

Working Together

*A Parent's Guide to Parent and
Professional Partnership
and Communication Within
Special Education*



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Partnership and
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Within Special
Education*



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Technical Assistance ALLIANCE for Parent Centers National Parent Technical Assistance Center

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A special thank you to all who reviewed this book. PACER Center
Advocates gathered the ideas and strategies outlined in this book
and have helped thousands of families by using these techniques.

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Introduction

Do Individualized Education Program (IEP)* meetings for your child go smoothly, or do you find yourself becoming upset or near tears? Do you feel like your ideas are being heard? Are you surprised or frustrated when the rest of the IEP team does not agree with you?

You're not alone. Parents of children with disabilities usually receive little or no training in communication and partnership skills. These skills are very helpful in IEP planning. This guidebook offers parents of children with disabilities a variety of practical ideas to improve effective interaction between parents and school staff.

It is people who put together an IEP for a child.

Imagine you are playing a board game. Games have rules, and the players need to know those rules in order to play the game. But the players also need "people skills" such as turn-taking, concentration, making conversation, and managing emotions. Special education is not a board game, but it is a process with "rules" that also requires "people skills" for effective educational planning.

The special education process is based on a federal law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA). In this law Congress states, “Almost 30 years of research and experience has demonstrated that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by...strengthening the role and responsibility of parents and ensuring that families of such children have meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children with disabilities...”

Parent Centers provide workshops and written materials to help parents understand IDEA and what it means for their children. We find, however, that the law alone doesn’t build an appropriate special education program for a child. Many elements enter into the process of determining special education services. Current issues include teacher shortages, implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, and school finances. Effective communication and partnerships can increase creativity and make the best use of resources, including the amount of time spent by parents and school staff on special education planning.

It’s people, parents and professionals, who come together to develop an appropriate educational program. The rules of this process are provided by IDEA, but what happens within those rules is up to the people building the educational plan. Disagreements will happen and there is nothing wrong with that. It’s how these disagreements are handled, that can make the difference.

Clear parent and professional communication and effective partnerships do not “just happen.” It takes time, energy, effort, and patience to build skills to communicate clearly and collaborate effectively. Virginia Richardson, parent of an adult with disabilities and a parent

advocate, advises parents to “be intentional.” This means that parents can set a goal and then take specific steps to achieve it. You may want to set a goal to become a more effective advocate for your child with a disability and then take the necessary steps to achieve this goal. It’s worth the effort!

*“Life is either a daring adventure,
or nothing.”*

—Helen Keller

“Long after the last teacher or therapist has disappeared from your child’s life, you will be there to support and encourage your child. Will he or she be prepared for the future? You can make the difference now, by asking questions, helping to develop your child’s program, working to resolve disagreements, and letting your child’s teachers or other providers know when you are pleased with services. By working with the school team and exercising your rights, you will ensure that your child receives the education he or she needs and deserves during these important years.”

(Honorable Intentions, PACER Center, 2009).

Communication

Parents are a child's best and longest lasting advocates. Parents with good communication skills can be even more effective advocates for their children.

Disagreements and conflict within special education are normal and inevitable—there will be conflicting interests, perspectives, positions, and views of the child. Most parents want what is “best” for their children while the school is only required to provide “appropriate services.” In addition, each person is a complex human being, and each school is part of a complex government agency. Effective communication can help bridge these gaps for the benefit of the child with a disability.

If English is a second language for you:

- *Ask that information be provided to you in your native language.*
- *The school must provide a method, such as an interpreter, so **you** can understand what the **school** says.*
- *The school must provide a method, such as an interpreter, so the **school** can understand what **you** say.*
- *This service may be necessary both for meetings and phone contacts.*

The ideas in this guidebook are for “me” not “them.” Sometimes parents think that things would work out if someone else would just stop doing a particular thing. However, one person can not change another person. The only person I can change is me.

***If I want things to change,
then I have to change.***

Communication is like a mobile—when one part moves, then the whole mobile must move. Likewise, when your approach, attitude, or responses change, the result may be a different and better outcome for your child.

