 boys with active  
IEPs**

**10+ years successful IEP  
advocacy**

**Former Teacher &  
Administrator**



Julie  Cole

# Using the Lingo to Channel the Mama Bear



# IEP

## Qualifying Conditions

A student's challenges must **get in the way of them accessing their curriculum / learning in the typical way** in order for intentional interventions to become warranted and implemented.

AUTISM

DEAF-BLINDNESS

DEAFNESS

EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE

HEARING IMPAIRMENT

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

MULTIPLE DISABILITIES

ORTHOPEDIC IMPAIRMENT

OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENT

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY (SLD)

SPEECH LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI)

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

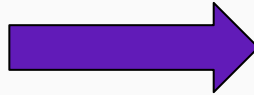
# Terms To Know

Accommodation	Change in the HOW of teaching techniques, materials or environment
AT	Assistive Technology
BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
FBA	Functional Behavior Assessment
GENED	General Education
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Act
IEE	Independent Educational Evaluation
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
Modification	Change in WHAT a student is expected to learn and demonstrate
PLP	Present Levels of Performance
PWN	Prior Written Notice
SAI	Specialized Academic Instruction
SLD	Specific Learning Disability
SPED	Special Education
SST	Student Success Team

# Accommodations Vs Modifications

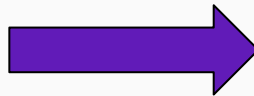
**\*\*Modifications impact the ability for students to earn a high school diploma.\*\***

**Accommodations** change **HOW** the student learns (or shows mastery of) the same expectations as all other students.



Extra time to complete assignments or tests, use of audio books, separate setting for tests, graphic organizers, word processing instead of handwriting, copies of class notes, closed captions on videos, etc.

**Modifications** change **WHAT** the student is learning.



Alternate curriculum at the student's level, significantly reduced workload\*, alternate assignments

***\*IF mastery of the topic can be shown with less math problems or with less sentences when writing then it is probably an accommodation.***

# Parent Concern Letter Verbiage: Be Specific

My child is not currently placed in their Least Restrictive Environment because ...

My child is entitled to a Free and Appropriate Education under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). They are not receiving this because.....

In order for my child to successfully access their curriculum they need.....

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ensures my child with a disability a right to programs that receive federal assistance. My child would benefit from the following accommodations to their educational program.....

***Get their attention by speaking their language.***

*Download a letter  
template at  
[languageofadvocacy.com](http://languageofadvocacy.com)*

# Mama Bear Tactics: Know What You Need





# Data Drives Needs. Needs Drive Goals. Goals Drive Services.

When it's action time:

**Send a dated request (in writing) to the school site administration for a formal evaluation.**

- Print a physical letter. Take it to the school office (OR send an email).
- Get it to the Special Education coordinator (usually the assistant principal or the principal).

**\*Always date your letter—the clock starts ticking the moment they receive that request for action.**

## California Special Education Timelines Calendar Days , Excluding School Holidays

### Request for Evaluation

District has **15 days** to respond to the request with a proposed Assessment Plan. Parents have **15 days** to respond the proposed plan.

### Assessments

From the day the Assessment Plan is signed, they have **60 days** to conduct assessments and conduct an IEP meeting to discuss results.

### Parent Written Request for IEP (current IEP in Place)

District has a **30 day** window to hold that meeting.

### Reviews

- Annual review for IEP Documents
- 3 year review to determine eligibility

50 State timeline spreadsheet



## IEP

Eligibility required from 1 of the 13 categories from IDEA

The child must need SPED in order to progress in school

Specially Designed Instruction and Services to Meet the Needs of the Individual Child (including accommodations and modifications)

Present Levels, Goals & Progress Monitoring

Procedural Safeguards for Parents

Annual Meeting with Parents

Every 3 year Evaluations for Eligibility

Does NOT Transfer to College

IEE option



No Cost to Parents

Established by Federal Government

Serves to Accommodate the Needs of Children in the Educational Setting

Requires Parental Consent to Assess to Determine Eligibility

The disability must interfere with the child's ability to learn in a general education classroom

## 504 Plan

Refers to Section 504 of the Federal Civil Rights Law of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Any Disability is Eligible which interferes with the child's ability to learn in General Education

Focuses on Accommodations that Improve Academic Functioning

Changes to the Learning Environment to enable access to curriculum

Re-evaluation as Needed

Annual Meetings Encouraged

College Accepted

Focus on Assistance- NO Measurable Goals




# Mama Bear Tactics: Successfully Front Load Your Team

# Your child is not just a number!

Prepare a student Brag Page (share with the team and anyone working with your child at the start of each new year).

Bring a few copies to meetings so team members know your child is a person and not just a number.

