



**BBB AUTISM SUPPORT NETWORK/
AUTISM SOCIETY ONTARIO
(YORK REGION CHAPTER)**
Autism Society
Ontario

PRESENT

THE E-NEWS

http://www.bbbautism.com/about_bbb.htm

THE I.E.P. ISSUE

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OUR FAVORITE ARTICLE
...the good IEP!!

by Lindsay Moir, *Comhnadh Consultants* <http://www3.sympatico.ca/l.moir/index.html>

I was recently doing a workshop for a group of educational assistants...it was a rather in-depth, intense workshop where we examined the characteristics of needs statements, and then followed up with "walking through" the entire process of developing the Individual Education Plan for a real student presented by the EA. Obviously, for many of the participants, this was the very student they worked with on a day-to-day basis... they had a lot invested in the exercise!! During the process we constantly referred to "buzz words" such as clear, concise, measurable, evidential, and individual to help us identify good needs statements and strategies. In fact, these words brought a knowing smile to our lips as we visited and revisited them throughout the day!

About ten minutes from the end of our long, exhausting, intense time, I made a "fatal" pedagogical error... I asked a summative question!! (Who can tell me when you know you have a good IEP?). Honestly, I expected to hear back our "buzz words". An experienced Educational Assistant, smiled and said, "I know." The answer that was forthcoming was so unexpected and profound, that it was 45 minutes of spirited discussion before we left.

She said, " That's easy.....if it is a good IEP it will be on the desk, wrinkled and coffee stained..... all the bad ones are crisp, pristine and in a file.

If you reflect on this statement you will get a picture of the process and its flaws. Resource teachers

generate pieces of paper because they are mandated or because they are needed to justify staffing or funding. These are often generated from computer software without any editing, customizing or individualizing. It must be very frustrating to spend precious time creating a piece of paper for a file! These teachers are often exasperated when parents want to exercise their right to participate in this process.... But if the plan is used daily by the classroom teacher and the EA, if it is the result of meaningful consultation with the parent, if it clearly outlines what is to be done and each person's role, ONLY THEN is it worth the time and effort put in to its creation.

So, is your IEP worthy of a "Tim Horton" ring?? Is it on the desk or in a file? Is it a cooperative effort or is it spun out of a generic mold?

Over the past year, the Ministry of Education has strengthened the requirements for IEP's. They legislated new "Standards for the IEP" (Nov 2000). There is no doubt in my mind that the IEP is fast becoming the most important piece of paper in Special Education. Is yours "on the desk, wrinkled and coffee stained?"

"Comhnadh Comments" may be reprinted in any not-for-profit newsletter issued by parents groups or community groups who support parents of exceptional children, provided that proper attribution is given. As a courtesy, please send a copy of the newsletter to Comhnadh Consulting, 92 Cumberland Crescent, LONDON, Ontario Canada N5X 1B6

Advocating for Your Child - Getting Started (from *Wrights Law*) <http://www.wrightslaw.com/>

Why Advocate?

Good special education services are intensive and expensive. Resources are limited. If you have a child with special needs, you may wind up battling the school district for the services your child needs. To prevail, you need information, skills, and tools.

Who can be an advocate? Anyone can advocate for another person. Here is how the dictionary defines the term "advocate":

ad-vo-cate – Verb, transitive. To speak, plead or argue in favor of. Synonym is support.

1. One that argues for a cause; a supporter or defender; an advocate of civil rights.
2. One that pleads in another's behalf; an intercessor; advocates for abused children and spouses.
3. A lawyer. (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition)

...to read the rest of this article, click [here](http://www.wrightslaw.com/advoc/articles/advocacy_intro.htm). http://www.wrightslaw.com/advoc/articles/advocacy_intro.htm