Parental approaches, attitudes, and responses are choices. For example, if there is a situation where you could “take offense,” don’t “take” it! You are free to make another choice of response. Sometimes it may seem like you have no choice, or you may feel forced into a corner with no good choices. However, this is almost never the case. While you can’t control all the situations of your life, you can control how you respond to those situations.

***Ask yourself, “Will
feeling and behaving
like this help me obtain
what my child needs?”***

Parents sometimes feel they are too shy, passive, aggressive, busy, anxious, uninformed, overly emotional, unorganized, intimidated, overwhelmed, distrustful,

***“Be hard on the
problem
but soft on the
people.”***

—Roger Fisher

angry, protective, etc. Each person has a right to their feelings. But you don’t have to let your feelings control your behavior. Ask yourself: “Will my feelings, thoughts, opinions, and the way I express them help my child receive what he or she needs? Am I being effective? Does this serve my cause or hurt it? If I put my child first and in the center of what I do, will I still want to behave like this?”

Parents and school staff do not need to be friends, but they do need an effective working relationship. Unless you move or someone changes his or her job, you may be working with many of the same people for a number of years.

Focus on the positive and you'll see more of it!

First, gather information. Learn all you can about special education and your child's disability. The more you know, the more you can communicate as an equal partner. Your Parent Center and disability groups can help build your knowledge base.

Second, think about your communication skills. This booklet contains some suggestions and techniques to help improve communication with school staff. You probably already use many of these suggestions and techniques, but others may be new ideas to consider. Do the best you can today, and then learn more skills to do an even better job tomorrow.

Communication Skills

The following are some suggestions and ideas to consider when planning ahead to improve your communication skills.

Be Self-aware

Do you have preconceived ideas? Are you aware of your own and other's perspectives and perceptions? Do you judge others? Can you recognize your own communication attitude?

Preconceived Ideas

- Do you have preconceived ideas such as “they have all the answers, I have none” or “they have none of the answers” or “they must approve of me?”
- Be aware of what thoughts you bring into a meeting because these preconceived ideas or notions can affect the outcome of a meeting.
- Be open to new ideas, information, and solutions.

Perspective

- Parents come from the perspective of life-long, intimate knowledge and connection to this child.

- Parents have a long-term investment in this child.
- Educators come from the perspective that they are trained to work with children. Educators made a choice to do this work.
- Educators have a relatively short-term investment in this child.
- Both are important. Both parties usually have honorable intentions, just different ideas or perspectives.

Perception

Be aware that each person's perception of truth and reality are filtered by experiences of many years, differing values and beliefs, emotional reactions, and cultural backgrounds. Viewpoints are not always shared in the educational setting.

- People's perceptions *will* differ. This is normal.
- The more varied the backgrounds, the more different the perceptions of truth and reality may be; this will affect communication.

Judging

- We will *never* know all there is to know about another person, so try not to judge.
- Assume that a person's intentions are honorable. Ask clarifying questions instead of making assumptions.



***Take a close look
at this picture.***

***What do you see?
The old woman or
the young lady?***

***Ask someone else
what they see. Is it
the same?***

Recognize Your Communication Attitude

How does what I say affect those who are listening to me?

Is my communication attitude effective in helping to obtain what my child needs or do I want to make some changes in my behavior?

- Am I passive? (The professionals know more than I do; they won't listen so there is no need to speak up; I feel powerless and controlled by others.)
- Am I aggressive? (I know more than anyone else; I will make others fear me so I can achieve my goal; I don't care if I

Shouting to control others is like trying to drive a car by honking the horn.

You get about the same results.

violate the rights of others.)
If you behave with anger at a meeting, others will likely only remember that you were angry, not that you had good points to make.

- Am I assertive? (I will share what I know; I express my child's needs clearly; I will listen as others share what they know; I will feel heard.)

"If you think you are too small to be effective, you've never been in bed with a mosquito!"

—Bette Reese

Prepare for Meetings, Conferences, and Conversations

The communication we are talking about in this booklet usually occurs at a meeting. Here are some suggestions for effective communication at a school meeting.

