

Ideas for Better Communication with Professionals

1. Stop saying, "I'm just a parent."
2. When calling the school, ask people to identify themselves when giving you information.
3. Never send verbal messages by your child to the teacher or other school officials.
4. Let the teacher know when you are available. Make sure there is a phone number where you can be reached.
5. Be reliable about your attendance and be on time at scheduled meetings.
6. Have someone go with you to the conference.
7. Keep your child's records (medical and academic) in a file. Keep the file in order. Keep all written communications and make a record of all phone conversations, including the date and person you spoke to.
8. Collect facts and your thoughts before attending a conference.
9. Be open minded and receptive to information and allow a flow of communication.
10. Listen and think about what is being said and then explain your viewpoint.
11. Ask questions about your child.
12. Take notes so you don't forget what has been discussed.
13. Try to resolve one problem at a time.
14. Give solutions an opportunity to work.
15. Ask for a copy of school policies and procedures.
16. If there is a serious problem, ask for specifics in writing.
17. Be aware of the chain of command.
18. If the problem is not resolved at one level, go to the next level in the chain of command.
19. Control your emotions.

Adapted from a paper by the Task Force of Education for the Handicapped, Indiana.



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