

Tips for Getting Ready for a Meeting

As the parent of a child, with special education needs, there are many times you may need to meet with school staff. Transition meetings can occur before your child starts school, and parent-teacher meetings occur in every grade. School team meetings, meetings about the Individual Education Plan (IEP) or the Identifications, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC), will occur on a regular basis. You will feel more confident about attending the meeting, and talking about your child, if you prepare carefully for the meeting. The following tips are provided to help you organize information about your child, or any questions you have, and get ready for school meetings.

Organize information about your child:

1. Your child's strengths:

- Academic strengths – reading, math or other subjects
- Social strengths – friendships, leadership, self esteem
- Personality strengths – motivation, perseverance
- Talents or special skills – music or sports
- Interests – science, computer games, hobbies

2. Your child's needs:

- Is there a diagnosis and can you provide an overview?
- What are your child's specific challenges?
- What areas are affected by these difficulties?
- Are there any emotional or behaviour challenges?
- Does your child's challenges impact learning and how?

3. Your child's learning style:

- Visual, auditory or kinesthetic learner
- Strategies that help your child learn

- Coping strategies that help your child
- Assistive technology that is helpful
- Relationships with peers
- Ability to self advocate at school

Research the school system:

- School board philosophy on special education
- School team meetings and supports available at school
- Special Education Plan and available programs and services
- [Individual Education Plan \(IEP\)](#)
 - Accommodations
 - Modifications
 - Alternative Programs
- [Identification, Placement and Review Committee \(IPRC\)](#)
 - Exceptionality criteria
 - Placement Options
 - Annual Review
- Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
- Your rights and the rights of your child

Review your Child's Progress:

- Look at most recent progress report or report card
- Consider your own observations of the school experience
- Look at last IEP and review current accommodations, modifications or alternative programs being provided
- Look at transition plans for current year and future plans

Identify concerns and questions for the meeting:

- Make a list of questions you have about:
 - Your child's progress
 - School services
 - Next steps
- Make a list of concerns or issues that you would like to talk about at the meeting

- Ask your child if there is something they would like you to share at the meeting

Find out about available supports for you:

- Find out about community or provincial organizations that may have helpful information
- Find out if there are community agencies that will help you prepare for a meeting, or attend with you
- Ask a friend or relative to attend the meeting with you for support and to take notes or ask questions on your behalf

Remember that the school staff are working with you in the best interests of the child. School staff are knowledgeable about the school system and you are the expert on your child. Together you can develop plans to support your child's success at school.