Special education is "data driven." This means that school records such as evaluation reports, discipline records, and progress reports are very important. Be sure you have copies and read them.

If it's not in writing, it doesn't exist.

- Use a record-keeping system for special education records that works for you.
- Written records can include:
 - Formal records such as the IEP, progress reports, and evaluation report
 - Notes taken at previous meetings
 - Written follow-up letters from meetings or phone conversations
 - School handbooks and publications
 - Phone logs
 - Copies of consent forms, letters, and reports
 - Regular education report cards
- Read your child's current evaluation report, IEP, and IEP goal progress reports.
- Consider using PACER's handouts *Parent Homework Sheet* and *IEP Meeting Planner* located in the appendix of this book.
- Give thought to what the "problem" really is.
 - Be ready to state a problem clearly.
 - Have ideas for a solution.
 - Find and bring specific data to support your position.
 - Try to listen to the ideas and solutions of others first.
 - Make a list of your priorities and concerns before a meeting.
 - You may want to share this list with the case manager beforehand.
 - Your priorities and concerns should be on the meeting's agenda, too.

Bring no "surprises" and expect none from the school.

Ask for and give information ahead of time.

- Set priorities: you may not be able to cover all issues at one meeting.
- Make a written list of questions you may have.
- Know who will be at a meeting and what their roles will be.
- Make sure you know the purpose(s) of the meeting.
- Consider inviting someone to go with you to a meeting; inform the case manager if you do invite someone.

- Consider role-playing. Prepare your approach by anticipating what will be discussed at the IEP meeting or school conference.

Beginning a Meeting

Here are ideas for setting the stage for an effective meeting:

- Arrive early enough to sit where you will feel most comfortable and effective.
- Consider bringing your child to the meeting. (For more information on including your child in a meeting, read PACER's handout *Ways to Involve your Child in the IEP Meeting*.)
- If the child does not attend, bring a picture and place it on the table.
- Establish rapport: consider bringing food to share (one writer suggests bringing too much food and leaving the leftovers). Tell a short, interesting story about your child. Handshakes, "small talk," and smiles can open a meeting on a positive note.
- Seek common ground—start with things that team members agree on.
- Make sure there is an agenda and that it includes your items.
- Find out how much time has been scheduled for this meeting. Is it enough?

During a Meeting

Here are some tips to consider for communication during an IEP meeting.

- Identify and focus on your goal—hold yourself accountable.
- Show respect and expect it from others.
- Manage your emotions. Cool heads and warm hearts make the best decisions.
- Be specific and clear. For example:
 - Rather than "She is frustrated with school," you may want to say, "She acts out at home each time she has long homework assignments."

Cool heads and warm hearts make the best decisions.

- Instead of “He follows directions at home,” you may want to say, “At home he follows directions better when I give him two-step directions with one reminder.”
- Acknowledge that you understand that teachers have multiple and complex roles.
- Ask questions if unfamiliar terms are used.
- Use praise and say thanks whenever possible.
- Rephrase what you hear to ensure you understood correctly.
- End a meeting by summarizing the outcomes of the meeting to make sure you understood correctly, and it is clear who will do what by when.
- End a meeting on a positive note whenever possible. Even if you’ve disagreed, you may be able to say, “I think we understand each other’s perspectives more clearly now.”

Listen More Than You Speak

Communication is a two-way process that involves listening as well as speaking. Other people may have valuable information and insights that you need to hear. You may never hear that information or those insights if you don’t listen.

- Listening gives you information or data to use. Your own thoughts and opinions are not enough.
- Listen more than you speak.
- Listen to see if the speaker is expressing an opinion or if data is being presented.
- Whether you agree or not, try to understand clearly what others are saying. You may want to repeat what you’ve heard to make sure you understood it correctly.
- Let your body show you are listening—make eye contact and lean forward.
- Take notes on what you hear or invite a friend to do this for you.

“Don’t take turns not listening to each other!”

—Don’t Sweat the Small Stuff

- Don't interrupt. Allow the speaker to finish; don't assume you know what the speaker will say.
- Don't "argue mentally." You may miss some data or the real message while thinking of what you will say next.

