

SPECIAL EDUCATION RECORDS: COMMUNICATION

Be sure to enter the following information in pencil!

This will enable you to update the contact information yearly or as needed.

School Name _____

School phone # _____

Address _____

School fax # _____

Principal _____

Other contacts:

Special education teacher _____

Regular education teachers: _____

County Board of Education #: _____

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS TO KEEP

1. Telephone/Visit Log. Keeping track of your communications is easier if you make notes immediately following the conversation or visit. Take a few minutes each time to record your calls and visits. Do this for every phone call or meeting. It builds documentation. Turn this over to start recording on the "Telephone/Visit Log" we provided to get you started. Make sure you make a copy of the back before you get started.

2. Formal notices of meetings scheduled to discuss your child. When you get a notice like this, write down the date you received it. Sometimes the question of whether a school system has met time requirements is important under IDEA. (It is sometimes a good idea to keep copies of the envelopes in which such notices arrive. Check the date of the notice or letter and the date of the postmark. It could be significant if the postmark is later than the date on the notice.)

3. Correspondence. Save any correspondence between you and teachers, special education administrators, TEAM chairpersons, and evaluators. Don't forget emails -- print them out and include them in your correspondence file. Also save correspondence from the school system that's addressed to you or to all special education parents describing issues that affect your child. This may include letters describing new programs, changes in programs or services, school system policies for children with special education needs, or budget issues.

4. Notes from conversations and meetings with school personnel, evaluators, the child's TEAM, or other interactions relating to your child's program or needs. Be certain to take excellent notes at key meetings or, better yet, bring someone with you whose only task is to take notes (especially at TEAM meetings). These notes can help enormously when, months later, you try to remember exactly what various people said or what agreements were reached.



TELEPHONE/VISIT LOG

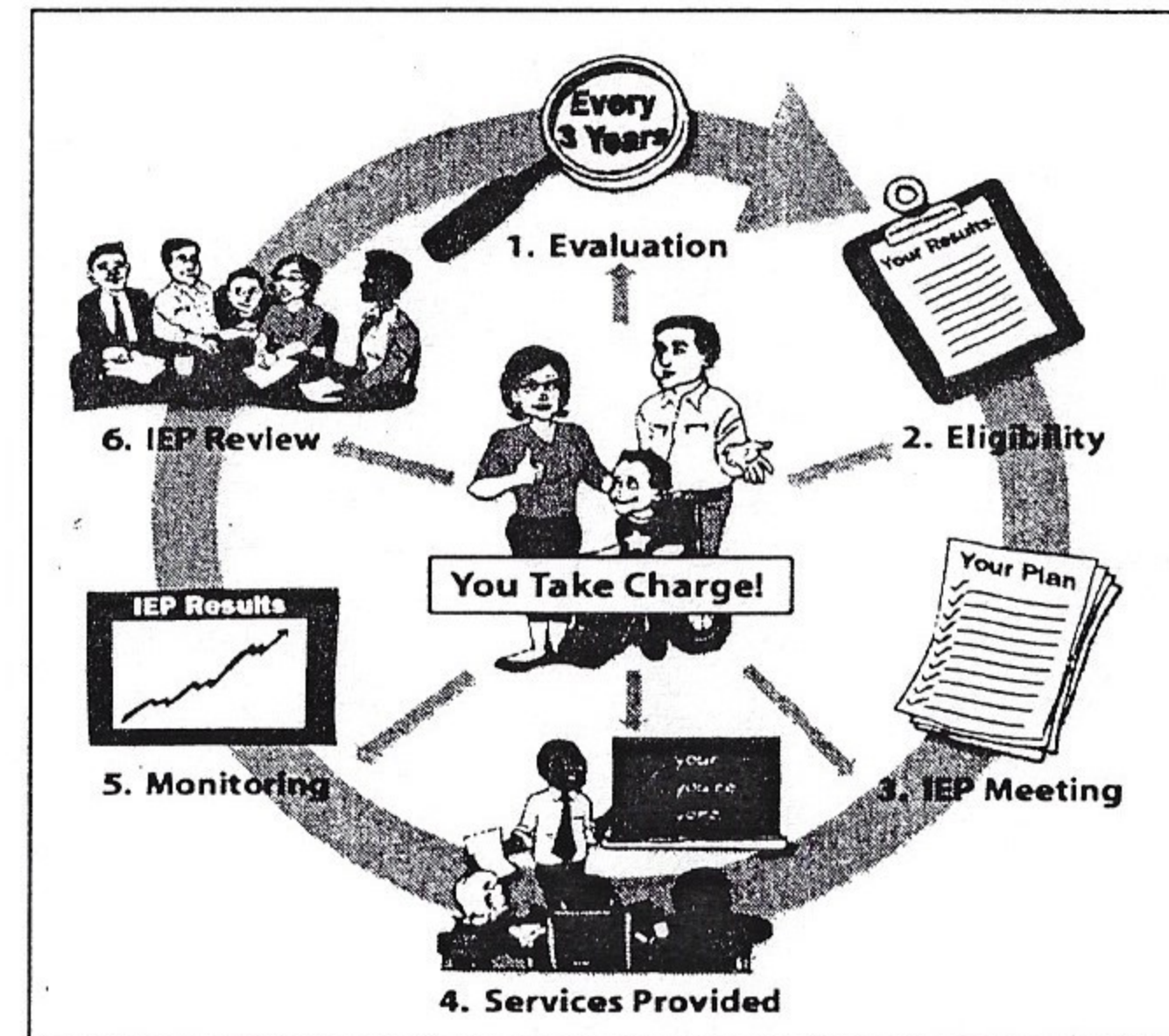
Date/Time	Name	What you wanted	What you were told	Notes

