



The 5 E's to Advocating

Get all that your child needs to successfully thrive in their school environment.

- Educate** yourself.
- Envision** what your child needs.
- Embrace** the process.
- Empower** yourself with resources.
- Equip** yourself with tools.

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





“The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why.”

Mark Twain

Advocating is my WHY!

Educate Yourself



Educate Yourself: Common Terms



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

Educate Yourself: Qualifying Conditions



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

- An Educational Evaluation is done by team of school professionals to assess needs and show deficiencies.
- Your child's needs determine services, *not the category or diagnosis*.
- The primary eligibility category should match the issue that most impacts learning.
- Multiple eligibility areas are possible.

Educate Yourself: Accessing the Curriculum



- Just because a student is having some academic or emotional challenges does not automatically qualify them for services.
- A student's challenges must get in the way of them accessing their curriculum in the typical way in order for intentional interventions to become warranted and implemented.
- There are many layers of support to be explored to ensure the appropriate plan of action.

Understanding what this really means is crucial in navigating the system of student support.

A student's individual path for accessing their curriculum is just that--individual.

Educate Yourself: What to Expect

Home Vs. School Behaviors

-Behaviors and / or deficiencies must be *present at school* for interventions to be put into place.

Teams can get very creative with how to address things in the school setting.



When preparing for a meeting:

- A LOT of testing over a few week period
- A LOT of parent forms to fill out
- Results that may show more that you bargained for
- It is VERY COMMON to see things in your child that the school does not see.
- NO results or draft goals will be shared early unless you ask for them (48 hours prior to meeting)
- NO service options will be discussed until the meeting

Educate Yourself: What to Expect

A discrepancy between Intellectual Ability and Student Performance = Specific Learning Disability (SLD).

Many times students will struggle with a subject, but not technically qualify for Special Education and IEP services.

Speak their language = Use Data.

- Where does your child falls on the testing curve?
- Low Average / Below Average are red flags
(no data = no conversation)
- Is more testing needed to more accurately identify specific areas of challenge?
- You have the right to request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) at the expense of the district if you do not agree with initial assessment data presented.



Data Drives Needs.

Needs Drive Goals.

Goals Drive Services.

The IEP team (that means you too) determines the need for services and ultimately can decide to provide interventions that are needed even when the standardized data is not showing conclusively that the student “qualifies”.

Envision Your Child's Needs



Envision What Your Child Needs: Parent Concern Letter



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.

Envision What Your Child Needs: 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.



📖
📖
: **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:

NAME : Cliff Notes

Possible Triggers

- Academic Demands, non preferred tasks (tests)
- Separation from Mom
- Stern voice or excessive verbal redirection
- Stern discipline
- Loud noise
 - School bell, fire alarm, PA announcements
- Change in routine
- Loss of preferred activity
- Transition
- Loss of comfort items
 - Apple Watch, fidget ring, essential oil, or bracelets
- Schoolwork that is above her level (especially with reading)
- Peers misbehaving without adult correction
- Peers teasing her
- Discussing behavior in the moment

Strategies to Prevent Behavior

- Use a kind tone and present If-Then statements
 - I.e. You can do three problems, then _____
- Turn demands into favors/requests/choices.
 - "Can you show me you can do #1?" vs. "You need to start your work."
 - "Do me a favor and finish #1-5 because I need your help hole punching these papers."
- Send her on errands or give her tasks to help in the classroom like passing out papers.
 - She loves to gain authority figures' favor.
- Lower demands for the moment until she's recentered.
- Seat next to neurotypical peers vs. neurodivergent
- Use positive reinforcement and affirmations

Level 1 Behaviors

Level 2 Behaviors

Level 3 Behaviors

<i>Presents As</i>	<i>Support By</i>	<i>Presents As</i>	<i>Support By</i>	<i>Presents As</i>	<i>Support By</i>
-Quiet and one word responses -Grunts, noises -Non compliance -Covering ears -Illogical reasoning -Defensive body language: Arms crossed, eye roll, side eye -Appearing frantic	-offering previous strategies -distracting her: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5 senses - ask about a pet -lightening the mood -telling jokes or acting silly -taking deep breaths together -acknowledging her feelings vs. diminishing them	-Verbal outbursts -Refusal to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - go to class - work on assignment - follow directions -Inappropriate/strong language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "I hate..." - "You're terrible" - "Shutup" 	-offering previous strategies -offering a break <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - go for a walk - go to her safe place - see her safe person - not engaging in negotiations or arguing	- Foul language - Extreme statements -Threatening or actually harming herself or others -Tantrum -Unreasonable -Glossed over look	- moving her to a safe space - clearing the room of students - unnecessary adults, and dangerous objects - giving her space - not approaching - allowing her talk to Mom PHONE # - DO NOT RESTRAIN

(Shown with permission from chart designer Educator, Taryn Valdez)

Envision What Your Child Needs: Accommodations and Modifications

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.