*You can fill in and print your own at [languageofadvocacy.com](http://languageofadvocacy.com)*

STUDENT PHOTO HERE	Name: _____	
	Age: _____	
Grade Level: _____		
Contact Information: _____		
My Strengths:	My Challenges:	
What Works Best for Me:	What Doesn't Work for Me:	
What Motivates Me:	What I'm Working On:	My Path:

# Success Chart

*-Setting up the team for success is a WIN  
WIN for everyone.*

*-The chart does not have to be centered  
around behavior. Modify the titles to include  
things like medical, allergies (food or other),  
communication (verbal and non-verbal),  
mobility challenges, etc.*

*You can fill in and print your own at  
[languageofadvocacy.com](http://languageofadvocacy.com)*

Strategies for Success					
Possible Triggers			How to Prevent Behavior		
Level 1 Behaviors		Level 2 Behaviors		Level 3 Behaviors	
Presents As:	Support By:	Presents As:	Support By:	Presents As:	Support By:



# Empowering The Mama Bear

# The parents are the 1st people listed on an *IEP Team*.

## Sec. 300.321 (a) IDEA

(a) General. The public agency must ensure that the IEP Team for each child with a disability includes—

(1) ***The parents of the child;***

(2) Not less than one regular education teacher of the child (if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment);

(3) Not less than one special education teacher of the child, or where appropriate, not less than one special education provider of the child;

(4) A representative of the public agency who—

(i) Is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities;

(ii) Is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum; and

(iii) Is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the public agency.

(5) An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results, who may be a member of the team described in paragraphs (a)(2) through (a)(6) of this section;

(6) ***At the discretion of the parent*** or the agency, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel as appropriate; and

(7) Whenever appropriate, the child with a disability.

## *You have the right to:*

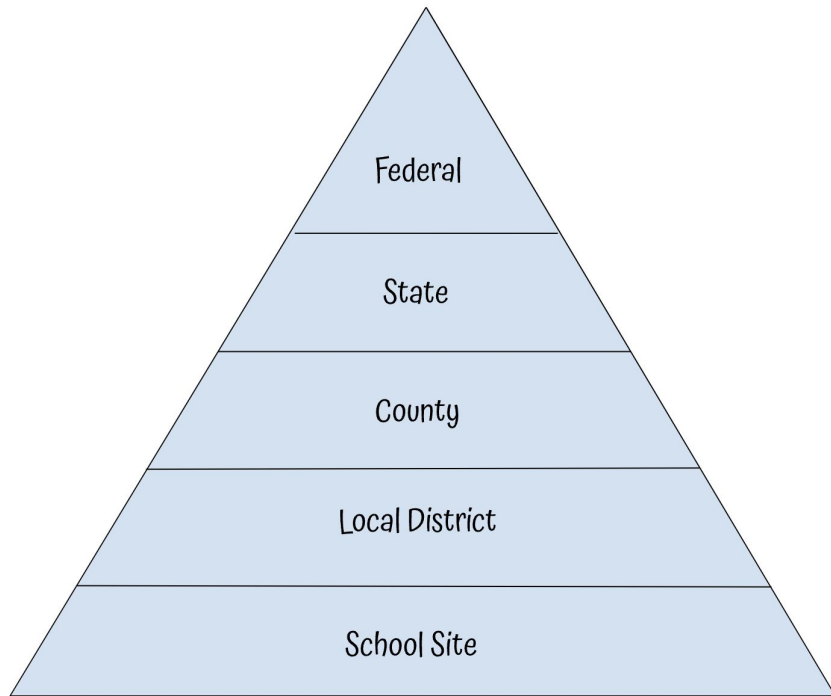
- Participate
- **Receive Prior Written Notice**
- Consent, Partial Consent or Refuse to Consent
- A Nondiscriminatory Assessment
- **Receive Independent Educational Evaluations**
- Access Educational Records
- **Stay Put in Current Setting if there is a Disagreement About Placement**
- File Complaints
- Be Informed of School Discipline and Alternate Placement
- Be Informed of Policies of Children who Attend Private Schools

# Know Your Rights

- **NEVER sign any level of consent the day of the meeting.**
- Take time to read, digest and proof the entire document. Other team members contribute their part—**you are the only one looking at the document as a whole.**
- You have the right to have your procedural safeguards read and explained to you in full detail.



# Resources at Every Level



Resource Levels



All levels have websites to explore. Use search terms like ***COMPLIANCE***, ***TIMELINE***, or ***SERVICE CONTINUUM*** to get answers quicker

- State Department of Ed
- County Department of Ed
- District Website
- School Site Website

# Federal Resources

Individuals With Disabilities Act (IDEA)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

# Who to Get Involved

School Site Teams often do not feel equipped to meet student needs.

## Round 1:

Always CC:

- Case Carrier
- All service providers that interact with your child (OT, Speech, PT, AT, APE, School Psychologist)

## Round 2\*: (on same thread and add)

- School Principal
- School SPED Coordinator

\*Wait 48 hours between rounds.