Our IEP Experiences *by BBB Member Khris*

Although my son is only 5 and just entering kindergarten, we have been dealing with the School District for 2 years now and had more than 10 IEPs. I have learned a lot in the past 2 years. My son has gotten a better and more individualized program than any other child in our district that I have come in contact with. (His program this last year included full inclusion with an aide, speech 2 times a week for one hour, OT one hour a week, adapted PE small group one hour a week, 12 one hour play therapy sessions, 12 one hour counseling sessions for the family, 15 hours one on one with behavioral aide in the home, 3 hours once a week from the behaviorist overseeing the home program, consult hours with all of the therapists for both the classroom teachers and the home program providers- and I never went to due process to get this) The 3 most important things in the IEP process, in my opinion, are:

1) Be prepared

have a copy of your child's current IEP, current goals, list of strengths and weaknesses, goals you feel need to be addressed, and a concrete idea of exactly what you want for your child. Also ask for any test results or reports before the meeting so that you can go over them beforehand, and bring hard copies of all new information to the meeting and have enough duplicates to pass out to all attending members of the IEP team.

2) Know your rights

read up on the laws pertaining to what you are requesting of the school. Investigate law cases and make copies of these to bring to the meetings. Many times the school does not really know the laws, or assumes that the parents don't

3) Be adamant

decide what you can accept and stick to it. If the IEP team says no to what you feel is a reasonable request, then go further. An informal "pre-mediation" meeting with an advocate may be all you need to change the school's mind, if not go on to mediation, if that does not solve the problem file for due process. Chances are that somewhere along the line the school will decide it is not worth the fight.

http://www.bbbautism.com/club_front_page.htm - club_new_front_page

IEP ADVICE FROM SUE

by BBB Member Sue

About IEPs... as in Intellectually Exasperating People you have to sit through meetings with once a year? Whadya wanna know, girlfriend? I'll do my best... just keep in mind that I might have been in one or a few too many, and have PTSD or something... could interfere with my usually utterly objective viewpoint.

I did resort to joining that Yahoo group a few months ago, when this teacher's IEP was giving me fits. It's http://groups.yahoo.com/group/IEP_guide. There are about 1200 members, and I suggest opening a whole new e-mail account just to handle this one very active group, as you get tons of attachments, along with the information and support. Lots of good stuff but it really is intensely overwhelming if one does not have good organizational skills and a lot of online time for sorting through this stuff.

The most important thing to remember about IEP meetings is that you should never, ever go alone. Always have a witness. Keep in mind that the people in this meeting usually do not have the child's best interests at heart, no matter what they say. If you happen to have a best friend who is either a member of the bar, or who is trained in hostage negotiation techniques, bring them. If you don't, find the most impressive person you can find to accompany you.

Looks count. You want someone who is intellectually, socially and/or economically intimidating. Brute strength usually doesn't work, so you can leave your biker buddies home.

There are people who are professional or lay advocates. Do check them out. Someone who actually understands the rules can be helpful. Beware of those who recommend "compromise with the schools". They are vampires at night, and will break your spirit and bleed you dry before the meeting begins.

Until tomorrow...

In the meantime, (((Hugs))) from Cynical Sue

HELPFUL HINTS

by BBB Member Gabrielle

Helpful hint for IEPs: Save all the old paperwork, especially evaluations!

They can save you someday. My son struggled for years with his motor skills, and spent quite a bit of time with the school OT. At the end of his kindergarten year, the OT decided that he was in the "normal" range, and didn't need her services anymore. Three years later he was re-evaluated, and was found to be in the "low-normal" range in the area of balance. I wanted him to receive OT services again, to get him caught up to his peers, but was unsuccessful...until I compared his old evaluation to the new one. The papers showed that his balance had gone from being a strength to a real hindrance. We got the OT services.

You don't have to be aggressive to get your point across. You do, however, have to stand and say "no" when it is needed. Nicely. Everybody is human, and everyone likes to be treated with respect and dignity. Cooperation can help strike a good balance for everyone.

Calling for Help

Making effective phone calls about your child

- Always know with whom you are talking. Keep a note of the name, and the date and time of call.

