

Making Effective Phone Calls about Your Child

As a parent of a child with physical disabilities you will often need to make phone calls about your child. You may be calling to arrange a meeting, or appointment, or to follow up on a previous meeting or a plan for your child's care. The following tips are to help you prepare for phone calls and make sure you get the information and response you want.

- Always know with whom you are talking. Keep a note of the name, and the date and time of call.
- Identify yourself and specifically state the purpose of your call.
- Be prepared to offer basic facts about your child which are relevant to the agency you are calling.
- Have records available (with identification numbers, dates, etc) and encourage immediate action.
- Be goal-orientated. Know exactly what you want. Focus on your goal until it has been achieved.
- Be direct and confident, yet positive and polite.
- If you are not satisfied, ask who else you may speak to.
- Convey a sense of cooperation. For example; "How can we work with each other?"
- End the conversation with a summary of the discussion and the next steps.
- Write a summary of the call and keep for your records.
- Follow up the call with an e-mail or letter confirming what you understand will happen next and outline your role. For example, "Thank you for talking to me on

Thursday. I will be contacting x and y agencies for more information. I look forward to hearing from you by next week (date) with a decision or further directions.”

Adapted from a presentation by Lynn Ziraldo, Executive Director of Learning Disabilities Association of York Region (LDAYR). For more parent resources from LDAYR check the website: www.ldayr.org