

IEP Meeting Prep

Questions to ask + red flags to watch

Walking into an IEP meeting can feel intimidating: the acronyms, the team of professionals, and you on the other side of the table. **Here's the truth:** you don't have to just accept whatever's on the table. Use this before your next meeting so you walk in prepared and confident.

Before the meeting

- ☐ Ask for the draft IEP and any evaluations in advance, in writing, so you have time to review instead of reacting on the spot.
- ☐ Review the current goals. Were they met? Are they specific and measurable, or vague?
- ☐ Write down your top concerns and your child's strengths. Bring the strengths; a good plan builds on them.
- ☐ Remember you can bring someone: a partner, a friend, or an advocate. You never have to sit at that table alone.

Questions to ask in the meeting

- ☐ How was each goal measured, and what data shows whether my child is making progress?
- ☐ Is this the least restrictive environment for my child, and what supports would allow more inclusion?
- ☐ What specific data supports this placement and these services?
- ☐ How, and how often, will progress be measured and reported to me?
- ☐ What's the plan if my child isn't making progress?

Red flags to watch for

- Vague, unmeasurable goals ("will improve behavior," "as appropriate") with no numbers or criteria.
- "We don't do that here" or "there's no funding" used to deny a need. Eligibility and services are based on your child's needs, not the district's convenience.
- Services cut or reduced without data showing your child no longer needs them.
- Pressure to sign today. You can always take it home to review.
- Goals copied word-for-word from last year, a sign no one tracked progress.

Three rights you may not know you have

1) If you disagree with the school's evaluation, you can request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) at public expense. **2)** You don't have to agree to an IEP in the same meeting where it's presented; ask for time, in writing. **3)** You have the right to bring a special education advocate who is there for you, not the school.

Want support with this?

As a BCBA with a Master of Legal Studies in Education Law and Special Education Advocacy, a COPAA Special Education Advocacy Training Instructor, and a certified mediator (National Association of Certified Mediators), I help Tampa Bay families walk into IEP and 504 meetings prepared and supported.

Non-attorney advocacy. Not legal advice or legal representation.

[Book a free consultation](#)

ACCEPT. UNDERSTAND. LOVE.