



# HOW CAN I ADVOCATE FOR MY CHILD AT AN IEP MEETING?

## KNOW YOUR SPECIAL EDUCATION RIGHTS: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS IN KANSAS

This flyer is part of a series of one-page flyers covering over 30 Special Education topics. They are designed to give you “just in time” information for each step of the Special Education process. You can download the whole series in the form of an extensive booklet, or simply choose the topics and view the individual flyers as you need them. See the whole series here.



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Advocating for your child at an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting can seem overwhelming. With the right preparation, the IEP process can be incredibly productive for your child. This information will help you prepare. This information can help you prepare. Nobody knows your child better than you do. This is why you are an important member of the IEP team. You can be your child’s best advocate by guiding the IEP team to address your child’s unique needs.

## What can I do *before* the meeting?

- **Keep a log** of people who work with your child (teachers, other school staff, doctors, therapists, etc.). It may help to have a notebook just for this log.
  - Include their name, phone number, and email address.
  - Write down the dates and times that you talk to them.
  - Write down notes when you talk to them, including anything they said that they would do for your child.
- **Communicate in writing** when you talk to the school (email or letters).
  - If you write a letter, keep a copy for yourself.
- **Invite someone** to go with you to the IEP meeting.
  - Bring someone that knows your child. This could be:
    - Someone that works with your child outside of school (social worker, counselor, doctor, etc.)
    - A family member or friend
    - An advocate from an organization related to your child’s disability
  - If they can’t go, they can also write a letter to the school about what they think your child needs in school.
  - You don’t need permission from the school to bring someone. You can bring anyone you’d like to the IEP meeting.
- **Ask the school for a copy** of your child’s current IEP.
- **Prepare for the meeting.** Use the guide on the next page and bring it with you.

## Parent Guide to Special Education



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Families Together, Inc.

<https://bit.ly/3xhXhp9>



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## Request for Evaluation

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<https://bit.ly/37mMKhT>

<p><b>1. What is my child good at? (in school and outside of school)</b></p>	<p><b>2. What does my child need that they are not getting at school?</b></p>
<p><b>3. What is working in the IEP? What can we celebrate?</b></p>	<p><b>4. What needs to be changed or added in the IEP?</b></p>
<p><b>5. Of the needs listed in #2 and #4, which ones would I compromise on?</b></p>	<p><b>6. Of the needs listed in #2 and #4, which ones will I not compromise on? (This is where you may need to advocate the most.)</b></p>

### What can I do *during* the meeting?

- If the school agrees to something, **ask that they write it in the IEP**. Agreements should be written down.
- **Note Taking Options** – You can record IEP meetings, take notes, or ask a friend or IEP team member to take notes.
- **Be respectful** while speaking up for your child.
- **Try to stay calm**. Ask to take a short break or to continue the meeting later, if necessary.

Remember, parents may choose to not sign the IEP. However, in general, the services in the IEP will still be provided even if a parent refuses to sign the final version. It is better to **work with the IEP team to resolve issues** before it ever comes to that.

**Disclaimer:** This fact sheet is not intended to provide specific legal advice. If you need legal advice, please contact an attorney. Only an attorney can give you specific legal advice based on your particular situation. We try to update our materials regularly, but the law can change frequently. This publication is based on the law at the time that it was written. Future changes in the law could make information in this fact sheet inaccurate.



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