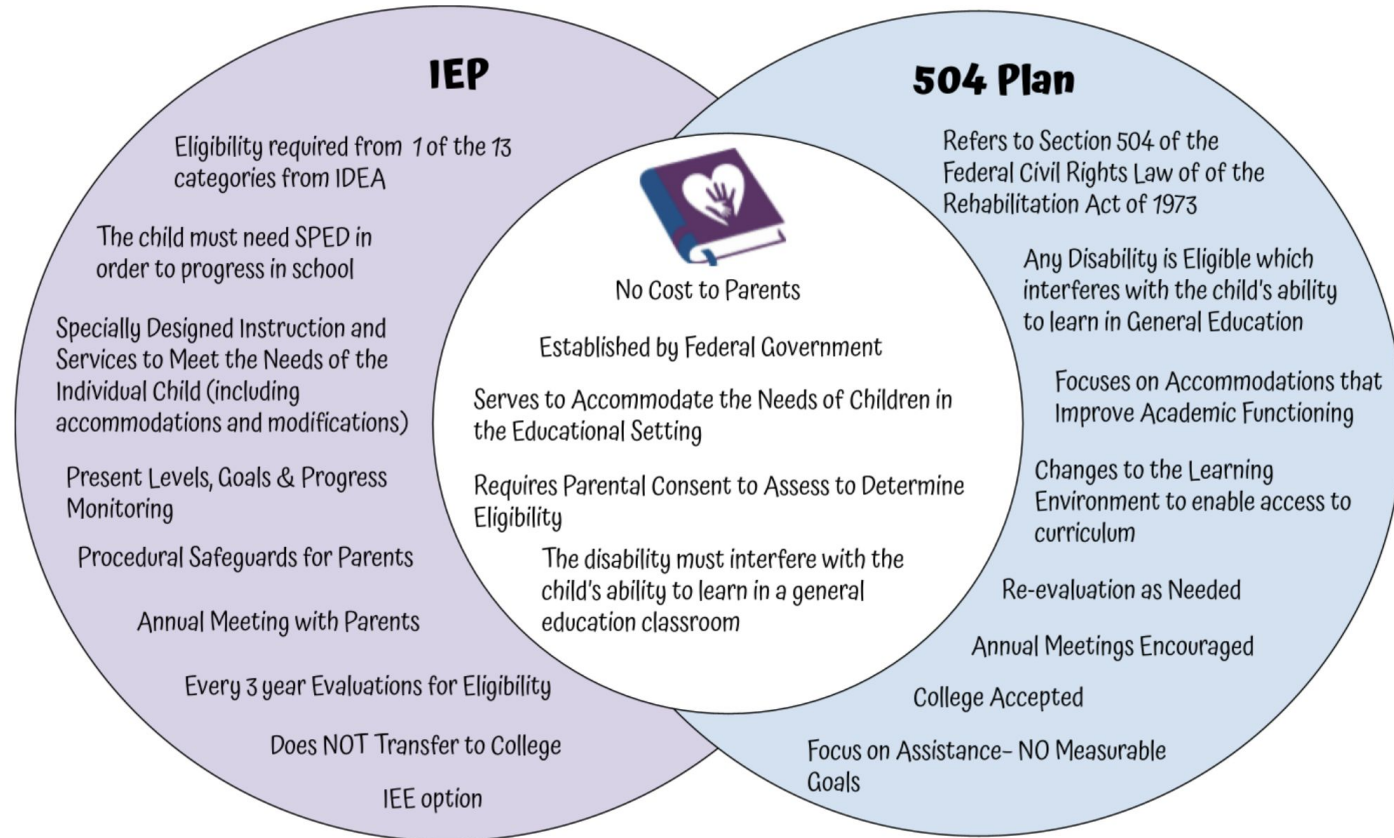
Modifications change **WHAT** the student is learning.



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.*

Envision What Your Child Needs: IEP vs 504 Plan



Envision What Your Child Needs: BIP



Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

- A BIP is a written plan that teaches and rewards good behavior.
- The purpose is to prevent or stop misbehavior, not just punish the child.
- The plan has three key parts:
 - List the problem behavior
 - Describes why it's happening
 - Puts in place strategies or supports to help
- Can be part of an IEP or 504 or stand alone
- Should be reviewed annually (or more frequently as needed)

-BIPs are formulated from data from a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA).

