

Don't be afraid to ask questions!

Don't be afraid to ask for help!

Do be polite when communicating with your school district about your child's educational placement, evaluations or services.

Do attend all meetings with your school.

Do remember to send follow-up emails after conversations stating your understanding of what was discussed.

Finally, always remember that ...

Every child is special!

Get it in Writing:

A Guide to Communicating with School Personnel



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Passionately guiding and representing families

You might not have a dispute right now, but one may arise and you will need a record of your dealings with the school. **My cardinal rule** is that all communications with school personnel should be in writing. Also, keep work that your child brings home. Whether you are just starting the evaluation process or your child already has a 504 plan or an IEP, schoolwork can hold crucial clues as to whether your child's needs are truly being served.

Put all requests and communications in writing.

Record keeping practices for parents:

My cardinal rule: keep a written record of all of your communications with your child's school or the school district. Also, set up a file just for correspondence. Set up a separate file for your child's report cards and yet another file for any written work that your child brings home.

Procedure for delivering letters:

Bring two copies with you to the school for delivery. Ask the person accepting delivery to sign and date your copy and return it to you. Retain that copy for your file.

When is communication in a letter appropriate:

Evaluation requests and reevaluation requests must be made in writing. The request should be made in a letter that is hand-delivered to the head of special education for the district. Send or bring a courtesy copy to the school principal.

If you are enrolling your child in a private school and plan to seek tuition reimbursement, you must provide 10 days advance written notice. Bring this letter to your district's superintendent and send or bring a copy to the public school

principal. In New York City, send the letter to your district's CSE representative and deliver a copy to your school's principal (if your child is enrolled in public school).

Other communications:

Communicating with your child's teacher or school administrators by email is perfectly acceptable. Print out your emails and maintain them in chronological order in a correspondence file. There are times when you will speak with school personnel. In that case send a follow-up email that:

- Thanks the person for their time.
- Refers to the date and time of the conversation.
- States that the email reflects your understanding of the discussion.
- Summarizes what you believe was agreed upon.

Here is a sample format:

Dear Teacher:

Thank you so much for your time and understanding of my daughter's special needs and difficulties. I just wanted to confirm that you will be sending me and my daughter a monthly social studies syllabus. I really appreciate your support.

Yours truly,
Sample Parent

Contact Bonnie