

# Before Your Next Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting: Tips for Teachers of Transition-age Students

As the teacher of transition-age students with disabilities, every day you accompany your students on their journey toward self-determination. You help them find the courage and confidence to speak for themselves, dream up their own futures, and learn the skills they need to get there.

Teaching transition-age students requires you to transition, too, from your role leading the classroom to a new role where you follow your students' lead, as they develop their own personal vision of themselves and forge a path to the future they want.

One of the most important places to follow your students' lead is in their IEP meetings. These tips from parents of transition-age students are for you:

**Don't walk into your next IEP meeting with your shoes on.**

*Take them off and step inside your student's shoes for a while.*

**Don't check your honesty at the door.**

*Say "I don't get it" if you don't, and give your student another chance to tell you what they're trying to tell you.*

**Don't say "Trust me."**

*Say "I'm listening."*

**Don't say "Let me explain."**

*Say "Help me understand."*

**Don't say "This is just how we do things."**

*Say "There must be another way. Let's figure this out together."*

**Don't let your student experience that nothing changes when they speak for themselves.**

*Show them that their input makes a difference in their services and supports.*

**Don't teach your student that whatever they question, they can learn to accept.**

*Teach them that their questions are important.*

**Don't be afraid to say "yes" to your student's requests.**

*Help them connect their requests to their rights.*

**Don't forget what you've taught your students since they were little, that knowledge is power.**

*Listen to your student's knowledge of their own experience and help them find power in it.*

**Don't doubt that class is in session at every IEP meeting your student attends.**

*And the lesson they're learning is whether their voice matters.*

See PACER's Companion Document: [IEP Meeting Checklist for Teachers of Transition-age Students](#)