Tip: Make extra copies of this telephone log to keep in your toolkit.

SPECIAL EDUCATION RECORDS: MY CHILD'S IEP

THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS and YOUR CHILD'S RIGHTS

Appropriate Evaluation
Individualized Education Program (IEP)
Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
Parent & Student Participation in Decision-making
Procedural Safeguards



How ADA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and IDEA relate to educating individuals with disabilities

The three laws work in concert with each other affecting the education of students with disabilities. In some instances there will be duplicate coverage and an individual situation will be covered under more than one law. When this happens, whichever law or portion of a law provides the *greatest protection* for the individual with a disability will prevail.



IEP

When a special education need has been identified by the team, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed. The IEP is a plan written by the team that states what will be provided for your child at school.

Check to see that the following is included in that plan:

1. Your child's present levels of performance in all areas.

- Is it written in language that YOU understand?
- Does it address all of the areas of concern for your child?
- Does it describe how your child's disability affects his/her involvement and progress in the general curriculum?
- Is it based on current information, stating more than just test scores?
- Do the assessment results shown correspond to your knowledge of your child's ability?
- Do the results of the assessments describe your child's abilities as well as the specific areas of need?
- Does it address both the academic and functional needs of your child?

2. Development of objectives and annual goals.

- Are they based on an assessment of your child's present performance?
- Can you match each goal up to an area of concern on the Present Levels of Performance area of the IEP?
- What changes are expected in your child's behavior, if any?
- Are positive behavioral supports included?
- Does it have specific academic information? For example, does it say what grade level of work your child will be working towards?
- Are the goals appropriate?
- Will objectives help your child reach the annual goals?
- Can your child's progress on each objective be measured? If so, how?
- Is there a "start date" for each goal?

3. Related services to be provided:

- Assistive technology devices
- Health care needs
- Toileting needs
- Speech/OT/PT
- Transportation
- Other _____

4. Placement Recommendation

- Is everything written out in the IEP?
- Have you visited the possible placement?
- What makes the proposed placement appropriate to your child's needs?
- How will the child participate in the general education curriculum?
- What opportunities will your child have to be educated with their non-disabled peers?
- What modifications are needed in a typical class for your child to be successful?

5. Report on progress toward goals.

- What evaluation procedures will be used?
- How often will reporting occur?
- How will daily/regular communication occur?

SPECIAL EDUCATION RECORDS: EVALUATIONS

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS TO KEEP

Evaluations by the school system and/or independent evaluators. Depending on your child, these will include educational, psychological and/or neuropsychological, speech and language, occupational therapy, physical therapy evaluations.

Standardized test results. These tests can provide a helpful comparison to the progress reports written by your child's teachers.

It is recommended that you keep all of them.