-ERMHS stands for *Educationally Related Mental Health Services*. These are related services given to children who need them in order to benefit from their special education services. (Screening will most likely occur as part of the FBA and be included in the assessment plan for the FBA.)

Envision What Your Child Needs: IHP



Individual Health Plan (IHP)

- Considers how to deal with what might happen with a student **medically** while the student is in school
- Designed to address medical issues that do not impact the student's learning
- Formal agreement that outlines the student's needs and a plan for addressing those needs
- Establishes student, family, and school roles for:
 - how medication will be administered
 - how the student's health status will be monitored
 - the location where care will be provided
 - who will be providing the care
- Provides the school with an accurate, centralized source of information about the student's medical needs, and with direction and authorization should a health need arise suddenly
- Can be part of an IEP or 504 or stand alone
- Should be reviewed annually (or more frequently as needed)

Envision What Your Child Needs: GOALS



Collect your own data.

- Work Samples
- Videos of at home work time
- Log time spent on / off task
- Log Behavior Outbursts

Present ideas for goals based on your data.

- State Standards
- Report Cards
- Developmental Milestones

Goals are at the heart of the IEP.

- They are based on deficiencies shown through the collection of data—formally or informally
- Goals are written to address the needs that show up in the data collection process.
- Services are assigned based on goals that are written.

Remember.....

***Data Drives Needs.
Needs Drive Goals.
Goals Drive services.***



Envision What Your Child Needs: SERVICES



Common Support Offerings in Special Education

-Know **all the options** and have the team justify why they are making their specific recommendations.

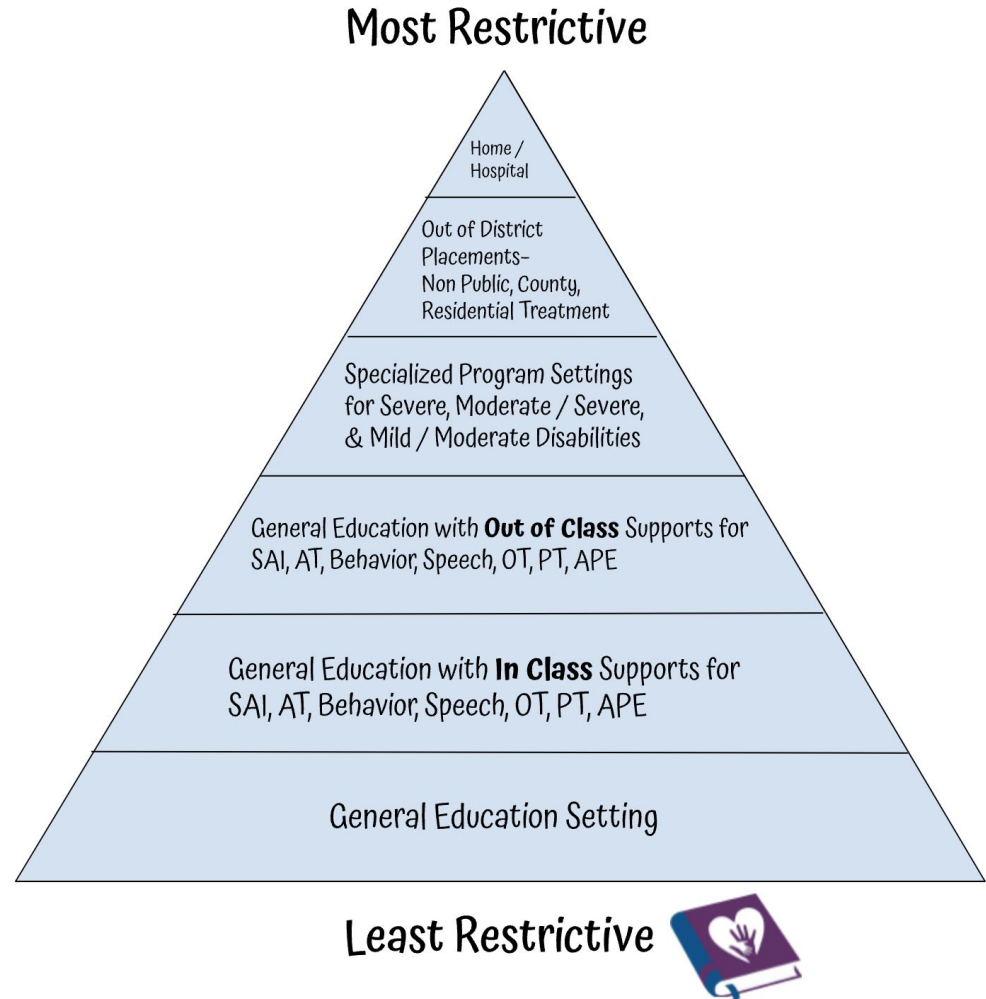
-Use terms like “**service continuum**” and “**complete listing of district services**” when you ask.