- Identify yourself and specifically state the purpose of your call.
- Be prepared to offer basic facts about your child, which are relevant to the agency you are calling.
- Have records available (with identification numbers, dates, etc) and encourage immediate action.
- Be goal-orientated. Know exactly what you want. Focus on your goal until it has been achieved.
- Be direct and confident, yet positive and polite.
- If you are not satisfied, ask who else you may speak to.
- Convey a sense of cooperation. For example, "How can we work with each other?"

Source: Based on an article by Lynn Ziraldo in Parents as Partners from OAFCCD <http://www.cyberus.ca/oafccd/>

The IEP Process or more Appropriately Labeled Anxiety Exercises

by BBB Member Chris

As a 5 year IEP veteran, I can clearly remember feeling as though I was entering at ground level, complete with a real life boot camp experience, separated by familiarity and faced with task upon task heaped on an exhausted mind. Being new to the experience, our first IEP was very school driven with a lot of compliance, fear, and disorientation by myself, the new recruit. I was already shell shocked and not really sure what we needed, but very sure the school did know. Signed on the line, fought back tears and hoped for the best. As I learned more about autism, therapies and programming, while a good program, it was far from tailored to my sons' specific needs. I learned I needed to advance my rank and become an "Advocate".

That year I read and attended conferences and networked with other parents and professionals in order to get a clear understanding of what my son would need specifically and how to present that information at the next IEP to the "TEAM". I learned I didn't always have to be a player but could design my own plays and present them. A very helpful book I read was "Creating a "Win-Win IEP" for Students with Autism: A How-To Manual for Parents and Educators by Beth Fouse, Ph.D. It provides a road map through the process as well as sample letters, listings of state regulations with timelines, and checklists for parents through the process. It provided me the references I needed to advocate effectively.

All IEP's following have been much less anxiety-ridden as the recruit and handled by the "Advocate" with the newly earned knowledge, preparation, and tools to map our course.

Whether the school has contacted me or not, I provide them a month ahead of time my proposed IEP. They are able to know my direction and we can communicate prior to the actual meeting about issues. I even write the goals and objectives, and have also rejected a behavior plan and written my own that was implemented. I think it is crucial to assert yourself as a team member making clear your knowledge of autism and your IEP rights. A daily journal or checklist is also crucial to provide communication between home and school, and to identify triggers and patterns that may develop behaviorally that only a parent may recognize. I think it is crucial to have this written in the IEP. Our school has also implemented a "Passport" which is a list of modifications that travel with the student so a consistent environment can be maintained.

The IEP process need not be an exercise in anxiety. Being prepared, being open minded, and willing to compromise and recognize the most important elements and focus energies on these, can create the best educational opportunities for our children.

A Cute Story

by BBB Autism member Diana

We are still not sure what is happening about A. and an EA, so I have been a bit distracted and not around here much....but, he has been adjusting to the new school quite well.

Yesterday, his IBI therapist (who has been with him this week, to help with the transition). was with the EA at recess watching A. She told me this story...

A. was walking around the portable He seemed to be doing it very repetitively, he had been around 5 times already and she just kept an eye that he kept coming around this one corner. Well on the 6th time around, a little boy from his class was behind him, following him. On the 7th time around the corner there were two boys behind A.

At this point, the therapist stepped in and stopped the "train", and prompted A. to say "Hi" to the boys and say their names, which he did. The boys smiled and then they continued walking around the building...BUT *after* this, A. would stop periodically on his own and look at the boys and smile!!!

My therapist was in tears telling me this story...those boys joined in all on their own!!...and A. wanted to keep the game going!!

Gives me a lot of hope you know?

Parent Empowerment Workshops

Fall 2001 Lineup

Proudly Presented by Autism Society Ontario
~ York Region Chapter

Registration Required, Limited Enrollment. E-mail

asoyork@axxent.ca

Location: 11181 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill

IF YOU ARE NOT CURRENTLY A PAID-UP MEMBER OF AUTISM SOCIETY ONTARIO, MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT EACH WORKSHOP. PAID-UP MEMBERSHIP OF \$30.00 ANNUALLY WILL IMMEDIATELY ENTITLE YOU TO THE MEMBERS' RATE. FEES WILL BE COLLECTED AT THE DOOR, AND ARE ON A 'COST-RECOVERY' BASIS ONLY.