Ask Questions

- Ask what, who, when, where, and how questions.
- Be careful of "why" questions:
 - Asking why to understand someone's reasoning can be helpful. Example: "Why is my son assigned to a special education bus?"
 - Asking why to find someone's motivation is not. Example: "Why did you put my son on a special education bus?"
 - Questioning motives usually leads to defensiveness, not problem solving.
- If a district policy or special education law or rule is mentioned and you are not familiar with it, ask to see it in writing.
- Phrases that may help:
 - "Tell me more about..."
 - "That term (or acronym) is unfamiliar to me. Would you please define it?"
 - "Please explain ..."
 - "Would you please rephrase that so I can understand?"
 - "How will I know this plan is working?"
 - "What will the school propose to do about...?"
 - "What do you suggest we do about...?"
 - "I think I heard you say...Is that correct?"
 - "How was that progress you mentioned measured?"
 - "That is interesting. Tell me more so I'm sure I understand your view."
 - "How long will we need to use this intervention to determine if it is successful?"

When You Are the Speaker

Be as clear as possible so that others will understand what you have to say. These are some important communication tips for you to consider.

- Be honest about what you know and what you don't know.
- Don't blame. Focus on solutions instead.
- Limit criticism. With each criticism, defensiveness increases and listening decreases.
- Give positive feedback and praise as often as possible.
- If you are interrupted, you may want to say in a polite manner, "Excuse me, I am not finished."
- Use "This will..." instead of "I think..."
 - Example: "Giving Jimmy more time to complete his tests will allow him to show his actual knowledge" versus "I think Jimmy needs more time to complete his tests."
 - The first statement offers a concrete reason to consider your suggestion while the second statement is an opinion.
- Use "You could..." rather than "You should..."
 - Examples: "Instead of sending Tara to the office, you could call the social worker" versus "You should never send Tara to the office."
 - "Jon's progress in learning to read seems very slow. Could we look at other methods?" versus "You should use a different method for teaching reading."
 - The first statements suggest an option that's open to discussion and flexibility. The second statements imply that you are ordering someone to do something.
- Consider using humor, although it's not for everyone or for all situations.
 - Humor can help build rapport and break down barriers.
 - It can reduce stress and conflict.
 - When using humor, make it brief, spontaneous, and relevant.
 - Example: Teacher says, "Collin just has to settle down!" Parent responds, "Yes, he sometimes acts like a champagne bottle being uncorked. I've told him this behavior might be hard on his first wife!"

- To avoid misunderstandings, use correct vocabulary whenever you can.
 - *Summer school* is not the same as *extended school year*.
 - *Home bound* is not the same as *home school*.
 - Learn the vocabulary of special education as much as you are able.
- Focus on specifics, not generalities. For example, you could ask, "What does 'disruptive' mean to you?" Or "How often in a school day is Sara disruptive and what does she actually do?" Or, "I hear you say that David is inattentive. Is there a specific time period when this happens?"
- If you have a hard time saying what you mean, write your thoughts and ideas down and then read or pass them out at the meeting.
- Keep the emphasis on the child. Focus on what the child *needs* not on what you may *want*.
- Realize that being heard is *not* necessarily the same as getting what you want.
- Paraphrase (restate what you think you heard someone else say) to make sure you understood clearly.

Use "I" Statements

Here are some examples:

- "I would like to talk about what my daughter is learning."
- "I feel like I'm not being heard."
- "I didn't understand that. Let's stop and go back."

Leave Out the Word "You"

Using the word "you" in a sentence can cause other people to feel defensive. Defensive people don't listen because they are busy thinking of ways to defend themselves. This accomplishes nothing positive for the child.

- Practice rephrasing statements leaving out the word "you":
 - "You are not helping my daughter" versus, "My daughter is not getting the help she needs."
 - "Why can't you teach him to read?" versus, "Tommy still struggles with reading. How can we help him?"

- “You aren’t listening to me!” versus, “I don’t feel the team has understood my point.”