-Have the team justify **with data** why services were or were not offered.

	Push IN	Pull OUT	Individual	Group
Adaptive Physical Education	x	x		x
Assistive Technology	x	x	x	
Additional Program Support	x		x	x
Behavior Intervention Service	x	x	x	x
Counseling (Student and Family)		x	x	x
Learning Lab		x	x	x
Mild to Moderate		x		x
Moderate to Severe		x		x
Occupational Therapy	x	x	x	x
Physical Therapy	x	x	x	x
Specialized Academic Instruction	x	x	x	x
Speech Therapy		x	x	x
Structured Autism Class		x		x
Therapeutic Behavior Intervention		x		x

Envision What Your Child Needs: SERVICES

Most teams will have met to talk about what they feel is appropriate prior to the meeting you get to attend. They are coming to the table with the benefit of already considering all the options.



Embrace the Process



Embrace the Process- Getting Help



***It's a marathon,
not a sprint.***

***Get those running
shoes out and be
ready to keep
them on.***

After parent conferences and informal strategies have been exhausted....

Send a 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 or the principal.

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

Embrace the Process: Timelines



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

Districts have a timeframe for taking action. They can vary slightly by state, so check out this amazing spreadsheet by Lisa Lightner, founder of *A Day In Their Shoes* for state specific information.



Embrace the Process: Assessment Plan

-Categories should be marked with who will be conducting the assessments.

-When consent to assess, do so with a note that you are formally requesting their full report **48 hours prior to the meeting** where the results will be discussed.



Assessment Categories	Meaning
Academic / Pre-Academic Achievement	Formal and informal measures for Reading, Writing, Math. Measures for Pre-Academic can look like matching, sorting and counting
Speech Language	Ability to understand and use speech and language clearly and appropriately. Expressive, Receptive and Pragmatics should be evaluated.
Intellectual Development	Assessing cognitive skills that comprise general intellectual functioning both verbal and nonverbal abilities.
Social / Emotional / Adaptive Behavior	Classroom observations, report review from outside agencies, interviews and checklists
Perceptual / Processing	Measures of how the child processes instruction, auditory processing, visual processing, sensory motor skills, attention, association / conceptualization and expression
Health / Physical Status	Growth and development patterns, current physical conditions that relate to school performance, vision and hearing screenings, medical history, developmental history, medical records / reports and behavior patterns
Gross / Fine Motor Development	Large and small muscle coordination
Career / Vocational	Interests and abilities as they relate to future job and life skills

Embrace the Process: Pre-Meeting



Get Organized!

Get a notebook, a big one—the view kind so you can put a picture of your child right on the cover*.

Get ten dividers—the kind that have pockets in them for loose papers. Label your dividers with these sections and fill the notebook with these items.

Assessments- signed consent, school and formal, private

Behavior—plans, observations, school notices

Communication Log*

Correspondance –meetings, emails, notes home

Current IEP / 504 –signed, parent rights

Goal Tracking*

MISC— homework issues, food tracking, sleep tracking, medical records, medications

Report Cards- 12 months of report cards, standardized tests

Team Contacts*

Work Samples -concerns and progress for present levels


*Fillable and printable PDF link available in book

Embrace the Process: Pre-Meeting

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 from [book link](#).

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:
_____	_____	_____



Name: Matthew Cole

Age: 13

Grade Level: 7



Contact Information:

Julie Cole: 949-230-9668 Don Cole: 949-422-9881

My Strengths:

- Behavior. I want to please and follow the the rules.
- Memory. I've got an incredible one.
- Responsibility: I do what I am asked to do on time.

My Challenges:

- Receptive & Expressive Language: too much input too fast and I get lost; vocabulary is hard for me
- Perspective Taking: I expect everyone to think like I do.
- Change: It's hard when it's unexpected.

What Works Best for Me:

Front loading. Simplified Directions. Extra Processing Time. Visuals paired with words. Graphic Organizers. Sentence Frames. Patterned Language. Field of Choice. Repeated Exposure.

What Doesn't Work for Me:

- Using different language to ask me the same thing
- Rushing, sense of urgency
- Open ended questions

What Motivates Me:

- Paper Awards
- Public & Private Praise
- Good Grades

What I'm Working On:

- Critical Thinking
- Synthesizing Information
- Making Inferences
- Opinion / Argumentative Writing

My Path:

Hyperlexia can't stop me from getting my High School Diploma.

