



Tips & Resources for a **SUCCESSFUL** IEP Meeting

ieautism.org/resources

 **AUTISM SOCIETY**
Improving the Lives of All Affected by Autism
Inland Empire



The Special Education system is often a stressful and confusing maze of laws, acronyms, and rights. How do you ensure that your child has the supports and services they need to be successful in their educational endeavors? Knowledge and understanding of the rights guaranteed under the Federal IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) is key and the best weapon you can have in your advocacy tool kit.

One of the best resources is from [Disability Rights California](https://www.disabilityrightscalifornia.org/), a federally mandated, non-profit organization established to protect and advocate for the human, civil and service rights of Californians with developmental disabilities. Staffed by attorneys and advocates, they have the most comprehensive collection information related to California Special Education, including an online version of "Special Education Rights and Responsibilities". Publications available in Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Spanish and many other languages. <https://www.disabilityrightscalifornia.org/publications/serr-special-education-rights-and-responsibilities>

Table of Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Before the IEP: 8 Tips for IEPs..... | 3 |
| IEP Trainings..... | 4 |
| Online and Phone Support..... | 5 |
| Advocates and Attorneys..... | 6 |

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8 Tips to Prepare for a Successful IEP Meeting

IEP meetings can be exhausting! Preparing will help you feel less anxious and more focused on how to meet the needs of your child. IEP meetings are supposed to be a team effort in building a plan that will ensure your child's success. These are tips from parents who have been there.

1. Be organized!

Invest in a 3-hole punch and a 3-ring binder. It helps if you have one binder where you keep all your child's IEPs, assessments, and any other important paperwork.



2. Write a list of issues

Start a list a few weeks before the meeting and write things as they come up. Having a list helps you ensure you address them at the meeting.



3. Ask for evaluations/assessments at least 3 days to the meeting.

The information you read in these reports may bring up emotion. It can trigger feelings of sadness to realize your child is behind his grade level or anger if you find your child did not make a lot of progress on goals. This gives you time to process, understand the information and take notes on questions or issues that arise. Make sure the assessments are showing the areas of need you know your child has.



4. "What are your hopes are for your child?"

Know how you are going to answer the "What are your hopes are for your child?" Tell them! Whether you want your child to go to college, find a job, be safe in the community, enjoy family and friends. This helps the school understand what kind of future you envision for your child.



5. Make sure all necessary people will be there.

Review the written notice of the IEP meeting will include a list of attendees. Do you need the Occupational Therapist there? The Speech therapist?

Notify the school if you intend to bring someone from outside the school. The person you bring with you doesn't have to be an expert. It can be someone who knows your child needs, or someone just to take notes while you listen.



6. Make sure you have enough time for the IEP.

The school must take steps to ensure one or both of the parents of a child with a disability are present at each IEP Team meeting or are afforded the opportunity to participate. You can ask to reschedule to allow more time, or make it clear you will need to have second meeting.



7. Decide if you want your child to participate in the IEP meeting.

We all want children to grow up to be able to advocate for themselves in whatever way they can. For some students it is not appropriate for them to attend. Others may want to write a letter or do a power point presentation about things that are important, and they want the team to know. Some children may attend for the first few minutes to understand there is a group of people who are trying to help make their year successful while other students may run the entire meeting.



8. Remember, you do not have to sign the IEP document that you agree/do not agree at the IEP meeting.

You absolutely can sign that you participated in the IEP meeting, however, you have the right not to sign it for agreement or disagreement at the IEP meeting. You can take the IEP home to review it to make sure you understand everything and did not forget anything. You can tell the IEP team at the beginning of the meeting (or end) "We want to take the IEP home and we will look it over and return it, signed, in two or three days." If you do not sign, any new services you talked about at the IEP meeting cannot start and your child's previous IEP (if you have one already in effect) must stay in effect until replaced by a fully completed and signed new IEP.

IEP Online Trainings

Advocates for Angels

(909) 841-2600

<http://advocatesforangels.com>

Fee. Advocates for Angels provide experienced advocates/consultants to work with families to ensure their child receives an appropriate education to meet their unique needs in the least restrictive environment. Will attend IEP, 504 and SST meetings, conflict resolution and mediation, participate in team meetings and case conferences, conduct classroom and DIS observations, and work with families navigating compliance procedures. Advocates for Angels focuses on ensuring that children with IEP's receive an inclusive education with emphasis on a transition plan that will prepare them for an independent future.

Wrightslaw

www.wrightslaw.com

Online information about special education law, education law, and advocacy for children with disabilities. A consultation with Pete Wright, Esquire available for a fee.

In Person Trainings for IEPs

Exceptional Parents Unlimited (EPU)

<https://www.epuchildren.org/>

844-445-0305

Free service for San Bernardino County residents only (TASK does Riverside County). Provides free services in English and Spanish. Provides free workshops (such as IEP, 504, Transition); telephone advocacy, and in person IEP clinics. Does not attend IEPs with parents. Can help on special ed and Regional Center issues.

Online and Phone Support

Short question about something specific? Online and phone support.