Communication Strategies for Targeting Problem Behaviours in Autism

Tuesday September 25th , 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm, 2nd Floor Boardroom

Visual communication materials to aid and facilitate learning and leisure by 'Graduate Beginnings' will be available for sale, and custom orders can be taken.
<http://www.picturecommunication.com/>

Cost: Members \$ 5.00, Non-Members \$ 15.00

Effective Advocacy & Case Management Lyn Ziraldo, Executive Director,
Learning Disabilities Association York Region.

Tuesday October 9th , 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm, room B13

Cost: Members \$ 5.00, Non-Members \$ 15.00.

Writing Effective Needs Statements - Lindsay Moir, Educational Consultant
<http://www3.sympatico.ca/l.moir/index.html>

Tuesday October 23rd , 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm, 2nd Floor Boardroom

Special education is a 'needs driven' process and boards have a statutory obligation to MEET the needs of the exceptional pupil. As an arbitrator, Lindsay has often found that parents have difficulty in enunciating their child's needs and the school often doesn't

know what the parents expect. Good programming starts with clear communication of the students' needs.

Cost: Members \$15.00, Non-Members \$ 25.00

Financial Concerns & Taxes presented by Morty Cohen, Chartered Accountant

Tuesday November 6th, Room B13

Cost: Members \$ 5.00, Non-Members \$ 15.00

Sensory Integration Make 'n Take Workshop Instructor Shirley Sutton,
Occupational Therapist

Saturday, November 17th Room B 13 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Shirley's specialty training areas include early intervention and sensory integration. She brings more than 20 years' extensive clinical experience from a wide variety of settings, including consulting work with Geneva Centre, two private therapy centres, several community living associations and early intervention programs. Shirley co-authored the book 'Building Bridges Through Sensory Integration' and the workbook 'Learn to Print and Draw: A Tactile-Kinesthetic Approach'. <http://www.buildingbridges.cjb.net/>

Cost: includes lunch, materials, handouts. Members \$25.00 Non-Members \$ 40.00

P.E.C.S. Picture Exchange Communication System "A Short Cut to PECS"

Tuesday November 20th, 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm, 2nd Floor Boardroom

Shana Elman, Speech & Language Pathologist with Bloorview MacMillan Centre.
<http://www.bloorviewmacmillan.org/Visual> communication materials to aid and facilitate learning and leisure by 'Graduate Beginnings' will be available for sale, and custom orders can be taken.

Cost: Members \$ 5.00, Non-Members \$ 15.00

Dental Care and Autism with Dr. David Isen AT HIS OFFICE – Anaesthesia Associates <http://www.sleepfordentistry.com/>, 4800 LESLIE STREET SUITE 111, NORTH YORK

Tuesday December 4th, 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm

Cost: Members \$ 5.00, Non-Members \$ 15.00

Living With Asperger's Syndrome. Gary Waleski, An Adult With Asperger's Talks About His Experiences

Tuesday, December 18th, 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm, 2nd Floor Boardroom

Understanding how the disorder affects the child and tips on how to effectively deal with children in your care. To help parents, teacher and EAs better understand and help facilitate the child's growth in school. Gary is totally independent, works fulltime, has further career goals, does frequent public speaking presentations on autism/PDD, and is newsletter editor for Autism Society Ontario – Halton Chapter. He has a large circle of friends, many hobbies & interests and leads a well-balanced and fulfilling life.

Cost: Members \$ 5.00, Non-Members \$ 15.00

Coming in the new year.....

Rose Ann Punnett – Kerry's Place <http://www.kerrysplace.org/> - "Asperger's Disorder"

Dr. Adrienne Perry – Autism in General

Margo Allen and Liz C – Your Preschooler with Autism

Robyn Solnik – Solnik and Solnik – Wills and Estates

Art Therapy – Nancy Wood

Deanna Pietramala – Leaps and Bounds - Autism and Sexuality

Deanna Pietramala – Leaps and Bounds – Social Skills

Lindsay Moir School Discipline and the Exceptional Student

Deanna Pietramala – Leaps and Bounds – Behavior Management

...and more, more, more!!!

