

## **Understanding the IEP - What's Next?**

### **Preparing for your child's IEP meeting.**

**Yep! You have homework!**

**Review the tips below, complete the exercises on page 3 & 4, and read the closing story.**

#### ***General Tips***

- Keep your focus on the main reason you're there: creating an IEP that ensures positive outcomes for your student!
- Write up your parent input statement ahead of time, including your child's strengths as well as your concerns and/or ideas you have to address them. Bring copies!
- Be prepared to share methods that are successful for your child at home.
- Feel confident in your role on the team, and stay team-oriented (instead of "us" vs. "them").
- Be comfortable with the IEP document.
- Know your school district's policies and the chain of command - your case manager is very important!
- Use a binder with dividers to organize your child's information.
- Bring a note taker (friend, neighbor, etc.).
- Locate a FACT IEP training in your community or access the Understanding the IEP online training at [www.factorogon.org](http://www.factorogon.org)

#### ***Communication Tips***

- Document communication in writing.
- Ask clarifying questions.
- Be solution oriented. Don't point fingers. Use "we" instead of "you" or "them."
- Actively listen and participate!
- Be aware of all the different ways you are communicating (i.e. rolling your eyes, finger pointing, head nodding).
- Emails should be no more than a paragraph or two. If it needs to be longer, you might need to call a meeting.
- Be prepared to ask questions that re-engage the conversation (i.e. "What options can we explore where consensus might be possible?" or "How might we address those concerns?")
- Be strategic in how you communicate - you are working to build consensus.

***Consensus = general agreement***

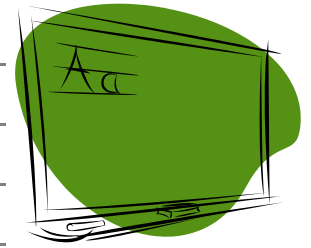
**Things I learned about the IEP process include:**

---

---

---

---



**My child's case manager is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email/Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My child's strengths are:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**What works for him/her:**

**What doesn't work for him/her:**


**Vision for my child's future:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Taking a look at my child's current IEP, my parent input in the Present Levels is:**

- Perfect: captures what I wanted to share
  
- Needs work: doesn't share my child's strengths



**My next steps are:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## A Closing Story

There once was a family making its way through the land of special education. The team was happy and in agreement, singing along without a care in the world... and then it happened; they weren't singing the same song. One person was humming a tune, while another whistled a different melody. What could they do? They found themselves at a fork in the road.

### The simple truth about disagreement

Disagreement is a natural part of any group activity. The bottom line is that when it occurs in the IEP process, parents are at a fork in the road with a decision to make: **Accept, Negotiate, Dispute**. Some of us swirl at the bottom of the fork, mad and upset, stewing on the problem. Some parents do this for a short time, others longer; the simple truth is you have a decision to make. FACT Support Specialists can help you out of that swirl. Call or email FACT's Helpline for additional support: **(503) 786-6082 or 1(888) 988-3228 ext. 302; support@factoregon.org.**



- ◇ **Accept:** you can be okay with what is offered by the district (i.e., IEP is implemented as is)
- ◇ **Negotiate:** you are not okay with what's offered, and want to continue to talk more (i.e., request parent conference or team meeting)
- ◇ **Dispute:** you strongly disagree, and neither side will change its mind (i.e., request mediation or other dispute resolution)

©Copyright 2014 FACT Oregon, All Rights Reserved. You may print and/or make copies of this booklet to use as a handout (for non-commercial use). Before using this booklet in any other way (for ex., on websites, blogs, newsletters, etc.) and to comply with copyright laws, please see Terms of Use at [www.factoregon.org](http://www.factoregon.org).



13455 SE 97<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Clackamas, OR 97015  
Tel: (503)786-6082 or 1 (888) 988-3228  
Fax: (503) 786-6084  
[info@factoregon.org](mailto:info@factoregon.org)