



SPED Classifications:

Autism
Deaf-blindness
Deafness
Developmental Delay
Emotional Disturbance
Hearing Impairment
Multiple Disabilities
Orthopedic Impairment
Other Health Impairment
Specific Learning Disability
Speech/Language Impairment
Traumatic Brain Injury
Visual Impairment

MAIN TERMS & DEFINITIONS:

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1990) law states “all children regardless of ability are entitled to a free and appropriate public education.”

FAPE: Each child with a disability is entitled to a *free and appropriate public education* that emphasizes special education designed to meet the child’s individual needs

IEP: Individualized Education Plan is a legal written plan for a child with a disability that is portable from state to state and involves individualized services & instruction with specific measurable goals.

504: Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973), a 504 is a plan for child to access learning at the school with accommodations and changes to the environment that help the child access learning.

LRE: Least Restrictive Environment means that children with disabilities should be educated to the maximum extent possible with their nondisabled peers.

PPT: Planning & Placement Team meeting is where a parent and the school communicate about a child in special education’s plan. Types include initial eligibility, annual review, & triennial.

IEE: Independent Educational Evaluation is an evaluation conducted by an independent examiner at the school’s expense & must be considered by the school in decisions relating to the child. May include any skill related to educational needs.

Phrases to Watch:

- **“Your child is not eligible for special education because he is doing fine academically.”** IDEA specifically states that grades & performance are not relevant to determining if a student needs special education.
- **“The goals are all written, all you have to do is sign.”** You as parent are an integral part of the IEP process, as stated in IDEA. If your IEP is all prepared when you arrive, watch out!
- **“You should take your child to the doctor & request medication.”** ILLEGAL. School administrators are not doctors and are not qualified to determine if a child should be medicated.
- **“We decided that your child no longer needs xxx services, so we are stopping them.”** IDEA requires that removal of services requires a formal evaluation, data, and an IEP meeting.
- **“We don’t have that service/teacher/intervention at our school.”** Not your problem. The I in IEP stands for Individual, so if your child needs a service that they don’t have, the school needs to find a way to provide it.
- **“We can’t include your parent concerns in the IEP because we disagree.”** Procedural safeguards say otherwise. Parents cannot be censored by the school.
- **“Your child should be in a self-contained classroom because she is difficult to handle.”** A self-contained classroom may not be the Least Restrictive Environment. IDEA requires the school evaluate and use data to determine the appropriate placement.
- **“I need to take this to my supervisor to get permission to increase services.”** IDEA procedural safeguards require that a school district administrator be present at all IEP meetings to make these determinations.
- **“We are keeping the same goal even though he has not made progress.”** Lack of progress is a sign that either the goal or the method is not appropriate. The IEP team needs to discuss options.
- **“This is a charter school, so we don’t have resources to serve a student with special education needs.”** Any school receiving government funding must provide support for special education services.
- **“We are not allowed to assess your child for an IEP unless we first try RTI.”** Not true. The Department of Education put out a memo stating that RTI cannot be used to delay or deny special education services.



DID YOU KNOW ...

- ⇒ Parents are an important part of the process!
- ⇒ Parents can call a PPT meeting.
- ⇒ Learning is not just academic! Learning is social, emotional, & behavioral as well.
- ⇒ You can record your PPT meeting.
- ⇒ Another parent can attend the PPT with you.
- ⇒ Your PPT documents should be translated.
- ⇒ You are entitled to an interpreter at your meeting.

WHAT TO DO:

- ⇒ Write down talking points that focus on your child's weaknesses and what has been done to help him so far.
- ⇒ Speak to your team before hand to make sure everyone is on the same page. This includes teachers, service providers, doctors, etc. If possible, see if they can attend the meeting with you.
- ⇒ Bring copies of your most recent and relevant evaluations and reports. You are entitled to look at your child's complete school records as well so ask your school to make copies of those files or make an appointment to see them yourself.
- ⇒ Document everything and take notes – nothing is off the record! Ask to record the meeting if the other parent can't attend, or you are not comfortable with your ability to remember everything.
- ⇒ Fill out the forms the school gives you for any school testing or evaluation. If you don't fill out those forms, your voice will not be incorporated into the evaluation process.

WHAT TO SAY:

- ⇒ *Say:* "I want an appropriate education program. My child needs the support of xxx in order to make meaningful progress. Without xxx. He/she will not benefit from classroom instruction."
- ⇒ *DO NOT SAY:* "I want the best education for my child" or "My child deserves the best education possible." The school district is not obligated to provide the best education for your child, only what is appropriate.
- ⇒ *DO NOT SAY:* "I want to maximize my child's potential." See above.
- ⇒ *Say:* "I am here to work with the school district as a collaborative partner and see what programs the public school has to offer."
- ⇒ *DO NOT SAY:* "I know you can't provide for my child's needs" or "You don't have what he/she needs."

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU DO NOT AGREE:

- ⇒ DO: Request a new meeting. Pursue an IEE (Independent Educational Evaluation).
- ⇒ DO: Contact a parent advocacy organization. Parent advocacy organizations will provide a special education advocate to parents at little/reduced cost.
- ⇒ DO: Pursue due process – file for an impartial hearing.
 - Mediation
 - Settlement
 - Litigation