Before your child receives special education services the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that he or she have an evaluation. An evaluation includes information from parents, any special medical concerns, and interviews with parents and school staff, and may include specific tests. The results of an evaluation will be used to determine if your child needs special education and related services help in school. You must give your consent in writing before the first evaluation can take place.

The evaluation:

- Must be done by trained and knowledgeable persons
- Must be in all areas related to the suspected disability
- Is more than just one test or assessment procedure
- Must be in your child's native language unless clearly not possible to do so

Re-evaluation does not necessarily mean more testing.

If you ask for re-evaluation in writing to see if your child needs services, or if it is time for the three-year re-evaluation, someone from the school may set up a team meeting to look at existing information and talk with you. You are a member of this team.

Generally, these are the steps:

1. Team members will review the information and test results that have been gathered on your child, including information that you provide to the school. The review will also include observations made by teachers or other school staff, and current class room-based assessments.
2. The team will decide if there is a need for additional testing to determine whether your child continues to be a "child with a disability" in need of special education and related services, and his or her present levels of educational performance and educational needs.
3. School personnel will notify you of the team's decision, and must tell you the reasons for the decision.
4. The team has several options. It may decide that:
 - a) No additional data are needed. An IEP team meeting will be set up to develop or update the IEP. You may invite someone who knows your child or who can help your child to attend the meeting with you, and should ask that the meeting be set for a time that you can attend. The time can be changed if you are unable to attend.
 - b) Your child needs more testing. The team will ask you to sign permission before any new testing is completed. If you do not agree to more testing, you should put in writing that you disagree. Schools can pursue testing even if you do not agree.



EVALUATION LOG

Date	Type of Evaluation	Purpose/Area of Concern	Date Reviewed	Findings

Tip: Make extra copies of this evaluation log to keep in your toolkit.

SPECIAL EDUCATION RECORDS: PROGRESS DATA

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS TO KEEP

Notes on your child's behavior or progress

These will include notes from you to the teacher, from the teacher to you, or journal entries between you and your child's service providers. Sometimes notes from a concerned teacher tell a different story than the formal report the teacher develops at the request of her supervisor when the TEAM convenes.

Progress reports and report cards

These are the formal documents where the school system periodically describes how your child is doing.

Samples of schoolwork

It can be helpful to keep examples of your child's work each year. You can compare these to show how much progress he's made in different academic areas.

Documents relating to discipline and/or behavioral concerns

These include notices of detention and suspension (both in and out of school), letters describing the concerns of service providers or school administrators about behavior, records of behavioral assessments, and records of behavioral plans for addressing behavioral issues.

DATA COLLECTIONS TOOLS FOR PARENTS

Many websites offer data collection tools for parents that can be used to record your observations about your child. You can share your observations with your child's team. We have listed some below:

Homework Observations and Concerns and Homework Survey

Uses these forms to help organize your concerns about your child's independence in homework.

www.tourettesyndrome.net/education.htm

Organization Skills Survey

Using this tool enables you to outline strengths and weakness in your child's organizational skills

www.tourettesyndrome.net/education.htm

Organizing Your Concerns

Children with special needs often have a variety of school-related problems. Some problems may be academic. Some may be social, some may be emotional. If your child has only one school-related problem or need, you may have no need for a chart, but if your child has a number of issues or problems, you may find it helpful to organize your concerns by using a worksheet like the one provided.

www.tourettesyndrome.net/education.htm



THE PARENTS' PLACE OF MARYLAND

ABOUT US

The Parents' Place of Maryland, Inc., is a private, non-profit organization which provides information and training about special education and health to families of children with all types of disabilities and special health care needs. With assistance to individual families, workshops, materials for parents and professionals, and leadership in securing services for all children, our work affects and encourages families in Maryland.

- Parents' Place believes parents can be the best advocates for their children.
- Experienced advisors assist parents to become more aware of their rights and responsibilities through telephone counseling, workshops and written materials.
- With confidence and knowledge, parents can then participate as equal partners with professionals on behalf of their children.

The Parents' Place is the federally funded Parent Training and Information Center for the state of Maryland and the Family-to-Family Health Information and Resource Center.

