

Tips & Resources

FOR A SUCCESSFUL
IEP MEETING



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 support 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) are crucial and the best weapon you can have in your advocacy tool kit.

One of the best resources is [Disability Rights California](http://www.disabilityrightsca.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 of information related to California Special Education, including an online version of "Special Education Rights and Responsibilities." Publications are available in Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Spanish, and many other languages. www.disabilityrightsca.org/publications/serr-special-education-rights-and-responsibilities

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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 to build a plan to ensure your child's success. The Autism Society Inland Empire has collected helpful 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 notice of the IEP meeting which includes a list of attendees. Do you need the Occupational Therapist there? The Speech therapist? You can ask them to attend if they are not listed. 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's 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 create a powerpoint presentation about things that are important to them and want they want the team to know. Some children may attend for the first few minutes to understand a group of people is 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 Training

A Day in Our Shoes

<https://adayinourshoes.com/parent-training-iep/>

Prepare for an IEP Meeting by listening to the IEP Podcast. Hundreds of posts. Thousands of IEP Goals and IEP accommodations. Tons of advice and tips after attending 100s of IEP meetings.

Master IEP Coach

<https://www.masteriepcoach.com>

IEP Trainings, Podcast, and Blogs by Catherine Witcher, M. For 20+ years, she has worked for parents and teachers, helping everyone work together to create IEPs with less stress and more results.

Wrightslaw

www.wrightslaw.com

Online information about special education law, education law, and advocacy for children with disabilities.

Resources for IEP Questions

Autism Society Inland Empire

951-220-6922

www.ieautism.org

Our Resource Specialists are here to help you navigate through the maze of special education. They can provide guidance and resources to help you on your journey.

California Department of Education

1 (800) 926-0648

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

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

Disability Rights California

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

A free and comprehensive collection of information related to California Special Education, including an online version of "Special Education Rights and Responsibilities." Publications are available in Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Spanish, and many other languages.

Team of Advocates for Special Kids (TASK)

Community Access and Disability Center

6848 Magnolia Ave., Ste. 150 Riverside, CA 92506

951-328-1200

www.taskca.org

Telephone support and assistance with special education and the IEP process. Holds workshops on special education and transition planning, IEP consultations and document review. It also provides assistive technology labs and AAC consultations.

Advocates

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.

ABA Innovations

Imari Nicoloff, Ed.D (Educational Consultant)

760-636-3479 Email: fapeforall@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/specialeducationadvocacy/>

ABA Innovations is a full-service Educational Consultation business.

Advocates for Angels

909-841-2600

<http://advocatesforangels.com>

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, SST meetings, conflict resolution and mediations. Participate in team meetings, case meetings, and conduct classroom and DIS observations. Works with families navigating compliance procedures. Advocates for Angels ensure that children with IEPs receive an inclusive education, emphasizing a transition plan to prepare them for an independent future.

American Advocacy Group

2082 Business Center Dr. Ste 235, Irvine

877-762-0702

www.americanadvocacygroup.com

Assist with first-class, affordable advocacy services that benefit individuals diagnosed with developmental and physical disabilities and their families. Whether you are new to the process, or an agency has denied your family member a service, their goal is to take quality time to get to know you and your family and to offer you options that will best meet your family's needs. Provides advocacy services in the areas of In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), IHSS Appeals, Conservatorship, Educational Advocacy, and Due Process Representation.

Advocacy Office of Theresa Sester (AOTS) Group

28544 Old Town Front St. Suite 301 Temecula

951-251-4437

www.aotsgroup.com

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

Brian Allen

661- 264-7351

<https://theofficeofbrianallenspecial.ed.godaddysites.com>

mailto:advocate_dude@yahoo.com Educational Advocate with over 18 years of experience with IEPs, 504s, Inland Regional Center and IHSS

Peter Attwood

951-897-1721

peter.attwood@hotmail.com

Educational Advocate

Community Access Center

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

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

www.ilcac.org

Provides the following Services: Individual Advocacy, Information, and Referral, PARADIGMS, The Technology Evaluation Computer Center, Self-Advocacy training, ADA compliance reviews, Mental health counseling in American Sign Language, and Caregiver Training. Will attend IEPs or IPPs for Regional Center.

Hope Consulting and Advocacy

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 will work together on a consultant basis. We also provide Advocacy for IHSS services.

Know IEPs? Dr. Sarah Pelangka, Ph D, BCBA-D, E.S.C.

310-597-0060

<https://knowieps.com>

Its mission is to ensure a collaborative and trusting experience between families and the district, allowing for a positive IEP experience. *Know IEPs?* is now a vendor of Inland Regional Center (IRC).

Samantha Morton

(951) 595-6303

Special Education Advocate

Sandi Ames

parentscan@yahoo.com

949-351-6380

Focuses on collaborating with the student's IEP team while providing parents with the assistance they need to ensure their child receives the services and support necessary to develop to their fullest potential. Workshops are offered at no cost on various topics, including Parents as Partners, navigating the IEP process, Self Determination, Person-Centered Planning, and Legal Rights and Resources.