Embrace the Process: Pre-Meeting

- Communication
 - Agenda
 - Attendees
 - Draft Documents
- Recording
 - 24 hour Notice
- Excusal
 - Right to Reschedule
- Breaks
 - Take one if you need it!



Meeting Day Checklist

Binder

- The current IEP
- Current work samples that illustrate progress/concerns
- A list of current questions
- Evaluation reports from your child's most recent school or private evaluations
- An up-to-date IEP goal tracker
- Parent-School communication log that is up-to-date
- Proposed accommodations & suggested goals
- School contact sheet to update with new provider info

Extras

- A notepad & pen to take notes
- An audio recorder or smartphone recording app
- Your partner, advocate or a friend to take notes & support you
- A letter of parent concerns
- A folder to keep documents received during the meeting
- Tissues
- A bottle of water
- A collaborative mindset



Embrace the Process: Meeting Day

- Having questions prepared ahead of time is useful.
- Pick and choose what you feel is necessary for your child.
- ***BY NO MEANS DO YOU NEED TO ASK THEM ALL.***
- Much of this should be covered in the meeting without you even asking.



Questions to ask DURING the IEP

- How does everyone at the meeting know or work with my child?
- Could you tell me about my child's day so I can understand what it looks like?
- Can you explain how what you're seeing from my child is different from other kids in the classroom?
- Could we walk through the current program and IEP plan piece by piece?
- How is my child doing in making progress toward his/her IEP goals?
- What changes in goals would the team recommend?
Is this a SMART goal?
*SMART goals are: **Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented and Timely***
How is this goal measured and my child's progress monitored?
- How will my child be assessed according to grade level?
- Who will work on that goal with my child? How? When? Where and how often?
What training does the staff have in this specific intervention?
- What does that accommodation/instructional intervention look like in the classroom?
- What support will the classroom teacher have in putting these accommodations/interventions into place?
- What can I do at home to support the IEP goals?
- I'd like to see the final IEP before agreeing to any changes suggested at this meeting. When can I see a copy?
- When will the changes to his/her program begin?
- How will we let my child know about any program changes?
- Can we plan for keeping in touch about how everything is going?
- May I have a copy of the notes referenced during this meeting?
- If I have questions about the information I've been given about my child's rights, who's the person to talk to for answers?
- Who's the person to contact if I want to call another meeting?

Embrace the Process: Meeting Day

- Goals are a main part of the IEP.
- Students may have 1, or 20 or more!
- It's vital each goal is formulated to challenge your child to achieve but not set them up for failure.
- Goals should always be **SMART:**
(They shouldn't be vague or general.)

***Specific, Measurable, Attainable,
Results-oriented & Timely.***



Questions for Goal Setting

- Are the goals clearly written? Do they avoid undefined acronyms?
- Are the goals positively oriented?
(Focus on what will be accomplished not what won't be.)
- Do the goals reference and align with your child's present level of performance?
- Do the goals address your total child?
(Academic, Social, Emotional, Physical.)
- Are the goals standards-based?
(Is the desired outcome to reach grade-level academic standards?)
- Do the goals address how your child will gain skills? Do they identify instructional strategies?
- Can the goals be accomplished within the time frame of the IEP?
- Do the goals list ways to measure progress?
(Standardized tests, curriculum-based measurements, screening, observations, etc.)
- Is it clear what your child will be able to do when the goals are met?
- Do the goals set ambitious, but realistic, expectations for your child?
- Are the goals strengths-based?
(Do they utilize your child's strengths to address a particular need?)
- Did your child have a chance to give input on goals and share information about strengths?
- If your child is in their last year of elementary, middle or high school, do the goals include transition planning?

Embrace the Process: Meeting Day

*Insist on **leaving with a printed draft** that includes a notes section you have read over for accuracy.

***It's OK** if 1 meeting was not enough. You can hold a Part 2 or 3 or 4 —whatever it takes to get it right.

***It's not OK** for them to put off providing you with that draft. Always wait for it.

Being a member of the IEP team requires confidence, collaboration and a commitment to your child. Here are five things to remember while you are in the meeting:



MAKE IT PERSONAL



KEEP AN OPEN MIND



SEEK CLARIFICATION



STAY FOCUSED



ADVOCATE

Embrace the Process: Post Meeting

DO NOT SIGN your IEP at the end of the meeting.

