

Our Mission

The advocacy of equal rights and opportunities for children and adults with disabilities

The Arkansas Parent Training and Information Center is a statewide network for parents of children with disabilities. The Arkansas PTI Center is a joint project of the Arkansas Disability Coalition, Focus, Inc., and Arkansas Support Network, Inc.

PTI Governing Committee

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What to Ask at a Parent-Teacher Conference

It is so very important to take advantage of parent -teacher conferences during the school year. Think of questions and concerns you may have and write them down before your meeting. Keep track of your child's schoolwork to help you with your questions. You are in a position to share important information as well as ask questions. Remember, you can and should talk with your child's teacher throughout the year.

Questions to Ask for Students in All Grades

1. Is my child performing at grade level ?
2. What are my child's strengths and weaknesses in major subjects reading, math and science?
3. How much time should my child spend on homework?
4. Are my child's assignments completed accurately and on time?
5. Does the school have special programs to meet my child's needs?
6. Does my child have special learning needs? Are there special classes my child should be in?

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The Individual Education Plan

What Is an Individual Education Plan?

The Individual Education Plan, or IEP, is a written document developed for each student receiving special education and related services. The specifications for the IEP are listed in P .L. 94-142, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

What Information Does the IEP Include?

- your child's current levels of educational performance
- the specific services your child will receive
- the goals and objectives for the current year
- a schedule to see if the objectives are being met
- a beginning and ending date for these services

Who Attends the IEP Meeting?

- the parent or guardian
- your child, if you wish
- your child's teacher

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- a representative of the educational system who provides or supervises special instruction
- a member of the team that evaluated your child, if requested
- any close friend or family member you want to have present

When Are the IEP Meetings Held?

IEP meetings are held once a year to review your child's progress during the present year and to revise the goals for the next year. These meetings may be held at any time during the year, but they often will be scheduled in May or June to prepare for the following year so that your child can start school in the fall with no interruptions.

The school system must notify you in writing of their intent to hold an IEP meeting. If the time they suggest is inconvenient for you, you must contact the school system to reschedule the meeting for a mutually convenient time. You have the right to request a review of the IEP at any time if you should have questions or are dissatisfied with your child's educational program. Put your request in writing, and always keep a copy of your letter for your records.

What Should You Do to Prepare for the IEP Meeting?

- Visit your child's classroom and observe the interactions between your child and the teacher, between your child and the other students.
- Look at the current IEP to see if last year's goals were met, and whether or not they were the right goals to start with.
- Meet informally with all those professionals who work with your child at school to discuss your child's progress and any problems you are concerned about
- Look over the written "draft" IEP you will receive from the school (some schools may not send out draft copies).
- Put your ideas and suggestions for the next school year in writing and give a copy to your school.
- Decide whom you would like to have attend the IEP meeting, and make your requests.

What Needs to Be Discussed during the IEP Meeting?

- your child's performance in the current program (progress or lack of progress)
- the academic and social goals for next year (for example, child will be reading at first grade level; child will respond by saying hello when greeted by other students)
- the steps that will be used to reach these overall goals (child will make eye contact when greeted; then will make eye contact and smile when greeted;

and finally will make eye contact, smile, and say hello when greeted)

- how progress will be measured (child performs task three out of four times with verbal cues; child performs task at home as well as at school)
- the related services that are necessary (such as speech therapy or physical therapy)
- any problems that concern you (such as behavior toward other children)
- what school or classroom your child will attend next year (special education classroom or regular education classroom: the concept of least restrictive environment)
- how the new plan fits into any long-range goals (such as whether your child is working toward a regular diploma or an alternative diploma)

What if I Am Dissatisfied with the IEP Process?

Conflicts about your child's IEP can usually be solved on a local level by meeting with school personnel to work out your differences. However, if emotions are running too high for this approach to be successful, there are further measures that can help you reach a satisfactory conclusion. The steps you can take, in the order they should occur, are listed here:

1. Write a letter to the director of special education in your school district, asking for a meeting to discuss the problem.
2. Write a letter to your state department of education, listing your complaint and any supporting evidence you have.
3. Write to the Federal Office for Civil Rights.
4. Check to see if your state has a mediation program available to help you and your school system resolve your differences in the presence of a third party.
5. If none of the above steps work, you may request a due-process hearing by writing to the director of special education in your school district

