

LIBERATED HANDS PARENT TOOLKIT SERIES



# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS DURING THE IEP PROCESS

*A Parent's Guide to Understanding Your Rights in Special Education*

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*Part of the Liberated Hands Parent Toolkit Series*



## WHY KNOWING YOUR RIGHTS MATTERS

Walking into an IEP meeting can feel overwhelming, especially if you're unfamiliar with the special education process. But one of the most important things to remember is this:

**You are an equal member of your child's IEP team.**

Knowing your rights doesn't mean you're preparing for conflict—it means you're preparing to collaborate with confidence.

When you understand the process, you're better equipped to ask questions, share concerns, and make informed decisions that support your child's success.




## WHY KNOWING YOUR RIGHTS MATTERS (CONT'D)

This guide highlights eight important rights that every parent should know under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

**Remember:** The best advocate for your child is an informed advocate.



## 8 IMPORTANT PARENT RIGHTS

 Right #1: You Are an Equal Member of the IEP Team

Your voice matters. Your knowledge of your child is just as valuable as the information shared by educators and service providers.

 Right #2: You Have the Right to Participate

You have the right to:

- Attend meetings
- Ask questions
- Request clarification
- Share concerns
- Participate in decisions about your child's education



## 8 IMPORTANT PARENT RIGHTS

### Right #3: You Can Review Educational Records

You may review important records such as:

- Evaluations
- IEPs
- Progress reports
- Therapy reports
- Behavior data

Reviewing these documents before meetings helps you prepare informed questions.

### Right #4: Your Consent Matters

Certain evaluations and services require your informed consent. Never sign documents you don't fully understand.



## 8 IMPORTANT PARENT RIGHTS

### ✓ Right #5: You Can Disagree

Disagreement is part of collaboration.

Ask:

- What data supports this recommendation?
- Are there other options?
- Can we discuss additional supports?

Your concerns deserve to be heard respectfully.

### ✓ Right #6: Bring Someone With You

You don't have to attend an IEP meeting alone.

Consider bringing:

- Your spouse or partner, a trusted family member, a friend, a Parent Advocate, another professional familiar with your child.



## 8 IMPORTANT PARENT RIGHTS

### ✓ Right #7: Request Prior Written Notice (PWN)

If the school proposes or refuses a change regarding your child's identification, evaluation, placement, or services, you can request PWN.

This written explanation helps you understand:

- What decision was made
- Why it was made
- What information was used to make it

### ✓ Right #8: Request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)

If you disagree with the school's evaluation, you may have the right to request an IEE.

An IEE provides another professional opinion to help guide educational decisions.



## PARENT CHECKLIST BEFORE EVERY IEP MEETING

- Read your child's current IEP.
- Review evaluations and progress reports.
- Write down your questions.
- List your child's strengths.
- Identify your biggest concerns.
- Bring a notebook for notes.
- Bring someone with you if you would like support.
- Ask for clarification when needed.
- Request copies of any documents discussed.
- Remember, you don't have to make rushed decisions.



# QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING AN IEP MEETING

Consider asking questions like:

- How was this recommendation made?
- What data supports this goal or service?
- How will we measure my child's progress?
- What happens if my child isn't making progress?
- How often will I receive updates?
- What can I do at home to support these goals?
- Are there additional services or supports we should consider?
- Can you explain this in simpler terms?
- Can I have a copy of today's meeting notes?

There are no "bad" questions.



# FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

Advocacy doesn't require you to know every law or educational term. It begins with learning, asking questions, and being actively involved in your child's education.

Every question you ask, every meeting you attend, and every decision you make is an opportunity to help your child succeed.

Remember:

Your voice matters.

Your perspective matters.

You are your child's greatest advocate.

Thank you for downloading this Parent Toolkit. I hope it helps you approach your next IEP meeting with greater confidence.

## WHAT'S NEXT?



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