Note: In Volume 1; Issue 6 "Back to School", IEP was referred to as "Individual Education Program" in an article from NICHCY. For those of you who contacted us asking if this was a misprint, I would like to thank you for your input, and let you know this article was cut and pasted (credits appear below it) verbatim, nothing was changed. Our policy has always been that we don't change wording on such articles.

Best wishes!

Liz

Our Favorite Links

Please note: We have provided the following links below, but it is most important to note that the strategies, samples forms and letters etc. are only providing guidelines. You will have to customize all to fit your own child and/or situation. For more information, please read "A Notice to Our Readers".

Many thanks to Khris D. and Chris T. for help with the U.S. links. Additional thanks belong to Lynda B. and Verna S. for help with the Ontario information.

This issue is dedicated to all our contributors. It is a true testament to our philosophy regarding parental input and I am in your debt!

U.S. LINKS

Wright's Law <http://www.wrightslaw.com/>

Reed Martin <http://www.reedmartin.com/esy.html>

State-by-State Special Education Web Pages http://lisa_kalp.tripod.com/IEPGuideindex.html

IEP Help <http://www.expage.com/page/iepsonly>

Sample Compliance Complaint in California <http://www.pai-ca.org/Pubs/Compliance>
Protection & Advocacy (California)

(this site has an online copy of Special Education Rights and Responsibility which is the parents guide to special ed law in California) <http://www.pai-ca.org/pubs/401601.htm>

Links to IDEA <http://www.dssc.org/frc/idea.htm> Asperger IEP Goals

http://www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger/IEP_Goals.html

Where can I find an Advocate? An Attorney? <http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/advo.referrals.htm>

Directory of Parent Training Information Centers <http://www.wrightslaw.com/links/ptis.htm>

The IEP Cycle <http://www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-5581.html>

What to Include in an IEP <http://www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-5594.html>

Two Powerful Documents to Take to the IEP

http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Oracle/1580/twin_documents.html

The Pediatrician's Role in Development and Implementation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP)

and/or an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) <http://www.aap.org/policy/re9823.html>

Accommodations for Students with Communication and Learning Disorders

<http://www.coping.org/involvepar/accomform.htm>

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SAMPLE FORMS (US):

504-Handicapped Student Accommodation Plan

<http://specialed.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.charleston.k12.sc.us%2Fccsdpages%2FPPSforms%2F504-4.htm>

Academic Plan for Students with Disabilities

<http://specialed.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.charleston.k12.sc.us%2Fccsdpages%2FPPSforms%2FACademicPlanAP.html>

IEP Goals and Objectives

http://specialed.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.charleston.k12.sc.us%2Fccsdpages%2FPPSforms%2Fiep-5_1.htm

IEP

http://specialed.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.greeceny.com%2Fse%2Fforms%2Fnew_iep.rtf

Find more of these forms by clicking [here](#).

<http://specialed.about.com/cs/formssamples/index.htm?rnk=r2&terms=special+education+forms>

CANADIAN LINKS

Canada's SchoolNet <http://www.schoolnet.ca/>

British Columbia Ministry of Education: Special Education

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/>

British Columbia Ministry of Education: A Parent's Guide to IEP

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/iep/cover.htm>

Alberta Learning <http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/>

Manitoba Special Education <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/metks4/instruct/specedu/>

Manitoba: IEP Resource

<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/metks4/instruct/specedu/iep/index.html>

New Brunswick: Education <http://www.gov.nb.ca/education/default.htm>

Newfoundland and Labrador: Student Support Services

<http://www.edu.gov.nf.ca/division/stsuppsv/studsrv.htm>

Nova Scotia: Education <http://www.ednet.ns.ca/>

Prince Edward Island: Department of Education

<http://www2.gov.pe.ca/educ/schools/index.asp>

Quebec MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION Publications http://www.meq.gouv.qc.ca/GR-PUB/m_englis.htm

