School Meetings at a Glance

A practical guide to walking into school meetings prepared and confident.

A Note for Families

It's normal to feel nervous before a school meeting, whether it's your first or your tenth. You are an important member of your child's team. This guide will help you prepare, understand your role, and know what to expect. It is not a substitute for individualized guidance.

> DEA PERSPECTIVE
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> **Understand the child, then work together.**
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> Families know their child better than anyone. School staff bring educational expertise. The best meetings happen when everyone listens, asks questions, and keeps the student at the center.

Before the Meeting

Review Records	Read reports, evaluations, and school documents so the information is fresh.
Write Questions	List the topics you want to cover so nothing is forgotten.
Bring What Matters	Bring information tied to the meeting's purpose, such as a tutor's progress report or recent work samples.
Note Strengths	Meetings often focus on challenges. Think about your child's strengths and successes too.

During the Meeting

Listen First	Hear the team's perspective and ask questions if something isn't clear.
Speak Up	If you disagree or need clarification, say so respectfully. Your perspective matters.
Ask for Documentation	Ask that important discussions or disagreements be recorded in the meeting notes.

After the Meeting

Review the Notes	Wait a day or two, then read the notes and any documents you received.
Follow Up	If questions come up, email the school for clarification.
Stay Organized	Keep notes, evaluations, and documents together for future reference.

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Common Misconceptions

MYTH	WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW
I shouldn't speak up if I disagree.	Your questions and perspective are an important part of the meeting. Respectful conversations lead to better decisions.
I need to be an expert in special education before attending.	You don't need to be an expert. It's okay to ask the team to explain unfamiliar terms or steps.
The loudest person wins.	The most productive meetings focus on collaboration, communication, and the student's needs.

DEA PERSPECTIVE

Clear is kind.

Families deserve honest information delivered with compassion. Schools shouldn't minimize concerns, and everyone should remember they are talking about someone's child. Honest, respectful communication builds trust.

Need Help Preparing for a School Meeting?

Every meeting is different, and no guide can replace individualized support. If you would like help preparing for a meeting, reviewing documents beforehand, or understanding decisions afterward, schedule a consultation with Distributed Education Advocacy.

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