

The IEP Meeting Survival Kit

Walk into your next IEP meeting prepared — not panicked

Free resource from IEP Compass

■ BEFORE THE MEETING (1 week prior)

- Request a copy of the draft IEP at least 3 days before the meeting
You have the right to review it before you sit down. Don't show up reading it cold.
- Review your child's current goals — write down which ones were met, partially met, or not met
Schools should provide progress data. If they can't explain it, ask them to.
- Write down your new questions AND any questions left unanswered from your last IEP meeting
Keep two lists. Old questions don't disappear — follow up on every one.
- Organize your notes: what's working, what's not, what your child needs more of
You know your child better than anyone in that room. Your observations matter.
- Bring documentation: samples of your child's work, emails, notes from home
Paper trails protect your child. If it's not in writing, it didn't happen.
- Confirm who will be in the meeting and their role (teacher, specialist, administrator)
You should know who's at the table before you walk in.

■ DURING THE MEETING

- Ask how each goal is being tracked — request to see the data
Schools must document progress. 'We think he's doing better' is not data.
- Ask how new goals are created — who wrote them and what input they used
Goals should reflect your child's actual needs, not what's easy to measure.
- Work through your question list in order — check each one off
Don't let the conversation run you. You control your list.
- Ask for clarification on any term or phrase you don't understand
IEP language is intentionally complex. Make them explain it in plain English.
- Know your meeting time — IEP meetings should last as long as needed
There is no legal time limit. Don't let them rush you. Your child's rights don't have a clock.
- If you feel pressured to sign, you don't have to sign that day
You can take the draft home and review it. This is your right.
- Take notes — write down who said what
Your notes are your record. Use IEP Compass or a notebook.

■ AFTER THE MEETING

- Send a follow-up email summarizing what was agreed to — in writing
Email creates a paper trail. Start with 'Per our IEP meeting today...'

- Note which questions were answered and which were not
Unanswered questions don't go away — follow up within 5 business days.
- Focus on your controllables — your next steps, not theirs
You can't control what the school does. You can control how prepared you are next time.
- Organize your notes into IEP Compass for easy access later
Everything in one place means you're never searching through emails at 11pm.
- Take a breath. You showed up for your child — that matters.

■■ KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

- **You have the right to fight for your child.** The IEP team works for your child — including you.
- **Your child has the right to the same quality education as any other child.** FAPE — Free Appropriate Public Education — is a legal guarantee.
- **You have the right to ask questions at any time.** The school is required to accommodate your child's needs and explain the plan to you.
- **You can request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)** if you disagree with the school's assessment — at no cost to you.

■■ COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

- X Procrastinating on prep** Waiting until the night before means walking in unprepared. Schedule 30 min a week before.
- X Accepting 'false as true'** If something doesn't sound right, ask for the evidence. Schools make mistakes.
- X Losing emotional control in the meeting** It's hard — this is your child. But staying calm keeps the focus on solutions, not conflict.
- X Not knowing what's in the IEP** Read the whole document before you sign. Every page.
- X Not following through after the meeting** The meeting is step one. The follow-up is where things actually happen.
- X Being too hard on yourself** You're learning a system that wasn't designed to be easy. You showing up is enough.

Track Everything in IEP Compass

Log meeting notes, store documents, set reminders, and track your child's goals — all in one place. Built by parents who've been exactly where you are.

[Download free at ieppass.com](https://ieppass.com)