“Act As If”

- I can “act as if” I have something (like self-confidence) even if it’s just for a short time at a meeting.
- For example, “I will act as if I am confident. What my daughter needs right now is more important than how I actually feel—scared! I can do this.”

Consider Using “Repeat, Repeat” Technique:

- Repeat your statement nearly word for word when you think you are not being heard.

Example:

Parent: “So, the team has agreed that Josh needs transportation to the technical school every afternoon.”

Teacher: “But the cost is going to be significant.”

Parent: “Nevertheless, the team has agreed. Let’s write it into the IEP now.”

Teacher: “Let’s call transportation tomorrow to see if it fits their schedule.”

Parent: “No, the team has agreed. We need to write it in the IEP now.”

Teacher: “We should see what Mr. Jones thinks about the bus.”

Parent: “Mr. Jones is not here. The team has agreed. We need to write it into the IEP.”

Teacher: “Well, Josh is going to have to behave on this bus!”

Parent: “We may also have to deal with behavior issues. But right now we need to write the transportation services into the IEP.”

Turn Negatives Into Positives

- Sometimes a negative comment can turn into a need for service.
- “He’s always losing his papers” could mean “It sounds like my child needs to learn organizational skills.”
- “He’s always fighting” could mean “It looks like my child needs to learn social skills.”

Summarize

- Use your notes, your list of concerns and priorities, or the agenda.
- When the meeting is ending, ask that the agreements and/or disagreements be put in writing so you and the school staff may plan what to do next.

Remember Common Courtesies

- It’s okay to admit a mistake.
- It’s okay to say, “I’m sorry.”
- “Please” and “thank you” are always appreciated!

Help the School Understand

- Communicate unusual circumstances in the home that may affect your child’s behavior in the classroom. For example, it may be helpful to share when a death has occurred, a divorce is in process, or there has been a medication change.
- If you are from a non-majority culture or ethnic background, take time to explain your culture and values so that the school does not make assumptions based on past experiences with other parents of similar cultural or ethnic backgrounds.
- Give examples of your goals, such as “I expect my child to have his own apartment by the time he is 21.”

Ask yourself, “Could I use some of these communication techniques to help advocate for my child more effectively?”

Written Communication

There are times when the most effective form of communication is in written form. Written communication methods can include:

- Home/school notebook—a notebook that goes between home and school, often daily, with written comments between the parent and the school staff
- Phone log—in addition to the date and name of person you talked with, write down a summary of the conversation
- Meeting follow-up notes and thank you letters
- Formal letters:
 - Should be sent to the person who has the authority to make a difference
 - Be brief, business-like, and respectful
 - Focus on one or two issues
 - Set a deadline for reply
 - Keep a copy for yourself

Discuss with the school how you will set up on-going communication:

- Discuss how often it will occur, when, and by what method (phone, e-mail, written notes, meeting, etc.) and write this in the IEP.
- Check your child’s backpack regularly for notes, newsletters, or other communications from the school.

Partnership

The adults in a child’s life *can* make a difference. When parents and school staff work together as “partners,” the child’s educational outcomes can be enhanced. Neither the parents nor the school can educate a child in isolation.

“It’s easy to get good players. Gettin’ ‘em to play together—that’s the hard part.”

—Casey Stengel

IDEA calls for an IEP team to work together to develop the educational program for a child. Partnership goes beyond the team concept by building a relationship with mutual interests and equal status. With a partnership of team members, the special education process can be more effective.

- Development of a partnership requires all parties to:
 - Invest time
 - Commit to success
 - Make a conscious effort, even when the going is not smooth
 - Look for common interests
 - Understand the “big picture”
 - Understand different perspectives

- Give one another equal status
- Often parents do not feel they are “equal” partners. That can change by remembering:
 - Parent knowledge and opinions are valuable.
 - Only parents have an in-depth, long-term, daily relationship with the child.
 - Parents can learn new skills to communicate clearly and assertively.
 - Parents have the power of giving or withholding consent for services.
 - Parents are the only continuous persons on a child’s IEP team.
- To help understand the concept of “partnership,” consider partnership as it might apply to a business. Business partners:
 - have the same overall purpose or goal
 - make an effort to communicate clearly
 - have individual roles or jobs and a clear understanding of each
 - have authority to make changes with the permission of the other partners
 - have opportunities for giving feedback to one another
 - bring different skills and information to the endeavor
 - have a legal contract
 - are accountable for the outcomes
 - use problem-solving strategies early
 - realize limitations of the partnership
 - educate themselves about their particular business

These concepts can apply to parent and school partnerships. The “business” of this partnership is achieving an effective education for your child with a disability. When this is the focus of all the adult “partners,” your child will benefit.