- Take the time to really look it over as a complete document.
- Each provider prepares their section. **Your job is to look at it as a whole.**



What to do After the IEP



EMAIL



THANK



SIGN



UPDATE



ORGANIZE

Embrace the Process: Post Meeting

Safeguards to Signing

Ask yourself these things as you prepare to sign the document.

Once it's signed it takes another meeting to make any changes, so do all you can to ensure it's exactly how it should be.



Basics

- Does it give the date the new IEP will go in effect?
- Is your child's name, age, student ID number and grade level correct?
- Is all your contact information correct?
- Is the parent and guardian information correct?
- Does it give the name of your child's IEP case manager?

Clarity

- Are the annual goals SMART? (*Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented and Timely*)
- Are supports and services clearly stated with enough detail and with correct start and end dates?
 - Does it list who will be providing the support / service?
- Are accommodations (such as the use of assistive technology, extra time for testing, or classroom seating needs) clearly stated?
- Does it state how and when the school will measure and report your child's progress toward annual IEP goals? (*Usually in the form of benchmarks tied to progress report dates.*)
- Is the statement of your child's present level of performance based on information from you and your child's teachers?
 - Was that information obtained from data taken over a period of time?

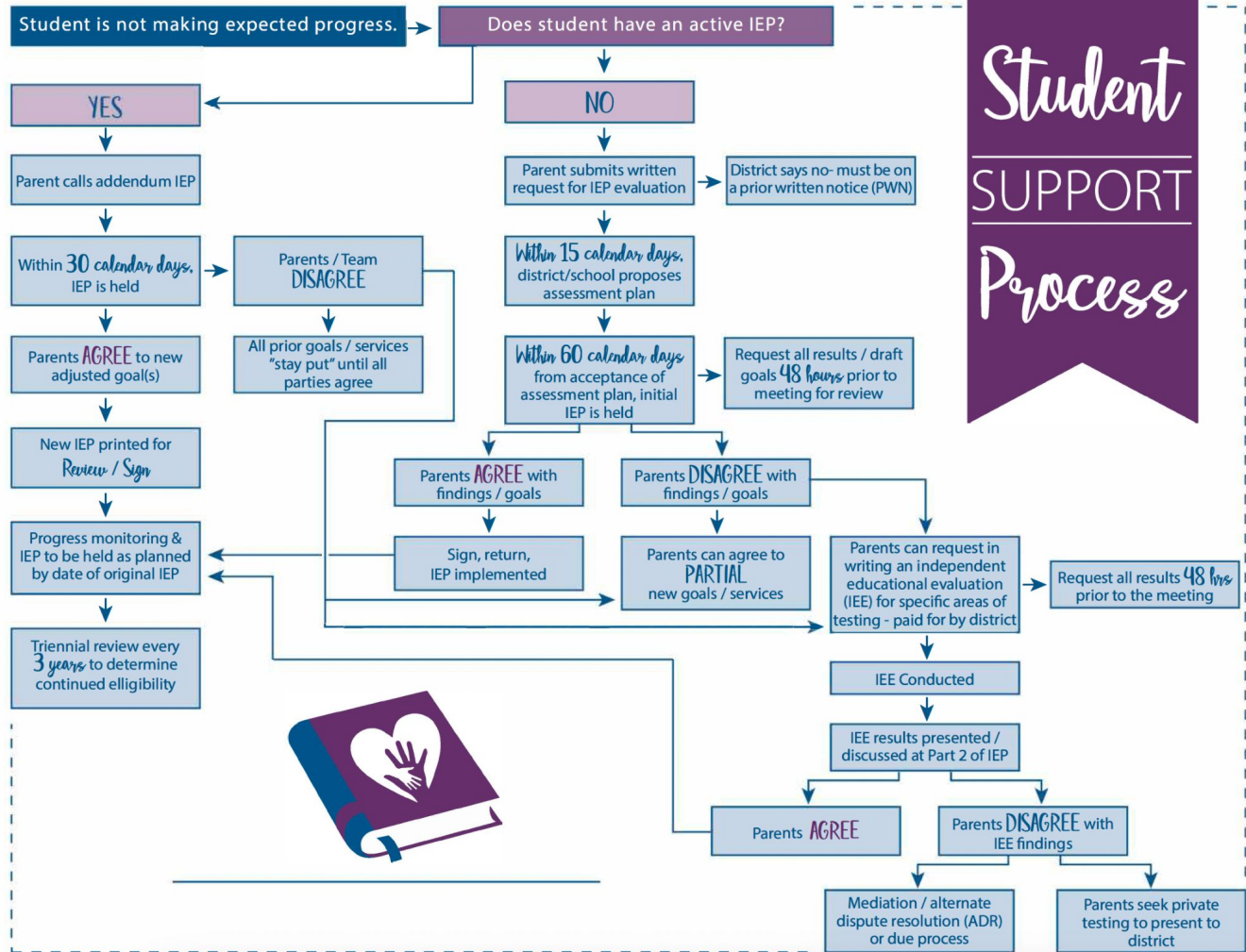