California Department of Education

1 (800) 926-0648

www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/fp/

Free. Provides technical assistance information and resources for parents, school districts, advocates, agencies and others of procedural safeguards regarding students between ages 3 and 21 with disabilities and their educational rights. Online publications available.

Disability Rights California

<https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/publications/serr-special-education-rights-and-responsibilities>

Free. A federally mandated, non-profit organization established to protect and advocate for the human, civil and service rights of Californians with developmental disabilities. Staffed by attorneys and advocates, they have the most comprehensive collection information related to California Special Education, including an online version of "Special Education Rights and Responsibilities". Publications available in Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Spanish and many other languages.

Exceptional Parents Unlimited (EPU)

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advocacy, and in person IEP clinics. Does not attend IEPs with parents. Can help on special ed and Regional Center issues.

State Council on Developmental Services (SCDD)

685 East Hospitality Lane, Suite 125,
San Bernardino

(909) 890-1439

www.scdd.ca.gov

Free services to individuals with developmental disabilities; advocates for coordinated, comprehensive community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance and works to ensure full access to these services.

Team of Advocates for Special Kids (TASK)

www.taskca.org

(951) 328-1200 Inland Empire

Conducts numerous Spanish/English Workshops FREE for Riverside County. IEP consultations.

Advocates and Attorneys

Need someone to attend your IEP with you or have more than a simple question? Advocates versus attorneys Currently, there is no license or certification to be a special education advocate. However, some organizations like the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA) have training programs. An attorney must have a license to practice law in California.

Adams Esq

3895 Brockton Avenue, Riverside

www.adamsesq.com

Attorney Jean Murrell Adams opened the law firm of Adams Esq, a Professional Corporation, to provide high quality legal service at no cost to qualifying parents of children with special needs. Her own experience fighting for the rights of her exceptional child prompted her to dedicate her career to helping other parents. Adams Esq focuses exclusively on special education law. With locations in Los Angeles, Oakland, Riverside and Sacramento, these attorneys are committed to helping children with disabilities obtain a free and appropriate education throughout California and Nevada.

American Advocacy Group

2082 Business Center Dr Ste 235, Irvine

844-255-4477

<http://www.americanadvocacygroup.com/>

Affordable advocacy services that benefit individuals diagnosed with developmental and physical disabilities and their families. Provides advocacy services in the areas of: In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), IHSS Appeals, Conservatorship, Educational Advocacy, and Due Process Representation.

Amster Law Firm

1976 S. La Cienega Blvd. #353, Los Angeles

(213) 444-6028

www.amsterlawfirm.com

Represents individuals with special needs in special education and community services matters, including regional center and In-Home Supportive Services. Amster Law Firm is committed to a person-centered approach. Age, race, gender, income, educational level, and/or level of English proficiency should not determine which services an individual with special needs receives.

AOTS Group (advocates)

41593 Winchester Rd. Suite 200, Temecula (951) 251-4437

29015 Garland Ln, Menifee (951) 667-3477

www.aotsgroup.com

AOTS can help you understand, develop and review these plans to ensure your child has an opportunity to receive a free appropriate public education and has the supports they need to be successful in school. AOTS can help you identify local providers to evaluate your child; can attend IEP meetings and more. Services all of Riverside and San Diego County, parts of Los Angeles and Orange County.

Brian Allen (advocate)

(661)878-8538 (661) 942-8186 or (661) 264-7351

advocate_dude@yahoo.com

Educational Advocate with over 18 years of experience.

Community Access Center (advocates)

6848 Magnolia Avenue, Suite 150, Riverside (951) 274-0358

74-390 Hwy 111, Palm Desert, (760) 568-9301

550 E. 6th Street, Beaumont (951) 769-8539

www.ilcac.org

Free service for Riverside County residents. Can attend IEPs or IPPs for Regional Center.

California Special Needs Law Group – Richard L. Isaacs (Attorney)

1901 Newport Blvd. Suite 350, Costa Mesa

(888) 900-0744

www.csnlg.com

Provides legal services at an affordable cost. Fills the void for families who can't afford a typical attorney but who also do not qualify for legal aid services.

Disability Rights California (Attorney)

1 (800) 776-5746

www.disabilityrightsca.org

Free service, but may not take your case. Federally mandated, non-profit organization established to protect and advocate for the human, civil and service rights of Californians with developmental disabilities. Visit site for the online version of "Special Education Rights and Responsibilities".

Disability Rights Legal Center, at College of Law, University of LaVerne

320 East D Street, Ontario

1-866-999-3752

www.disabilityrightslegalcenter.org

Free and low-cost education advocacy program. Services provided in English, Spanish, ASL and other languages. The Education Advocacy Program represents families of students with disabilities in special education proceedings, including Individual Education Plans (IEP's) meeting, mediation due process hearings, and government complaints.

Economou Law Group (Attorney)

536 E. Rowland St., Suite B, Covina, CA 91723

(626) 765-9607

<http://economoulawgroup.com>

Economou Law Group is dedicated to providing high attention representation to its clients. Free consultations are offered for all matters handled, including both educational matters and estate planning matters. Have extensive experience through cases with all school districts in the Orange County, Los Angeles, Antelope Valley, Riverside and San Bernardino areas.