Take a look at the list above and ask yourself, “Are there areas where my child’s IEP team could use improvement? Could the team discuss those

***Parents are the experts.
Schools have the expertise.
Together we can make
it happen.***

areas as functions of ‘partnership’ to bring positive change?”

Partners often come from different backgrounds and perspectives. When applying the concept of partnership to the relationship between parents and school staff, being aware of these differences can actually *help* the partnership be more effective and cordial. Consider that:

- Educators usually choose the career of educating children with disabilities while most parents do not know their child will have a disability.
- Educators are not usually involved in the long-term outcome for the student while most parents will be involved with the child for life.
- Educators receive formal training and payment for their role and are thus held to a higher standard of knowledge and have accountability for the outcomes or results.
- School personnel are employed by a government agency. They have government resources to draw upon, but they are also subject to its limitations and authority.

When we realize the different roles of the partners (parents and school staff), we are not so likely to assume personal motives or dishonorable intentions. Instead, we may ask questions differently, knowing that the role of each “partner” will influence the answers.

Partners share a goal of effective education for your child with a disability. When achieving this goal is in danger due to disagreement, the partners can:

- Disagree without being disagreeable. Express that you don’t want this disagreement to interfere with your continued partnership.
- Apologize whenever appropriate.
- Make a positive move to start a process of restoring the relationship.
- Accept responsibility for one’s own part of the problem, issue, or solution.
- Realize that neither parents nor professionals have all the answers.
- Pick the battles. Not everything is worth the effort of disagreement and resolution.
- Consider the risks of both facing an issue and avoiding it.

- Assume good faith on the part of those with whom you disagree. What is their perspective?
- Make sure the facts are accurate.
- Base discussions on facts and data rather than opinions or emotions.
- Try to resolve the disagreement as quickly as possible. Don't wait to see if it will go away by itself.
- Separate the problem from the person.
- Start where the problem started, not higher up unless necessary. Discuss it with the person(s) directly involved.
- Write solutions reached into the IEP; ask who will do it and when it will be done. Be sure to obtain a copy.
- Use compromise or a trial period as a key to resolution, such as "Let's try this until _____ and see how it goes."
- Here is an example of a plan for parent-school problem solving:
 - Describe the problem clearly.
 - Encourage input from all members of the team.
 - Brainstorm (without evaluating the ideas).
 - Choose a solution by consensus (all agree).
 - Develop a plan. Define who is responsible for an action and when will it be done.
 - Put that plan in writing.
 - Create a timeline and criteria to evaluate success.
 - Follow up.
- Consider participating on your local special education committee to gain more understanding of your school district.

Resolution will not only solve a problem, but it may actually improve the partnership.

If you have tried without success to resolve your concerns through IEP team meetings, there are also a number of *formal methods of resolving differences* for parents and schools to use. They include (but are not necessarily used in this order):

- mediation
- facilitated IEP
- filing complaints
- resolution session
- due process hearings

Information on all of these methods is available from your Parent Center or your state Department of Education.

Partners do not usually involve their “clients” when resolving a disagreement. Similarly, children should not be subjected to adults disagreeing in front of them. In special education, this means that parents and school staff discuss troublesome issues among themselves as adults. Always monitor what you say in front of your child. When children are older and in many cases participate as an IEP team member, they can learn to be effective communicators and partners too.

