

Effective Partnership in Special Education




AMERICAN SOCIETY for DEAF CHILDREN



Effective Partnership in Special Education


Today's Outcomes

- Understand the importance of partnership and advocacy
- Steps to effective partnership include
 - Effective communication
 - Effective organization
 - Effective preparation
 - Effective participation



Partnership


Two or more individuals in a relationship working towards a common goal.



Advocacy

Webster's definition:

- To plead another's cause
- To be in support of something
- To speak or write in support of something



Why Partnership & Advocacy Are So Important


Parent involvement is more important to student success, at every grade level, than family income or education.

IDEA promotes and is based upon the concept that "teams" make decisions for the student, and that parents are partners on the team.



**Steps to Effective Partnership
Advocating in Harmony**

- Effective Communication
- Effective Organization & Preparation
- Effective Participation in the IEP Process



Components of Effective Communication

- Expressing your thoughts and feelings
- Body language – non-verbal messages
- Listening
- Understanding the role and perspective of others
- Using assertive communication without being adversarial
- Being able to clarify the message or intent of communication



Assertiveness is ...

- A positive way of communicating your needs and feelings
- Identifying what you think your child needs, communicating those needs to the team, with information or observations to support your decision
- Recognition that each individual has rights
- Not being intimidated
- Not aggressiveness
- At the heart of effective advocacy



Characteristics of an Assertive Person

- Willing to disagree
- Feels free to make choices
- Takes responsibility
- Asks questions
- Uses direct eye contact
- Wants to be heard ... but willing to listen
- Able to ask for help
- Communicates a positive self-image
- Does not allow intimidation



Barriers that Create Adversarial Communication

- Using sarcasm
- Criticizing and finding fault
- Blaming others
- Bullying and patronizing team members
- Being unwilling to listen
- Not speaking up or participating in meetings.



Bridges to Communication



Communication bridges are positive exchanges between parents, teachers and everyone involved in the education process.

Bridges to Improve Communication



- Understanding roles and responsibilities
- Respect
- Setting boundaries
- Mutual desire

Barriers that Hinder Communication

- Failure to understand the importance of open honest communication.
- Not understanding each others perspective
- Different cultural expectations
- Negative memories
- Defensiveness
- Lack of communication



Effective Communication

- Bring a positive attitude
- Build mutual trust
- Realize your value
- Commit to the process




Effective Organization & Preparation

- Learn all you can about your child's special needs
- Know your child's strengths
- Use the knowledge and skills you already have.
- Keep current on state and federal laws
- Be informed about the process in your school system.
- Talk to other parents
- Know your community resources
- Get involved!!!



Getting Organized

- Develop a system
- Write down your child's accomplishments
- Keep notes about questions, concerns and answers
- Keep copies of letters and records
- Know what records are important




Preparing for Your Child's IEP Meeting

- Know your vision for your child
- Review your child's most recent evaluations and other relevant records
- Make a list of your ideas, concerns and needs




Effective Participation in the IEP Process?

- Be prepared and on time
- Prioritize the most important issues
- Stay positive
- Refocus the discussion
- Invite others
- Will your child participate?



Parent Rights

If the IEP is not being followed



What Parents Need to Know:
Who Is On My Child's IEP Team?

Parent Rights

As a parent, you have the right to:

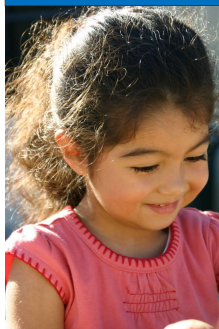
- Participate at special education team meetings
- Read your child's school records
- Use dispute resolution methods to resolve disagreements
- Agree or disagree with services and decisions

**Supporting the Partnership
Advocating in Harmony**



- Effective Communication
- Effective Organization and Preparation
- Effective Participation

Advocate in Harmony



The special education process can be a long partnership. You may be working with the IEP team for many years.

- Stay positive
- Stay focused
- Keep the lines of communication open

Thank you!

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