



High Expectations

How do we encourage the school to help our children reach the goals we've set for them?

1. Expect that your child will be valued as a human being whose rights are respected.
2. Appreciate those who provide service for your child and actively participate in planning those services.
3. Know there is a law that says your child has a right to an appropriate public education where he or she can make meaningful educational progress.
4. Show the school what the child can do at home; could you schedule a home visit, videotape your child displaying a particular skill, or show work completed at home to the teacher?
5. Share a "snapshot" of your child in a brief, usable format.
6. Describe why and how your vision for your child makes sense to you.
7. Share your ideas with the school, and be open to ideas from the school; no one knows it all; brainstorm.
8. Use your best people-skills.
9. Educate yourself about the special education process. Learn how to turn your child's needs into measurable goals and find services to achieve those goals.
10. Be willing to try something for a given amount of time and measure its effectiveness.
11. Discuss meaningful and effective inclusion. You may want to ask such questions as:
 - *Are there higher expectations for children who are fully included in the regular education classroom?*
 - *In what environment does my child learn the best? Which subjects?*
 - *What accommodations might help my child participate with other children?*
 - *If my child is included for social reasons, where and how will the academic subjects be taught?*
 - *Does inclusion mean the same thing from year to year?*
12. Discuss assistive technology (AT) devices and services. AT may be the key that provides access to instruction and peer interaction.
 - *AT must be considered annually at the IEP team meeting.*
 - *If the IEP team thinks AT may benefit a child, the school must evaluate to see what technology the child needs in order to learn.*
 - *If, through evaluation, AT is needed, those devices and services must be written on the IEP.*

Expect the Best

Dreaming, hoping, and seeing potential where others may or may not – that's the role of the parent. Believe in the capability of your child, cultivate patience and view your child's future with anticipation and optimism. Remember, children often live up to our expectations. What we do for them today has lifelong implications and benefits.

