Tested Tips for IEP Meetings

Parents and the IEP Meeting
• Organize questions and define areas where more information is needed
• Outline what they want their child to learn
• Bring a picture of their child
• Ask, “If this were your child....”
• Don’t necessarily “sign” at the meeting—take documentations home, process, discuss, consider, and share with significant people in child’s life
• Look for opportunities to express gratitude to teachers and school staff
• Bring someone
• If compromising, define how and when to evaluate if the plan is working
• Try to remain calm
• Saying “I don’t know what you mean” is demonstration of confidence and competence

Teachers/School Staff and the IEP Meeting
• Explain crucial nature of parent’s involvement and what will happen at the meeting
• Invite parents to bring anyone they wish
• Explain who will attend from the school district, why, and ask parent if anyone has been left out
• Schedule a convenient time and location, and ample time for the meeting
• Establish if parent(s) need help with transportation or childcare
• Invite parents to review relevant documents prior to meeting and encourage classroom visits
• Keep parents apprized of progress on an ongoing basis

During the Meeting
• Everyone introduces himself or herself and explains why they are there
• Set an agenda and time-frame for the meeting
• Speak in clear, plain language—avoid jargon and discipline specific
• Have specific materials available that are referred to
• Focus on the child’s individualized needs
• Listen carefully
• Maintain confidentiality
• Do not hurry
• Be honest and trust that others are also
• Be willing to say, “I don’t know”
• Involve student for at least a portion of the meeting, if it is appropriate

After the Meeting
• Review and evaluate what worked, what didn’t work
• Consider what should be incorporated into future meetings
• Consider building a meeting tip file for each child—sources of anger, joy, etc.
• Write down specific suggestions about things parents can do at home to help