Accuracy

- Does it include everything you agreed to in the meeting, including accommodations, special education services and SMART annual goals?
- Are there any boxes checked that need to be or ones that are checked that should not be?
(*Check especially that your desires for standardized testing are correct as well as any accommodations for test taking are noted.*)
- If the team agreed to changes to the IEP at the meeting, do they appear in the final document?
- Are your parental concerns and commentary accurately represented?
- Is there anything in the IEP that you did not discuss or agree to in the meeting?

Embrace the Process: Post Meeting

What to expect when you don't agree

Get a copy [HERE](#) from the book.



Empower Yourself



Empower Yourself: Your Rights



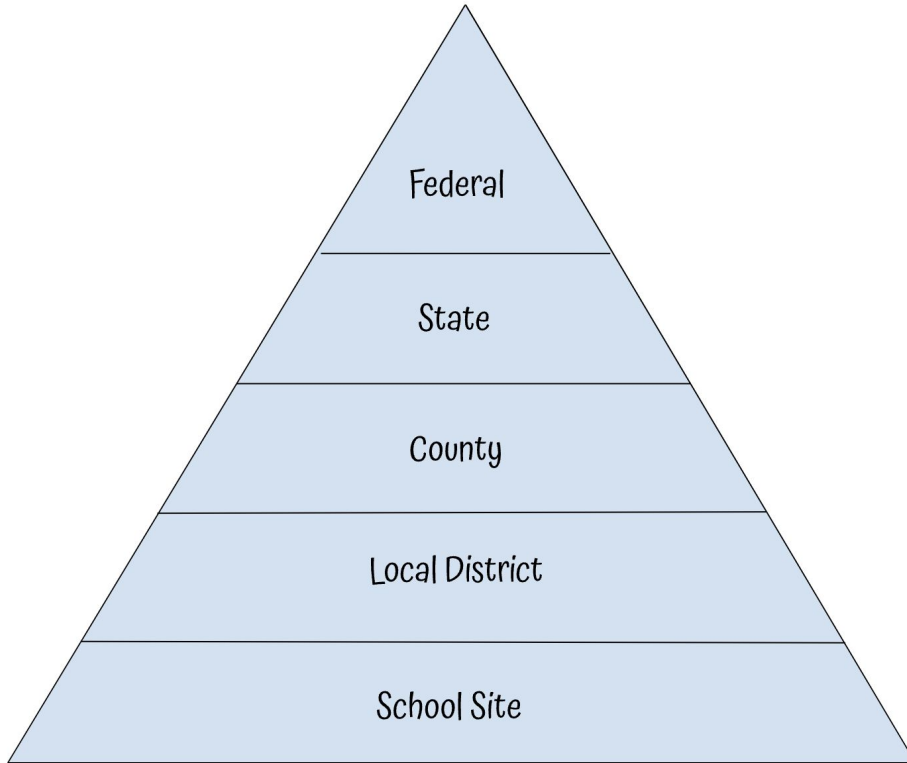
You have the right to:

- 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

Procedural Safeguards

- Offered at every meeting
- Read to you and explained if you choose

Empower Yourself: Resources



Resource Levels



Every level has 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



Empower Yourself: Federal Resources

Individuals With Disabilities Act (IDEA)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

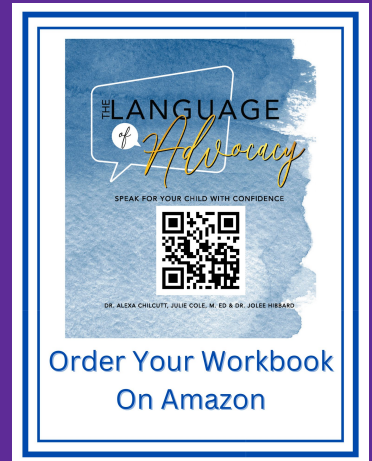
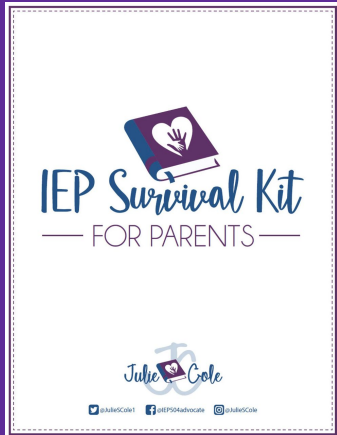


Empower Yourself: Advocacy Resources

JULIESCOLE.COM

MAMABEARSACTIVATE.COM

LANGUAGEOFADVOCACY.COM



The 5th E

Equip: Beyond the IEP



Equip: Beyond the IEP



What else can you do to support your family?