Partners need to *trust* one another, but sometimes trust becomes an issue between parents and school staff. When trust is lost between partners, it is difficult, but not impossible, to restore. Researcher Vicki Wolfe found three types of parents: those who only trust others, those who only trust themselves, and those who are able to do both. Which is most likely to benefit the child? To restore trust, consider:

- Defining, in writing, small steps or actions
- Holding individuals on the team accountable for following through
- Setting dates for steps or actions to be accomplished
- Reviewing the plan
- Taking further steps
- Following through

Slowly, trust can be rebuilt.

Working alone can lead to burn-out and frustration.

Working together leads to creative ideas and a shared workload.

Be a Model for Your Child

Whose life is it, anyway? Your child with a disability is the focus and common ground for you and the school staff. What you do together will ultimately affect the child's life more than it will affect yours or that of the school staff. This is true for educational outcomes, but there can be other significant results as well.

As a parent, your immediate reason to improve communication and partnership skills is to more effectively plan an appropriate education for your child. However, there are additional benefits when you improve your communication and partnership skills. You can:

- model and practice effective communication skills at home
- model these skills when the child attends IEP meetings and school conferences

Most children with disabilities will need self-advocacy skills throughout their lives. When you model clear communication and respectful partnership skills, your child can see how effective these skills are for advocacy and for accomplishing positive outcomes. Hopefully your child will adopt these skills and use them successfully in many facets of his or her life.

National and Regional Parent Technical Assistance Centers

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Region 3 Parent Technical Assistance Center

Partners Resource Network (PRN)

1090 Longfellow Drive

Beaumont, TX 77706

409-898-4684/800-866-4726

partnersresource@sbcglobal.net

Region 4 Parent Technical Assistance Center

Wisconsin FACETS

2714 N. Dr. Martin Luther King Drive

Milwaukee, WI 53212

414-374-4645/877-374-0511

region4TA@wifacets.org

Region 5 Parent Technical Assistance Center

PEAK Parent Center, Inc.

611 North Weber, Suite 200

Colorado Springs, CO 80903

719-531-9400/800-284-0251

region5ptac@peakparent.org

www.peakparent.org

Region 6 Parent Technical Assistance Center

Matrix Parent Network and Resource Center

94 Galli Drive, Suite C

Novato, CA 94949

415-884-3535/800-578-2592

region6@matrixparents.org

www.matrixparents.org

Find the Parent Center in your state or community at:

www.taalliance.org.

Appendix

Parents can use the following three forms in a variety of ways. These include preparing for meetings, prioritizing concerns, understanding the relationship between the IEP and the Evaluation Report, and documenting educational contacts.

Feel free to copy the forms from this book and then use them as often as desired.

Parent Homework Sheet

Student: _____ Grade: _____

Date of current school evaluation: _____

1. Read through the current school evaluation, then list all your child’s needs on the left column of the chart below.

Example: Evaluation page 4 says, “*Teacher cannot understand written work. Occupational Therapist recommends helps with fine motor skills. Student has trouble writing class notes. Student also has trouble with transitions between classes...*”

2. Read through the IEP. Check to see if the IEP addresses the concerns and needs listed on the left. Record the service or support* on the right column below.

Example: “*Student will receive occupational therapy (OT) to strengthen fine motor skills.*” “*Student will receive a copy of lecture notes from teacher or designated peer.*”

1. Student’s concerns/needs

2. Are concerns/needs addressed IEP*?

Add page number or name of area the information is found.

Example: Teacher cannot understand written work. OT recommends help with fine motor skills (page 4)	Example: Will receive OT 2 times per week, 30 min. each (Goal 2 and Special Education and Related Services page 9)
Example: Trouble writing class notes	Example: Will receive a copy of lecture notes from teach or designated peer (adaptation page 10)
Example: Has trouble with transitions (page 4)	Example: No supports found

*The identified needs can be addressed in IEP goals, objectives and adaptations.

IEP Team Meeting

IEP for _____

My Concerns:	Priority Number	Based on:
I think my child needs:	Priority Number	Data to support this can be

Meeting Planner

Date: _____

	Covered in this meeting	Result/Decision

be found in:	Covered in this meeting	Result/Decision

Contact Your Local Parent Center:



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National Parent Technical Assistance Center