Parents' Place is funded through grants from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services; the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Office for Genetics and Children with Special Health Care Needs; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services; Howard County Department of Citizen Services; along with other grants, contracts, and tax deductible contributions.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ASSISTANCE FOR PARENTS

Parents' Place provides training and information to parents of children with disabilities to prepare them to make decisions about their child's education:

- Parent Educators conduct free workshops around the state on many topics related to special education. Please check out our website for the latest workshops in your area.
- Telephone assistance is provided by staff to help parents understand their rights in special education. We also offer strategic planning and IEP problem-solving consultation.
- Other Resources:
 - Fact sheets which provide written information about special education issues;
 - E-mail newsletter published monthly;
 - Customized presentations for parents and professionals.

HEALTH EDUCATION AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Parents' Place provides training and information to parents of children with special health care needs to prepare them to make wise decisions about their child's health care:

- Free workshops are conducted around the state on health care issues of importance to families. Some of the topics include understanding Medicaid, appeals and grievances, and choosing the right health care plan. Our website lists the latest workshops in your area.
- Telephone assistance is provided by staff to help parents navigate the health care system. We can help parents understand their health care plan benefits, appeal denials, and identify alternative sources of health care financing.
- Customized training for parents and providers.
- Written resources for parents.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Telephone: 410-768-9100 or

Toll free: 800-394-5694

Web: www.ppmd.org

SPECIAL EDUCATION RECORDS: COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Local Health Dept

Phone # _____

Office of Special Education

Contact name _____

Phone # _____

Partners for Success

Phone # _____

Infant and Toddlers

Phone # _____

Child Find

Phone # _____

USEFUL WEB SITES

The Parents' Place of MD

<http://www.ppmmd.org/>

Family Net Works

<http://www.family-networks.org>

DORS MSDE Division of Rehabilitation

<http://www.dors.state.md.us/dors>

Wrightslaw

<http://www.wrightslaw.com>

Abilities Network

www.abilitiesnetwork.org

Arc of MD, Inc

<http://www.thearcmd.org>

Yellow Pages For Kids

<http://yellowpagesforkids.com>

THE PARENTS' PLACE OF MD

801 Cromwell Park Drive, Suite 103, Glen Burnie MD 21061

410-768-9100, 1-800-394-5694, fax # 410-768-0830

www.ppmmd.org

MD DISABILITY LAW CENTER

1800 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
1-800-233-7201

MD Coalition for Inclusive Education (MCIE)

7484 Candlewood Road,
Suite R
Hanover, MD 21076
410-859-5400
MCIE@MCIE.org

MD Coalition of Families For Children's Mental Health

10632 Little Patuxent Parkway
Columbia MD 21044
410-730-8267

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Office for Genetics and Children with Special Health Care Needs
201 West Preston St
Baltimore, MD 21201
1-800-638-8864

MD State Department of Education

Dept. of Ed. Div. of Special Ed
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-2595
(410) 767-0238
www.msde.state.md.us

State Mental Health Agency

Mental Hygiene Administration
Dept of Health & Mental Hygiene
201 West Preston St, # 416A
Baltimore, MD 21201
(410) 767-6655

DDA Regional Offices

SO. MD REGIONAL OFFICE
312 Marshall Ave., 5th Fl
Laurel, MD 20705

WESTERN MD REGIONAL OFFICE
1500 Riverside Drive
Hagerstown, MD 21740

CENTRAL MD REGIONAL OFFICE
Rosewood Lane
Owings Mills, MD 21117
410-581-6170

EASTERN SHORE REGIONAL OFFICE
1370 Marshall Street
Salisbury, MD 21802
410-334-6920



Other Resources in My Community

Organization	Contact Information Phone # / E-mail

If you would like to learn more about special education or disabilities, you might try one of the following:

- Your local public library
- Your local public school, particularly the Director of Special Education
- PARENTS' PLACE OF MARYLAND
- Your local "Partners for Success" parent center
- Parent groups or associations for children in your area like the Learning Disabilities Assoc., C.H.A.D.D., Tourette Syndrome Assoc., Abilities Network - Epilepsy Foundation, etc.
- Maryland State Department of Education
- Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program
- The Internet

SPECIAL EDUCATION RECORDS: PARENT ADVOCACY TOOLS

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS TO KEEP

- IDEA 2004
- Federal Regulations for IDEA
- COMAR
- Local school system policies
- PPMD Factsheets
- MSDE Informational Updates
- Other _____
- Other _____

TIPS FOR BEING AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE

Be prepared. Review your child's most recent evaluations. Develop a vision for your child. Ask for copies of all your child's records, and review them before the team meeting. Ask for a copy of the proposed IEP to review at least one week before the IEP meeting.