- Make you and your family's health a priority.
- Listen to your bodies and give them what they need.
- Acquire the right tools to be proactive and boost their lagging skills.
- Make slow and steady shifts.

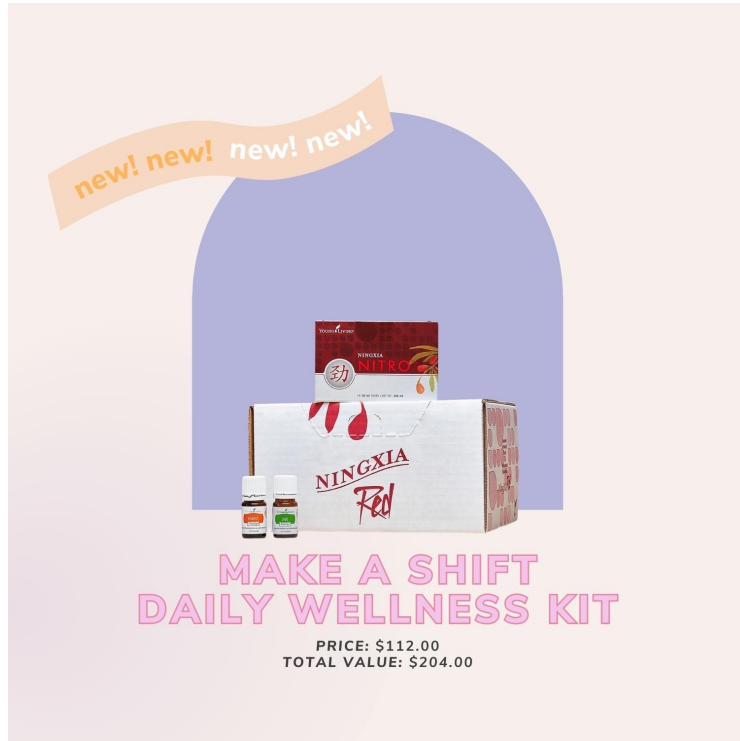
"The essential function of challenging behavior is to communicate to adults that a kid doesn't possess the skills to handle certain demands in certain situations."

-Dr Ross W. Greene

Where do I start?

- Emotions
- Gut
- Sleep
- Energy / Focus

Equip: Beyond the IEP



new! new! new! new!

MAKE A SHIFT
DAILY WELLNESS KIT

PRICE: \$112.00
TOTAL VALUE: \$204.00

All Systems Support

JUST A DROP OF NINGXIA...

- * Supports a healthy immune system
- * Helps us be proactive against all the germs coming our way
- * Provides energy support
- * HUGE source of antioxidants
- * Support brain and joint health
- * Supports healthy hormone levels
- * Supports healthy blood sugar levels
- * Can help curb sugar cravings
- * Whole-food, nutrient dense supplement full of vitamins, minerals, amino acids and polyphenols

new! new! new! new!



MAKE A SHIFT ESSENTIAL SOLUTIONS KIT

PRICE: \$112.00
TOTAL VALUE: \$201.00

Emotions & Sleep Support

new! new! new! new!



MAKE A SHIFT HAPPY, HEALTHY HOME KIT

PRICE: \$112.00
TOTAL VALUE: \$214.00

All Systems Support

Equip: Beyond the IEP

Start that shift by learning what we do in our home to support learning beyond having a solid IEP in place. Download the free guide.



The cover of the 'Ready to Learn' guide, set against a purple background. At the top, there is a grid of dots in the upper right corner. Below it, an illustration shows a white soap bar in a brown dish next to four small bottles of essential oils in blue, purple, and green. The title 'Ready to Learn' is written in large, bold, white sans-serif font on a dark purple rectangular background. To the right of the title is a blue square logo with a white outline of a drop containing the text 'THE TRUTH ABOUT Oils'. Below the title, the subtitle 'Daily Protocols for Student Success' is written in a smaller blue font. At the bottom, the text 'Your products cannot work if you don't use them!' is written in a small black font.

Let's Connect–We've got this!

Questions? * julie@juliescole.com * 949-230-9668 * www.juliescole.com





Top 3 Takeaways

1. Never sign to agree to anything the day of the meeting.
2. Build the program backwards.
3. Understand and know your rights.



Q & A