Sandra Marzullo, Special Education Advocate

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

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

Susan Moroff, Special Education Advocate

760-727-2473

www.iser.com/moroffadvo-CA.html

Serving San Diego, Riverside, and Orange County. 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 unique needs, and help determine the best placement for your child. Free Consultation.

Dr. Elena Watson

951-977-8000

jen@abc4iep.com

<https://abc4iep.com>

ABC4IEP provides the experience, quality, and affordable advocacy services that every family deserves. Special Education professionals with over 30 years' experience. Providing advocacy and training to help parents understand the special education process.

ATTORNEYS

Adams Esq

3895 Brockton Avenue, Riverside

951-686-6899

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 experience fighting for her exceptional child's rights 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.

Amster Law Firm

1976 S. La Cienega Blvd. #C-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 English proficiency should not determine which services an individual with special needs receives.

Augustin Egelsee

8141 East Kaiser Boulevard Suite 315 Anaheim Hills, CA 92808

714-602-1498

www.ockidslaw.com

More than 40 years of combined experience representing children with special needs in special education and juvenile justice. Helps families throughout Southern California, including the counties of Orange, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and San Diego as well as Northern California, including San Luis Obispo, San Francisco and Sacramento.

California Special Needs Law Group – Richard L. Isaacs

100 Bayview Circle Suite 100 Newport Beach, CA 92660

714-251-6530

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. Will educate clients on the IEP process so they feel emboldened and confident to address their child's educational needs without an attorney in the future.

Counsel for Kids

122 Stallion, Suite G, Irvine
626-340-6024

www.counselforkids.com

Offers free file reviews and consultations to all families currently experiencing educational concerns. Assists with the representation of students throughout Due Process Proceedings, including Resolution Sessions, Mediations, and Due Process Hearings. We also provide representation at IEP meetings, Manifestation Determinations, Disciplinary/Expulsion Proceedings, and Admission Hearings.

Economou Law Group

536 E. Rowland St., Suite B, Covina, CA 91723
626-765-9607

<http://economoulawgroup.com>

Free consultations are offered for all matters handled, including both educational issues and estate planning matters. Have extensive experience through cases with all school districts in Orange, Los Angeles, Antelope Valley, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties.

Inland Counties Legal Services Inc.

(888) 245-4257

www.inlandlegal.org

The Education Team assists students entitled to special education or disability rights by acting against school districts to preserve their rights and keep students in public schools. ICLS handles the following education-related issues: Discipline, including suspension and expulsion, enforcement of special education/disability rights, which includes homeless students being denied access to education, foster students with special education issues, or other situations in which child is being denied a right to an education.

Law Office of Janate Valenzuela

760-684-3361

<https://calspedlaw.com/>

Special education and civil rights attorney based in the Inland Empire. This office assists in all areas of special education, including, but not limited to, attending IEP meetings, representation at due process hearings, and representation for any related civil litigation matters. Offers free consultations.

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 Dependency Law, Family Law, Personal Injury Law, and Special Education Law. Offers free consultations and has extensive experience in special education law.

Law Offices of Sarah M. Gross

222 N. Mountain Avenue, Suite 106 Upland, CA 91786
909-204-2793

www.sarahgrosslaw.com

Its mission is to provide excellent, student-centered legal representation focused on the unique needs of special education students throughout Southern California. Specializes in a detailed review and analysis of each client's needs and legal issues, prompt and frequent communication, and educating parents so they are involved and understand the process every step.

Law Offices of Vivian McPayah-Obiamalu, Esq.

20955 Pathfinder Road, Suite 100, Diamond Bar, CA 91765
909-843-6578

www.vmcpolaw.com

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

Rios Eubanks

8605 Santa Monica Blvd PMB 36132 West Hollywood, California 90069
323-530-0560 - Se Habla Español

www.rioseubanks.com

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

Slovak Baron Empey Murphy & Pinkney SBEMP Attorneys LLP

1800 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs- 760.322.2275
74785 Hwy 111, Ste. 105, Indian Wells - 760-322-9240

<https://sbemp.com/practice-areas/special-needs-disability-healthcare-access/>

SBEMP's Special Needs & Elder Law practice group provides representation and advocacy for individuals and families with special needs due to disability or age. Offers a broad range of services, including Special needs trusts (SNT), Guardianships & Conservatorships Trust, guardianship, and conservatorship accountings, Access to federal and state disability-based programs, Medicaid planning; Medicaid, Medicare, and private health insurance coverage and Special Education.

Special Education Kids Attorney

(949) 257-2310 - Se Habla Español
spedkidsattysst@gmail.com

www.specialedkidsattorney.com

Special educational kids' attorney is passionate about helping low-income children with special needs. Handles cases throughout the Inland Empire and San Diego County.

Tsadik Law

1009 Wilshire Blvd. Suite #228, Santa Monica
213-677-0999

<https://tsadiklaw.com/los-angeles-special-education/>

Tsadik Law is a special education law firm based in Los Angeles. Its goal is to provide expert legal representation to legal guardians and parents of children with special educational needs. Has a long history of representing clients in the special education field.

Woodsmall Law Group, PC- Mark Woodsmall, Attorney at Law

2076 Lincoln Ave., Pasadena

626-314-6832

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.