## Round 3\*: (on same thread and add)

- District SPED leadership
  - Assistant Superintendents / Directors in
    - SPED Services / Programs
    - Curriculum and Instruction

Go to the the SPED Administrative Staff page of your district and add them ALL

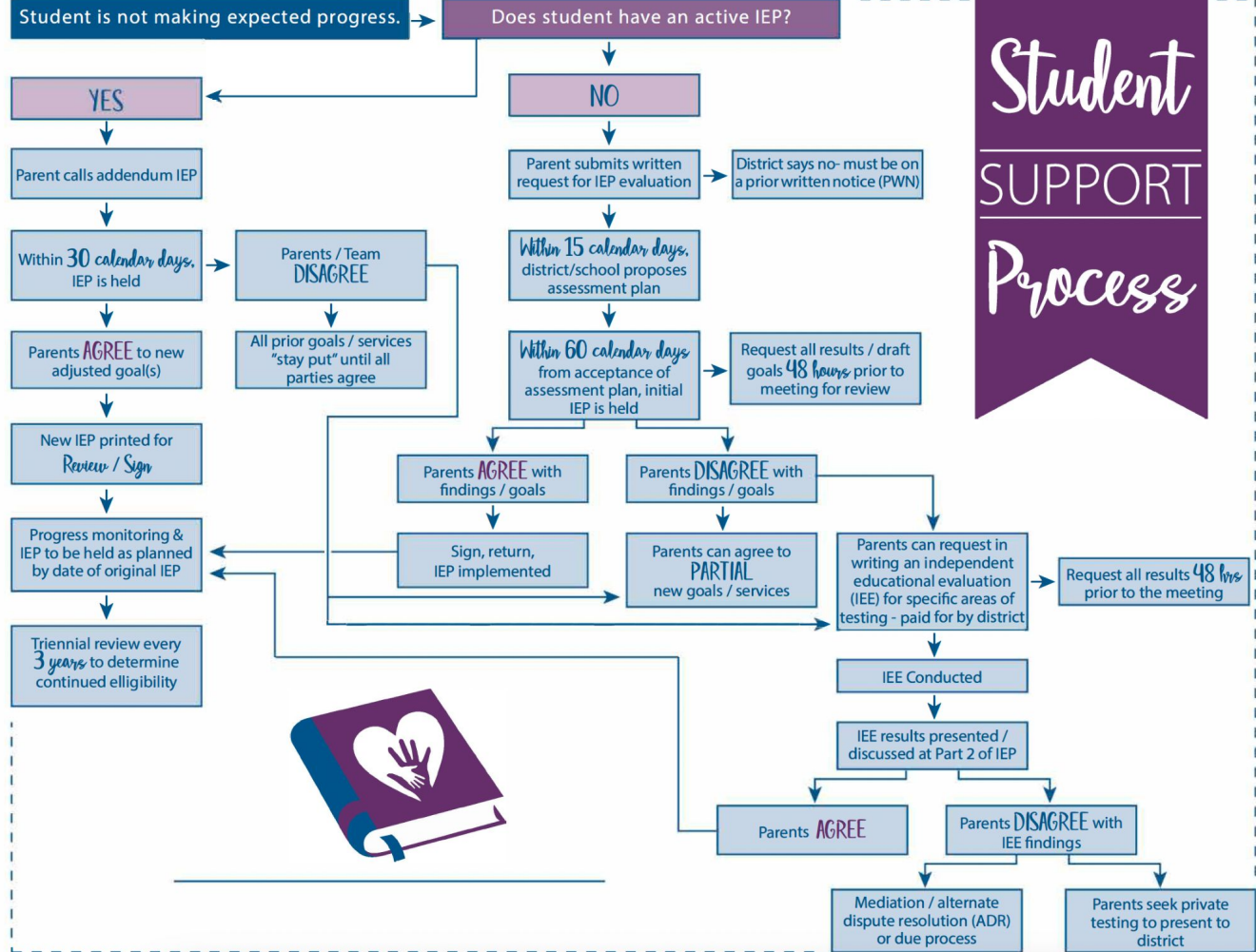
## Round 4\*: (on same thread and add)

- Superintendent
- Board Members

# Decision Tree

*What to expect when you don't agree .....*

*Download a copy at [languageofadvocacy.com](http://languageofadvocacy.com)*



# Top 3 Takeaways

1. Never sign to agree to anything (except that you attended) the day of the meeting.
2. Build the program backwards.
3. Understand and know your rights.



# Q & A



# Let's Connect—We've got this!

Questions? \* [julie@juliescole.com](mailto:julie@juliescole.com) \* [www.juliescole.com](http://www.juliescole.com)

