
Review your case file with your parents and Individual Education Plan (IEP) team to better understand your disability and its effect on your learning. Ask the following questions:

What is my disability?

How does it affect how I learn?

What are my academic strengths?

How do I learn best?

You might also consider meeting with the doctor or school psychologist who performed your assessment (testing). However, individual appointments with a doctor or psychologist can be expensive.

Become a “self-advocate” while still in high school

A “self-advocate” communicates his or her needs with logical and positive language. To be an effective self-advocate, you must understand your disability, know how it impacts your learning, and become comfortable with describing your disability and academic-related needs to others. At the college level, you are responsible for identifying and requesting support services. Parents aren’t normally involved with your education at the college level, and most colleges prefer working directly with you, the student.

Practice self-advocacy now

Participate in discussions at your IEP meetings. Understanding your learning strengths and weaknesses gives you valuable knowledge that can influence your IEP planning.

Listed below are ideas on how you can actively participate in your IEP meetings. Your parents and teachers can help you take these important steps.

Before each IEP meeting:

- Understand the purpose of the meeting.
- Know who will be there and each participant’s role at the meeting.
- Review the report from your last IEP meeting. Understand the goals listed on the report. With another person, practice saying how you accomplished the goals.
- Establish new goals and be prepared to state them.

At the IEP meeting:

- Summarize your past goals and accomplishments.
- State your new goals.
- Ask for ideas and feedback from other members.
- Know what support and help you will need in order to accomplish your goals—and ask for it.

Ask questions when you don’t understand something.

Source: College Counseling Sourcebook, 4th Edition