

## Parental Advocacy Tips

1. Know your child's disability and how it affects their learning.
2. Learn about Early Intervention/Special Education law and your rights.
3. Learn the acronyms associated with Special Education.
4. Learn to communicate.
  - a. Difference between aggressive/passive/assertive communication.
  - b. Know how to ask questions to get answers.
5. Participate in all meetings.
6. Build a relationship with your child's IFSP/IEP team.
7. Always ask for clarification.
8. Be organized.
9. Get it in writing.
  - a. Ask for a copy of the law and/or school policy that is being referred to in writing.
  - b. If there is a decision made around identification, evaluation, educational placement, or the provision of Free and Appropriate Public Education, then the school must provide Prior Written Notice.
10. Put it in writing.
  - a. Request information/action from the school (such as an IEP meeting, a request for a re-evaluation, the date that follow-up will be completed, etc.) in writing.
  - b. Ask for an agenda for IFSP/IEP meetings.
  - c. Any disagreements should also be in writing.
11. Bring support to the meeting.
  - a. Note taker.
  - b. Advocate.
12. Ask for the DATA!
  - a. What data was used in the decision-making process? Ask for copies to review.
  - b. Ask for data around the IFSP/IEP goals.

If you require more information on Early Intervention/Special Education, please contact PTI Nebraska. We are a non-profit, state-wide organization that helps provide parents with information about their child's disability, community resources, and helps with navigating the Early Intervention/Special Education processes at no cost to parents.

## Early Intervention/Special Education

1. **Rule 52** – Nebraska Early Intervention Regulations (B-3 & IFSP)  
<https://www.education.ne.gov/nderule/provision-of-early-intervention/>
2. **Rule 51** – Nebraska Special Education Regulations (3-21 & IEP)  
<https://www.education.ne.gov/nderule/special-education-program-standards/>
3. **Referral** – 45 Days (**calendar days** for infants/toddlers; **60 calendar days** for 3-21)
4. **Evaluation** – for determination of eligibility:
  - a. Must give parental consent in writing.
  - b. Do not have to wait for RTI or SAT/MTSS processes (school age).
  - c. Parents should be part of the evaluation process.
  - d. Parents should understand what is in the evaluation report (Multidisciplinary Team report or MDT report).
  - e. If you disagree with the school's evaluation findings:
    - i. IFSP – File a State Complaint.
    - ii. IEP – Request an Independent Educational Evaluation.
5. **IFSP/IEP**
  - a. IFSP – family driven, Natural Environment, can decline services except Services Coordination, reviewed every six months, year-round services.
  - b. IEP – parent part of the team, educational based (academic and functional goals), Least Restrictive Environment, reviewed annually, Extended School Year Services.
6. **Placement (IEP)** – Look at needs (the evaluation), goals (as identified by the IEP team per the evaluation), and **THEN** placement is determined per Least Restrictive Environment.
7. **Re-Evaluation** – Typically every three years, can be more often as needed/requested by parents or school.
8. **Parental Rights** (just a few):
  - a. **Parent Participation in Meetings.**
  - b. **Parent Involvement in Placement Decisions.**
  - c. **Opportunity to Examine Records.**
  - d. **Consent for Release of Records.**
  - e. **Prior Written Notice:** **MUST** be provided if the school agrees/disagrees to 1) identification, 2) evaluation, 3) educational placement, or 4) provision of a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).
  - f. **Dispute Resolution:** Options - State Complaint, Mediation, and Due Process.