

# A Collaborative Partnership: Parents & Teachers Working Together

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**Please note:** This document is a plain text adaptation of the original PowerPoint presentation. It includes the core content and structure but does not contain any visual design elements, images, or animations present in the original file.

***Parent's Guide to Special Education*** - Revised in 2010 by the Virginia Department of Education Division of Special Education and Student Services: *That* book that they give you when you start the process. Have you read it? [It] contains information on: Law, Special Education Process and Parent's Rights & Responsibilities

Broaden your Understanding:

- ***Negotiating the Special Education Maze: A Guide for Parents & Teachers, 4th Ed.*** (Written by Winifred Anderson, Stephen R. Chitwood, Deidre Hayden and Cherie Takemoto) - This book breaks the legal down & provides helpful worksheets for parents to prepare for IEPs
- ***The Art of Advocacy: A Parent's Guide to a Collaborative IEP Process*** (Written by Charmaine Thaner, M.A.) - This book will help you think realistically when collaborating with your school.

Educate Yourself on your Rights & the Injury!

- Lash & Associates Publishing/Training Inc. - Publications, blogs and pamphlets for parents & teachers specific to TBI.
- Wrightslaw - A Great resource for Advocacy and Legal Rights of ALL disabilities

As Educators:

- Read the Neuropsychological Report(s) whether done by school or outside sources.
- Regard an Educational Specialist as a viable resource. with TBI experience (BIS) To help take medical information, educational information and identify needs with educational vocabulary that the schools understand.
- Open Communication: Encourage parents to talk to their child's school team throughout the year. Encourage them to share TBI specific information and information on their child. Empower them to "speak the educator's language."

## Keep in Mind:

Parents will likely come to the IEP meeting having sought advice from friends, professionals, and family. While you should acknowledge them, you can help them to understand that this may not take into account the specific laws and regulations established by your county and state. School systems are still trying to figure out TBI designation since the survival rate and awareness has exponentially increased. A parent is the best advocate as long as they can be unemotional and logical when presenting their facts (not feelings). End the meeting when emotions take over. No one IEP is the same from year to year, child to child, case to case. To be effective, **it has to grow with your student.**

Successful partnerships start with relationships. Relationships require collaboration:

- Listening Effectively: Listen to understand the unique perspective of parents at the IEP table
- Communicating Powerfully: Always keep the interactions **positive** and supportive. No matter what!
- Thinking Creatively: Take time to meet with individuals involved with the IEP throughout the year to solve difficulties. Have a “TEAM” mentality.

Coach your parents to: Observe → List → Partner

### 1. Observe

- Watch and take notes on your child’s interactions with peers in school, at home, and in public places.
- Check out the Self-enclosed and Inclusive environments offered by your school with “open eyes”

### 2. List

- Make a priority list of: “Must haves” & be willing to compromise on the rest. (5 year increment goals)
- Discuss them with your case manager and teachers prior to meeting.

### 3. Partner

- Think of the IEP table as a “TEAM” meeting not a battle.
- Be Positive but never sign if there is disagreement. Ask to think and discuss with teachers later. Realize that your child is not receiving new services until IEP is signed and that can have a negative impact on your child.

Keep in Mind: Conflict will occur but it is how you DEAL with it, that will make the difference in your student’s educational experience.

## Creative Solutions to those “Stand offs”

- Remind parents to write their parent input before the IEP meeting.
- Suggest to parents to write a **Vision Statement** of their child’s future post graduation so that you understand their perspective.
- Be creative and open to looking at some goals as accommodations and some accommodations as goals.
- Encourage the team to take a break if emotions seem high or creativity has stalled.

After a 90 minute IEP meeting, call it quits! Reschedule your meeting for another day/time because it won’t benefit anybody—student or IEP team.

Thanks for coming! Everyone wins when we work together!

One Misconception: “The school system is able to bear the bulk of your child’s needs.”  
Meaning: Your child deserves Speech & OT no matter what the school says they can or cannot provide.

An inclusive environment may not be the only environment appropriate for your child. Sometimes private services are a better option when compared to school services because the child may miss out on important educational & social opportunities.