Government of Saskatchewan: Special Education Unit

<http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/k/pecs/se/index.html>

Yukon Educational Student Network <http://www.yesnet.yk.ca/>

ONTARIO LINKS

Special Needs Opportunity Windows <http://snow.utoronto.ca/siteindex.html>

Ontario Ministry of Education: Special Education Monographs #4 "Students with Autism"

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/monog4.html>

Ontario Ministry of Education: Student Focused Funding

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/funding/index.html>

Ontario Ministry of Education: Special Education

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/speced.html>
Comhnadh Consulting; Special Needs Consulting in Ontario
<http://www3.sympatico.ca/l.moir/index.html>
Ontario Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning and Implementation <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/iep/iep.html>
Ontario Ministry of Education: The IPRC
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/identifi.html>
Highlights of Regulation 181/98
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/hilites.html>
A Model for the Provision of Speech and Language Services (As applicable to the Education Act)
<http://mettowas21.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/model.html>
OAFCCD: Preparing for an IPRC <http://www.cyberus.ca/oafccd/factshee/fact19.htm>
Special Education Terms used in Ontario <http://www.cyberus.ca/oafccd/factshee/fact21.htm>

ASSORTED LINKS TO HELP EVERYONE

Looking for solutions <http://www3.sympatico.ca/l.moir/solutions.htm>
Meeting Management for Parents <http://www3.sympatico.ca/l.moir/mmfp.htm>
How to Be Your Child's Champion http://familyeducation.com/article/1,1120,23-9499,00.html?eld_h08211
International School Website Registry <http://web66.coled.umn.edu/schools.html>
Tips for Parents When Dealing With School Personnel
<http://www.cyberus.ca/oafccd/factshee/fact27.htm>
The Art of Writing Letters http://www.wrightslaw.com/advoc/articles/DRAFT_Letters.html
Letter Requesting ABA Services <http://m1.aol.com/sheeanaa/abaletter.html>
A Parent's Guide to Special Education and Related Services: Communication Through Letter Writing (NICHCY) <http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/parent/pa9txt.htm>
Request for Services for a Child With Asperger's Disorder (Sample Letter)
<http://m1.aol.com/sheeanaa/ammo.htm>

FOR TEACHERS

The Art of Teaching Bilingual Special Education <http://www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-6048.html>
Communicating with Culturally Diverse Parents of Exceptional Children
<http://www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-6048.html>
Learning Disabilities: Glossary of Terms <http://www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-5332.html>
Positive Descriptions of Student Behavior <http://www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-5589.html>
Preparing for an IEP <http://www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-5583.html>
The Council of Educators for Students with Disabilities, Inc. Section 504 and IDEA Training and Resources for Educators <http://www.504idea.org/>

ONLINE SUPPORT

Wright's Law Communities http://www.wrightslaw.com/community_intro.htm

United Parents - Mail List regarding Special Education in Ontario

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/unitedparents>

IEP Group on Yahoo http://groups.yahoo.com/group/IEP_guide

A SPOONFUL OF HUMOR...

Dr. Suess' IEP's

Contributed by Krista Long-Shroyer

DR. SEUSS' IEP'S
(Rhythm from *Green Eggs & Ham*)

Do you like these IEPs?

I do not like these IEPs
I do not like them, Geez Louise
We test, we check
We plan, we meet
But nothing ever seems complete

Would you, could you like the form?

I do not like the form I see
Not page 1, not 2, not 3
Another change
A brand new box
I think we all
Have lost our rocks

Could you all meet here or there?

We could not all meet here or there
We cannot all fit anywhere!
Not in a room
Not in the hall

There seems to be no space at all

Would you, could you meet again?

I cannot meet again next week

No lunch, no prep
Please hear me speak
No not at dusk. No not at dawn

Could you hear while all speak out?
Would you write the words they spout?

I could not hear, I would not write
This does not need to be a fight
Sign here, date there
Mark this, check that
Beware the student's ad-vo-cat(e)

You do not like them
So you say
Try again, try again!
And you may

If you will let me be
I will try again
You'll see

Say!

