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**PARENT INFORMATION CENTER OF DELAWARE**

## TIPS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION IN IEP MEETINGS

### AT A GLANCE

These tips are suggestions from parent advocates to help families when addressing concerns, as well as improving communication with school staff. You may already use some of these approaches, while others may be new ideas to consider.

STATEMENT OR SITUATION	YOU MAY WANT TO ASK/SAY
School staff presents a new idea that you may be interested in...	"What will it take to make that happen?"
A school IEP team member expresses something that you think may be an opinion...	"Is that an opinion or do you have data I can see to support it?"
You are uncertain about something in your child's school day...	"What does this look like in John's day?"
A school IEP team says, "Your son refuses to_"	"Is that something he can't or doesn't know how to do rather than refuses to do?"
A school staff member says "We don't have the money to do that"	"I understand that the school district has financial concerns. However, we are here to talk about what my child needs for a free, appropriate public education." Or you might say, "Please put that in writing for me."
A school staff member says — "We don't know (the answer to a particular question, concern, problem, or issue)" — without offering a way to find the answer	"Who can we invite to the meeting to help find the answer?"

**PIC is a statewide non-profit organization with a mission to improve health and educational outcomes for children and youth by empowering them, their families and the professionals who serve them. For more information visit [www.picofdel.org](http://www.picofdel.org) or call 302-999-7394**





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STATEMENT OR SITUATION	YOU MAY WANT TO ASK/SAY
The team wants to try something new	“How will we know if it’s working?” Or you might say, “What data will be collected?”
A school staff member states that something is in their school policy	“You say the policy is....May I please have a copy of that policy to read?”
You want input from a specific IEP team member	“What is your professional opinion?”
An important agreement, decision, or promise is made	Ask to have it put into writing
You are bringing a problem to the IEP team that needs solving	Try to clearly present the problem and then brainstorm solutions with the team. Use the IEP Meeting Planner as a tool to guide your thoughts and prioritize them.



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### **ADDITIONAL WAYS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION AT MEETINGS:**

1. Review the IEP invitation letter so that you know who has been invited
2. Make a list of your concerns regarding your child and their education and prioritize your list of concerns to a reasonable number—IEP Meeting Planner
3. Develop a list of questions that are important to you to ask of specific team members
4. Problem-solve solutions to your concerns and be ready to share your ideas
5. Take some time to review your child's IEP or any other relevant documentation before the meeting for items you'd like to discuss at the meeting
6. Ask a question, then give the individual time to answer
7. Stay focused
8. When action is required, always ask who will be responsible for seeing that it's done
9. Thank the members of the IEP team or specific teachers whenever possible and appropriate

*Adapted in part from PACER Center, Inc, 2018 [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org)*



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