



Tips for advocating at school

This tip sheet will give you three tips for advocating at school so your child with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) gets the support they need.

Get it in writing, put it in writing

Always ask the school to put IEP decisions in writing. They can do this in a document called a Prior Written Notice (PWN). You should also make all of your requests in writing. For example, if you ask the school to change something in your child's IEP, put the request in a letter or an email and keep a copy for yourself.

Ask the right question to the right person

Find out who oversees your area of concern. If it is something that happens in the regular education classroom, start with asking the regular education teacher. If the issue is your child's IEP or special education services, start with the IEP case manager. If you don't get a response from the designated person or are not comfortable speaking with them about the issue, find out who supervises that staff member and reach out to them.

Know your basic rights

You have the right to say no to a special education evaluation and special education services. Your child cannot be evaluated or begin to receive special education services without your permission.

You have the right to disagree with an IEP team decision or your child's IEP.

You have the right to receive the school's denial of your request in writing. That denial usually comes as a Prior Written Notice (PWN).

If you and the IEP team disagree, ask them about dispute resolution procedures, which is a process used to resolve differences.