

## **Suggestions for Effectively Working with Teachers**

Develop positive relationships with the teachers who work with your child.

Be available to teachers; return phone calls and email promptly.

Get information and know your options.

Be sure to learn what your rights are. Some parents use advocates to help communicate the specific needs they would like to propose at the IEP meeting.

Be aware that parents have a lot of power. If something is not resolved quickly, work on it.

Do your best to describe your needs in behavioral terms, not emotional terms.

Know that the IEP is not written in stone. You can change things at any time during the school year. A committee meeting can be held to discuss and reevaluate any situation.

Encourage teachers to praise your child.

Send a few small rewards the teacher can give the child sparingly on days of good effort. The child can bring the reward home.

Establish open communication with the teachers.

Be sure to communicate any concerns or ideas right away to avoid a situation growing into a bigger problem or crisis.

One very effective way to keep communication open is to use compositions. Each page is dated. The teacher would send home any notes or information the parent needs to be aware of, and the parent would in return respond to comments and send questions or comments for the teacher to read. This works very well especially with nonverbal children. Comments on daily behavior is sometimes needed to communicate as well.

Inform the teacher of any circumstances occurring at home that may cause a change in behavior.

Be positive and enthusiastic. Explain the reasons you want something done, then suggest ways to do it.

Ask teachers to try new activities and keep experimenting.

You can suggest a “pre” IEP meeting with therapists and case monitor prior to the annual IEP meeting with the full committee present.

Make a list of things you want to say before you go to a meeting and take it with you.

Bring someone with you to the meeting for moral support your spouse, a friend, a sibling.

Write letters or make calls to thank teachers and school staff for everything they are doing to help your child. Acknowledging the staff for their efforts encourages them to continue working hard with your child.

Work on creating a good relationship with all the people who work with your child.

Volunteer at school and stay involved.

Remember people at the end of each year. Little notes and gifts of thanks are very appreciated.