I almost like these IEPs!
I think I'll write six thousand three
And I will practice day and night
Until they say
"You've got it right!"

Anonymous

Brought to you for your enjoyment by The Autism Society of California, ASA

Assertiveness and Effective Parent Advocacy
by Marie Sherrett

I find that parents of children with special education needs come in several categories:

- **Pacifists or those who gets things done;**
- **Clinging vines or parent advocates;**
- **Silent victims or fighters;**
- **Dreamers or crusaders;**
- **Waiters or initiators;**
- **Bombshells or assertive parents;**
- **Appeasing compromisers or action heroes.**

Which are you?

Parents are not assertive if they:

- Beat around the bush;
- Fail to describe problems;
- Feel guilty or are afraid to be vocal;
- Agree with professionals to keep peace;
- Ignore the right to services;
- Leave everything to others;
- Accept excuses for inappropriate or inadequate services;
- Beg for what the law says a child should have;
- Abdicate to others the right to advocate for a child;
- Depend on others to advocate;
- Give up because of red tape;
- Are too hasty to act;
- Fail to act;
- Accept the status quo;
- Give in to defeat;
- Are uncomfortable with accomplishments;
- Discourage your child from having hope for success.

What do you do?

Assertive parents

- Express themselves clearly, directly and without guilt;
- Are not intimidated;
- Prepare for meetings;
- Stay together;
- Are informed;
- Keep records;
- Collaborate;
- Effectively communicate;
- Demonstrate self-confidence;
- Advocate effectively;
- Are self-reliant and independent;
- Persist;
- Analyze problems;
- Organize to effect change;
- Are positive and strong;
- Have pride;
- Encourage others and hold people accountable.

Does this describe you?

Advocacy helps you get services for all special education children in the least restrictive environment. Then you can participate, plan for educational programs, and get legislation passed.

Advocacy opens new doors so children may become part of the community.

Advocacy knocks down barriers and prepares children for independence.

To meet others, you can

- Publish a letter or article for your local papers
- Pass out flyers at school

- **Organize public meetings**
- **Encourage volunteers**
- **Plan**
- **Have goals and objectives**
- **Talk to the media (I love to do this!)**

None of this is easy but the rewards can be fantastic!

Remember: Parents put together Public Law 94-142. Parents who vote urged Congress to pass the law that became the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

You can make things better for the next generation without filing for due process. How?

You must learn the art of persuasion, advocacy-style!

There is both safety and strength in numbers.

If you can go over a hill and change a classroom, you can go over a mountain and change a state's respite care services, early infant and toddler program, inclusive educational situations and training manuals. There is no end to the positive changes one parent can achieve! Together, we are more powerful!

Now these things cannot occur overnight. But if a parent says to me, "What can I do? I'm only one person," I say, "You have no idea the power you have."

In five years, our Chapter made local and state changes. None of our parents felt alone.

You, too, can change the world for those with special education needs and disabilities.

Am I asking a lot? Yes, I am.

I am asking you to learn, read and network. You must take these steps for your children and the children who will come along behind your children.

THE INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP) - A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

From the York Region District School Board

What is an IEP?

An IEP is a written plan. It is a working document, which describes the strengths and needs of an individual exceptional pupil, the special education program and services established to meet that pupil's needs, and how the program and services will be delivered. It also describes the student's progress.

The IEP Summarizes the Following:

- * student's strengths and needs
- * medical/health information
- * assessment data
- * student's current level of achievement in each program area
- * goals and specific expectations for the student
- * program modifications (changes required to grade-level expectations in the Ontario Curriculum)

- * accommodations (supports, services that will help your child access the curriculum and demonstrate learning)
- * special education services provided to the student
- * assessment strategies for reviewing the student's achievements and progress
- * regular updates, showing dates, results and recommendations
- * a Transition Plan (over age 14)

How Does an IEP Work?

An IEP outlines the special education programs and services your child will receive. There are five phases in the development of an IEP.

1. Gather information.
2. Set the direction.
3. Develop the plan.
4. Carry out the planned activities.
5. Review and update the IEP.

