



10 Things Every GAL Should Know About IEPs

1. The IEP is a binding contract. What is on the IEP at the end of the IEP meeting is a legal document. **Whatever isn't in writing doesn't matter.**
2. Meeting notes should be taken by someone from the School Board and a copy should be given to you at the end of the meeting. Before the meeting begins, ask "Who will be taking the IEP minutes/notes?" and inform them that you would like a copy. Take time and check the notes for accuracy at the end of the meeting. Make sure that they include all of your concerns; if they don't, ask them to include them.
3. The child has the right to have an advocate, attorney or any other person who knows the child and can offer information to be present at the IEP meeting. The child may have more than one person. If the child doesn't have an attorney present, the district should not have an attorney present.
4. You have the right to take as long as you need to understand the IEP process and participate fully. If the district tries to hurry you, ask for a continuation on another date. If you don't understand what is being said, ask for an explanation. You understanding what is being said is one of the primary objectives of the IEP process.
5. Evaluations are important because the information will/should be used to write the IEP. The evaluations determine what strengths/weaknesses your child has. Bring a "cheat sheet" with you to understand the scores. You can Google: "psychometric conversion chart" to get a copy of one. Print it and take it with you to the IEP meetings.
6. Save all of your documents and file them in appropriate categories. Keep them in order. Again, if it's not in writing, it didn't happen in the eyes of the Court.
7. Do all communication by email. If you do have a telephone conversation, send a follow up email thanking them for the conversation and restating what you both said.
8. The child has a right to one meeting per year to determine the need for Extended School Year services. The child does not need to be on Access points or have failing grades to be entitled to ESY.
9. Do not speak poorly about the district or their employees to the child or guardian. Students with disabilities have enough challenges getting to graduation day without having the good will and authority of the district undermined. Be a strong advocate, but keep your battles private.
10. Know when to get help. If you feel that the child's rights are being violated, or you're not being heard, call someone. There are advocates and attorneys who specialize in educational advocacy and can help.