The IEP process may seem like an overwhelming ordeal, but it does not have to be. Look for other parents who have been involved in the special education system for awhile. They will be able to share their experiences with you and answer your questions about the procedures. Ask one of these parents to help you prepare for your first IEP meeting and even go with you if possible. As a parent, you are an equal participant in all IEP meetings. You can make suggestions, request changes, and ask for any related services you believe would benefit your child. These services cannot be denied to your child due to lack of funds or because they are not available in your area. All required services must be provided to you at no cost

- Rhonda S. Failey

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7. Do you keep a folder of my child's work? If yes, could you review it with me?
8. Does my child have close friends? How well does my child get along with the other students?
9. What can we do at home to support classroom learning?
10. What is the best way to get in touch with you?

Additional Questions for Middle and High School Students

1. How can I help my child to work independently and make the best use of time?
2. How can I help my child prepare for high school?
3. What can you tell me about peer pressure and how can I help my child handle difficult situations -drugs, alcohol and sex?
4. What courses should my child take to satisfy graduation requirements?
5. Do you have a list of courses my child should take to be ready for college?
6. If my child plans to attend college, how will the school help with the application process?
7. If my child plans to attend college, how will the school help my child find out about financial aid?

Closing the Conference

Before ending the conference make sure that you have a clear understanding of what was said. Do not be afraid to ask questions. Keep asking until you are clear about any concerns you may have. Review the main points of the conference to be sure everyone agrees with what was talked about. This is a good time to schedule a follow-up conference if necessary. Share what you talked about at the conference with your child. He or she will appreciate being included. If there are problems or just things that need to be worked on, you will have better success if your child knows that you and the teacher are working together as a team.

Source: US Department of Education

Fishing At The Harbor

Children who would not ordinarily have the chance to experience the thrill of baiting a hook, casting a rod, and reeling in a large catfish had a day of fishing, thanks to Horton's Orthotic Lab Inc. The 5th annual 'Fishing at the Harbor', sponsored by Horton's, was held at Mountain Harbor Resort Saturday April 26 from 9 A.M.- 3 P.M. The event is free. The day included fishing instructions, free lunch provided by Subway, and trophies, which were awarded to the largest catch as well as the most fish caught. Over 40 children with disabilities attended and over 100 pounds of catfish were caught.

"Many children with physical disabilities never get a chance to get outdoors and experience Arkansas' wonderful fishing," said Gary Horton, owner of Horton's Orthotic Lab Inc. "They often see their siblings and friends participating in all sorts of outdoor sporting events, and find themselves relegated to the role of spectators."

The main focus of this fishing event is placed on the children with disabilities. "While parents and siblings are encouraged to come and participate, our main attention is given to our specially invited children," Horton said. "Instead of merely watching others having fun, they are involved as active participants."

Supporting Your Child's Learning Through Collaboration

Presented By:

Arkansas Parent Training and Info Center

And

Arkansas State University Department of Educational Leadership, Curriculum and Special Ed

July 19

9:00 - 3:00

Arkansas State University



Books On Tape

In cooperation with a network of regional and sub regional Libraries, the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped provides a free library service to persons who are unable to read or use standard printed material because of visual or physical disabilities. Books and magazines in recorded form (talking books) are delivered by postage-free mail and are returned in the same manner. Specially designed phonographs and cassette players are also loaned free for use with material borrowed from the Library. Following approval for the program, you will receive catalogs of reading material and information about the procedure for ordering a small collection of books.

For more information, call our office or contact the National Library Service for the Blind at 1-866-660-0885 or by e-mail at nls@loc.gov.

Arkansas Support Network
614 E. Emma Ave, Suite 235
Springdale, AR 72764

If you need the PTI Center, call one of our coordinators listed below:

Wanda Stovall
Arkansas Disability Coalition
1123 S. University, Suite 225
Little Rock, AR 72204

Ramona Hodges
Focus, Inc
305 W. Jefferson Ave.
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Lynn Donald
Arkansas Support Network
614 E. Emma Ave, Suite 235
Springdale, AR 72764

501-614-7020
501-614-9082 (fax)
1-800-223-1330

870-935-2750
870-931-3755 (fax)
1-888-247-3843

501-927-1004
501-927-1373 (fax)
1-800-748-9768

The Arkansas Parent Training and Information Centers offer assistance through information, training, and support to parents of children with disabilities.

Your Child Can Experience Success!