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IEP SURVIVAL KIT

If there is an IEP (Individualized Education Program) meeting in your future, you can go in more prepared than ever with a thorough read of the advice compiled in this IEP Survival Kit. Hands & Voices has invited experts in deaf education and seasoned educational advocates—many of whom are parents of deaf or hard of hearing children—to share their wisdom for your benefit. Read them all. Recreate your personal favorites in cross-stitch to hang above the fireplace. Whatever you do, take them to heart and use them to ensure that your child (or student)

has the best plan possible.

Art Cernosia, Esq., Attorney & former Hearing Officer; Education Consultant, Institute for Program Development

1. Come to the meeting with a written list of both the successes that your child experiences and the challenges they still have.
2. Be specific in your requests for changes to the IEP
3. Ask what you can do as a parent to support the implementation of your child's IEP.

I could go on and on but it really is all about respectful relationships.

Shirley Swope, Educational Advocate & Parent Consultant, PEAK Parent Center, Colorado

IEP season is approaching! I think a good tip is to remember that nothing is written in stone, that the IEP is a guide, and if something doesn't work, it can be changed mid-stream. Also, it's a business meeting and should be treated as such. As much as parents want the school folks to appreciate our child as remarkable,

beautiful, unique, etc, the school system sees the child as a number that requires money to educate. Parents actually can speak up and push for services that the worker-bee teacher can't even though the teacher may agree with the parent. So with that said, I think my top tips would be:

1. It's a business meeting, do your homework. Ask for and review the DRAFT IEP before the meeting. If a DRAFT IEP is not available before the meeting, then explain that you will require a continuation meeting because you will need time

to review the IEP and make your recommendations. Parents ARE part of the team and have this right.

2. Put all requests in writing. If you are asking for something—testing, assistive technology, additional services—make that request in writing. You can verbally ask, follow up with an email,

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Darth Vader Takes a