Contributions from as many sources as possible will benefit your child.

As the Parent, What Role Do I Play?

Parents play a powerful supporting role in the IEP process. It is important to understand and participate in the five phases of the IEP process. As well, be sure to ask for a copy of your child's IEP within 30 days, so that you can support the planned activities at home.

You know things about your child's approach to learning that no one else knows. Be sure to tell the teacher about your child's:

- * likes, dislikes and interests;
- * interest in extra-curricular activities;
- * talents and abilities;
- * family relationships and dynamics (including extended family and pets);
- * peer relationships and dynamics; and
- * family routines and schedules.

You may wish to consider making a 'portfolio' of this information for your child's teacher under the following headings:

ALL ABOUT ME:

- * Physical
- * Intellectual
- * Educational
- * Cultural
- * Emotional
- * Social

Setting the Direction

Students are most successful when all team members work together towards achievable goals.

As a parent:

- * keep the focus on your child at all times;
- * tell the teacher the hopes you have for your child's learning;
- * bring ideas and information;
- * ask questions; and
- * value everyone's input.

Developing the IEP

How Can I Contribute to Planning Goals for My Child?

Beginning with your child's strengths and needs is an important first step. You can help by:

- * including your child in the discussions; and
- * telling the teacher what you hope your child will accomplish this year.

Carrying out the IEP

There are many things you can do at home to help your child to reach his/her goals.

1. Talk to the teacher about what s/he is trying to accomplish.
2. Do what you can at home to try to support your child's goals.
3. Take every opportunity to communicate with your child's teacher.
4. Provide additional insights and resources to the school.
5. Share significant personal/family events as relevant.

Review and Update the IEP

Your child's progress toward his/her goals will be reviewed. Then, the IEP will be updated to include different strategies, approaches and/or resources considered necessary to help the learning process.

- * Talk to your child's teacher about the goals that have been set.
- * Communicate regularly with your child's teacher regarding progress.
- * Look for evidence of growth towards goals on your child's report card.
- * Recommend changes in goals, strategies and/or resources or support where you see a need.
- * Be actively involved in discussions at school when your child is changing grades, schools or moving into the workplace.

Many organizations are available to support you in understanding the IEP and/or to provide additional resources. Your school's principal can provide the names of the organizations that serve your area. This information is also available in the Special Education Advisory Committee's brochure, available at your local school.

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Past Issues

(to request, email liz@deaknet.com and indicate which volume/issue(s) you prefer

- Volume 1; Issue 1 WELCOME ISSUE!
- Volume 1; Issue 2 SUMMER CRISIS ISSUE
- Volume 1; Issue 3 SPOUSAL CONCERNS ISSUE
- Volume 1; Issue 4 SENSORY INTEGRATION
- Volume 1; Issue 5 CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS
- Volume 1; Issue 6 BACK TO SCHOOL

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UPCOMING CHATS:

HOW TO SET UP A HOME PROGRAM - Guest hosted by **[Kathy Lear](#)**, creator of **[Help Us](#)**

Learn <http://www.helpuslearn.com/>; A Self Paced Training Program for ABA - Thursday, October 4 at 1:00 pm, eastern time.

SENSORY INTEGRATION - EVERY DAY STRATEGIES - Guest hosted by **Shirley Sutton**, co-author of "**Building Bridges Through Sensory Integration**" <http://www.buildingbridges.cjb.net/>
For dates, times and chat locations, please email liz@deaknet.com
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PLEASE NOTE: TRANSCRIPTS FROM APRAXIA, CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS AND AUTISM AND ENZYMES CHATS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST liz@deaknet.com

COMING SOON: "Autism and Essential Fatty Acids", "Central Auditory Processing Disorders", "Siblings of Children with ASD", "ADHD/ADD and ASD", "Autism and Nutrition"

Regular chats take place Mon-Fri at 2pm and 9 pm daily. If no one is in the chat room when you get there...give it a chance. You never know who might drop in!

For chat instructions, please email the chat(s) you wish to attend to liz@deaknet.com