Tips for Having a Successful Individualized Education Plan Meeting

When you have a child with a learning difference, Individualized Education Plan Meetings, or IEPs are a critical component of your child's education, ensuring they receive the maximum education benefit. That being said, many parents find the process to be daunting and overwhelming, leaving them uncertain as to how to navigate the complex process. Here are some simple tips to improve the quality of your child's IEP.

1. Request the reports ahead of time

Asking to review the IEP reports that are presented at each IEP is a critical strategy, especially when the IEP is a triennial and many reports are presented. Viewing reports ahead of time both equips you with a greater sense of preparedness in addition to making you feel more comfortable with the multitude of information covered.

2. Send your concerns or specific questions prior to the meeting

Sending your concerns to your child's special education teacher ahead of time gives the administration as well as the teacher the space to discuss possible options and solutions prior to the IEP. This can make the overall meeting more productive.

3. Ask for work samples to support academic goals and progress

Accountability is a very important part of an IEP, and academic goals and goal progress updates should be based on assessments and data collection as described in the IEP. Viewing grade level assessments, work samples, or data collection charts will help to get a better sense of your child's level of performance, in addition to the alignment of the proposed goals. Be sure to request these materials prior to the meeting, so participants can come prepared.

4. Remember that the IEP being presented is a DRAFT

You are a critical member of the IEP team, therefore your input is imperative to the outcome of these meetings. If you have changes you would like to see (a goal added, services increased, for instance), propose those changes in the meeting and request that they be implemented into the IEP.

5. Get input regarding accommodations and modifications

Your child may need a specific accommodation or modifications in order to access the curriculum. It is critical to get the input of both the general education teacher as well as the special education teacher when including accommodations and modifications as these changes will often be implemented in both classroom environments. The school psychologist at a triennial meeting may also have meaningful suggestions based on your child's cognitive profile and processing.

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