H & H Advocacy and Consulting, LLC (advocates)

2900 Adams St. C180 Riverside, CA 92504

(951) 977-9530

<http://hhadvocacyandconsulting.org/>

The goal of our organization is to provide each consumer with individualized support and information. Whether it be regarding the Social Security Administration, School Districts, or preparing to enter or re-enter the workforce, we strive to provide specific and individualized services to enhance their personal situation.

Hope Consulting and Advocacy (advocate)

Linda Higgins

13657 Norton Ave Chino, CA 91710

909-525-0763

<https://www.facebook.com/HopeConsultingandAdvocacy/?ref=bookmarks>

Specializing in Advocacy for Special Education or we can work together on a consultant basis. We also provide Advocacy for IHSS services.

Inland Counties Legal Services Inc.

(888) 245-4257

Offices in Blythe, Indio, Rancho Cucamonga, Riverside, San Bernardino, Victorville

www.inlandlegal.org

ICLS is committed to securing justice and equality for low-income persons who otherwise would not have access to the judicial system. Offers high quality legal assistance through advocacy and community legal education. ICLS is a non-profit 501c(3) corporation serving Riverside and San Bernardino Counties and receives federal, state, and local county funding.

Janice S. Cleveland, Esquire

5041 La Mart Drive, Suite 230, Riverside

(951) 680-9195

Specializing in advocating for children in or needing special education, including due process hearing, federal court proceedings & retaliation suits.

Jeffrey A. Gottlieb, Esquire

www.specialeducationattorneyatlaw.com

(562) 699-2412 (LA)

(949) 419-6196 (OC)

(951) 240-5610 (IE)

Offers special education services, adoption services for special needs children, Limited Conservatorship of Special Needs Adult, family law and vendor resources.

Law Offices of Liu & Naime

8291 Utica Ave., Suite 100A, Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730

(909) 941-4114

<http://socalfamlaw.com>

Full-service law firm practicing in the areas of Dependency Law, Family Law Personal Injury Law and Special Education Law. Offers free consultations and have extensive experience in the area of special education law

Law Offices of Vivian McPayah-Obiamalu, Esq.,

14726 Ramona Avenue, 4th Floor

Chino, CA 91710

(844) 433-1242

<http://www.vmcpolaw.com>

Practices in a number of areas including Special Education Law. Services include IEPs, Mediation, Due Process, harassment and discrimination.

Office of Clients Rights Advocate (OCRA), Inland Regional Center
3602 Inland Empire Blvd., Suite B-100
Ontario, CA 91764
(909) 383-1133

Free Service but may not take your case. For clients of Regional Center, the Clients Rights Advocate (CRA) may be able to help answer questions or refer you to another resource in administrative hearings in regards to schools, Social Security, Medi-Cal, neglect, rehabilitation, mental health, discrimination, Regional Centers, In-Home Services, private insurance, guardianship, abuse, day care, criminal matters, personal autonomy, and conservatorship and Alternatives.

Peter Attwood - Special Education Advocate
951-897-1721
peter.attwood@hotmail.com

Rios Eubanks
516 West Whittier Boulevard Montebello
323-530-0560
www.rioseubanks.com

Speaks Spanish and English. Can attend IEP and 504 meetings, advise you of your rights and how to enforce them, represent parents in administrative procedures, mediation and settlement negotiations, and due process hearings. and State and Federal level litigation. Also provides consultation and advocacy services for Regional Center issues such as understand what resources are available, and help you get what you need.

Sandi Ames (advocate)
parentscan@yahoo.com
951-351-6580

Parents CAN (Collaborate/Advocate/Navigate) is a special education advocacy program serving families who have children who require special education and disability services. Our focus is in assisting families to advocate for the services and supports necessary for their child to develop to their fullest potential. Workshops are also available for both parents and professionals on a wide-variety of topics, including Parents As Partners, the IEP process, and Legal Rights and Resources. Specialties: Trainer, IEP Consultation and Support, Resource Coordination, Parent Support.

Sandra Marzullo, Special Education Advocate

985 Kendall Drive #193, San Bernardino
(909) 856-6418 or email marzulllos@aol.com

Provides a number of services including educational record review, assessment request, parent training, IEP or 504 meeting attendance, assistance in developing goals, assistance in filing compliance complaints, assistance with regional center issues.

Samantha Morton-Special Education Advocate

(951) 595-6303

Susan Moroff, Special Education Advocate

<http://www.iser.com/moroffadvo-CA.html>

(760) 727-2473

Serving San Diego , Riverside and Orange County California. Can help develop an Individualized Educational Plan to obtain social, emotional and educational goals, assessments in areas of suspected disabilities, receive services specifically designed for your child’s special needs and help determine the best placement for your child. Free Consultation.

Woodsmall Law Group, PC

2076 Lincoln Ave., Pasadena

(626) 314 -6779

www.woodsmalllawgroup.com

Provides experienced, practical and sophisticated representation in matters related to the educational and community access rights of the special needs child. Practices in the areas of Special Education, IDEA & Section 504 Claims, Rights Under the Lanterman Act/Regional Center, and Civil Litigation. Offers free 1 hour consultation.