Be organized. Make a list of all your ideas, concerns, and what your child needs to do to achieve that vision. Be as specific as possible in discussing your child's needs and abilities. Stick with the issue at hand -- your child's education.

Know who has the power. Remember, you are the primary decision-maker for your child. No changes in your child's placement or services should take place without your approval, except in an emergency situation.

Communicate regularly. Maintain close contact with anyone who is responsible for coordinating your child's program. If you think teachers or other team members are doing a good job, tell them. Get involved in your child's school. Talk with your child's teacher or case manager if you have any questions.

Keep your cool. There will be times when this will be very hard. Prepare and rehearse ahead of time, so you will be able to anticipate and refute those bureaucratic arguments without losing your cool.

Bring someone with you. You have a right to invite anyone to attend the IEP team meeting with you. Bring a friend, family member, or another parent for moral support and to take notes.

Know what your bottom line is. Ask for more and be prepared to negotiate. (e.g. it may be more expensive or difficult for the school to provide some services you could easily win versus what you're asking for).

MEETING ETIQUETTE

Be clear on the purpose of the meeting before the meeting occurs. If someone other than you calls the meeting, ask and note the purpose for the meeting and what will be discussed. If a meeting is called by you, be certain that you state the purpose for calling the meeting and what it is you want to talk about.

At the meeting, ask that the purpose of the meeting be stated. State your understanding for why the meeting was called, or state your purpose for calling the meeting. This gets everyone focused and prepared to deal with the issues at hand.

Listen carefully and take notes. While others are presenting their reports and discussing your child's progress, take notes on the points that you agree or don't agree with.

Ask questions about anything you don't understand. Don't be afraid or shy to ask people to explain words, terms, roles, and responsibilities, what is being asked of you, or what is being decided about your child.

Ask that decisions and recommendations be restated. Make sure that everyone understands the decisions and recommendations made during the meeting.

Note any follow-up that should occur and who is responsible for what.

PREPARING FOR YOUR CHILD'S IEP MEETING : A CHECKLIST

Participating in your child's IEP meeting is one of the most important roles you have as a parent. Your perspectives about your child are essential in shaping and determining your child's education. Gathering and reviewing information about your child can help you be ready to participate as a full team member at the IEP meeting.

- Obtain and study all school records including assessments reports, medical records, prior IEPs, progress notes, report cards, teachers' notes, etc.
- On your child's current IEP, indicate the goals and objectives that you believe have been partially or completely attained, and those which have not been attained.
- Make a list of your child's present level of functioning based on your observations:
 - Academic skills
 - Developmental skills
 - Expressive and receptive language skills
 - Emotional/behavioral skills
 - Self-help skills
 - Prevocational and vocational skills
 - Other
- List the special education services that you feel your child will need.
- List your child's needs for transportation.
- If your child will require adapted physical education, list the goals that he should attain as a result of this service.
- List the special considerations in dealing with your child in the classroom.

MEDICAL RECORDS

This section provides a place for you to record medical information that is important to your family. In this section you can keep:

- Important Numbers – Record all of your important phone numbers in one place.
- Medical History – Keep your child's important medical information such as diagnosis, evaluations, and other documents.
- Child's immunization record – You can also keep your child's immunization record in this section.

PHYSICIAN INFORMATION

Primary care physician:	Phone:	Fax:
Key office staff/Nurse:	Phone:	Fax:
Current Specialty physician:	Phone:	Fax:
Specialty:		
Current Specialty physician:	Phone:	Fax:
Specialty:		
Pharmacy:	Phone:	Fax:

INSURANCE INFORMATION

Primary Insurance		Secondary Insurance	
Phone		Phone	
Subscriber #		Subscriber #	
Group #		Group #	

Medications:	Allergies: Medications/Foods to be avoided
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.

MEDICAL/SURGICAL/DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

Date	Diagnosis/Condition	Procedure	Doctor

Tip: Make extra copies of these forms to insert in this section.