



Case Conferences Reminders for Parents

Parents are important participants in school meetings. So important, in fact, that parental participation is guaranteed by federal special education law. This handout is designed to help parents participate in school meetings by highlighting some parental rights and discussing typical meeting procedures. Article 7 is Indiana's Special Education rule that complies with the federal special education law. Where applicable, you will see citations (beginning with the number seven) showing where supporting information can be found in Article 7. If you wish to obtain a copy of Article 7, visit our website at insource.org.

- The Case Conference is a meeting where school personnel, parents and sometimes students meet to discuss and develop a student's Individualized Education Plan – IEP.
- The parent and the school are equal partners of the case conference committee and both share decision-making authority. IAC 7-32-12, 7-37-1 (f) (3) (A), 7-42-3 (b) (5) (A)
- Remember that as a parent, you know your child's needs and strengths best. The Case Conference Committee is required to consider your concerns. Your input is valuable and you are an important member of the team! IAC 7-42-6 (b) (2)
- Conferences are to be held at a "mutually agreed upon" day and time. If the date suggested by school does not work for you, please contact school immediately and offer alternative dates/times when you will be available. If necessary, you can attend by phone. 7-42-2 (a)
- Case conference meetings can be overwhelming because there are usually several people from the school in attendance. This is because special education law requires that people with different areas of expertise attend – not because they are trying to intimidate you. IAC 7-42-3 (e)
- You can invite an advocate, friend or anyone knowledgeable about your child to the case conference. It is best to let the school know if you plan on bringing someone with you. 7-42-2 (d)(4)(A)
- Be sure to read the Notice of Procedural Safeguards that is provided by the school at your meeting. It provides a good summary of your rights.
- Prepare for the meeting by making a list of the issues you wish to discuss and prioritize them as "must haves" and "would be nice to haves." Go to www.insource.org, Parent Resources tab to print off a copy of "Worksheet of Concerns" to help you.
- Organize important information you have about your child (such as test results, report cards and samples of school work) to bring to the meeting. This information should support the concerns and/or services you may be requesting.

- At the beginning of the meeting, clarify who is making decisions for the school.
- Also, clarify how much time has been set aside and use the time wisely by maintaining focus on your child and the topic at hand.
- Try to stay focused and positive. You have the right to air your concerns in an appropriate manner. Ask questions about things you don't understand.
- Keep notes of what transpires at the meeting in order to review them later and to be certain that the discussions were included in the report of the meeting.
- You can stop a case conference at any time and ask to continue the meeting at a later date if you don't understand something or feel that the meeting is becoming too emotional.
- If you and school personnel disagree on key issues such as eligibility for special education or services, you can stop the case conference and ask to reconvene at another time. You can bring additional information or an advocate to the next meeting. Or, you may choose to request mediation and/or a due process hearing to resolve the disagreement.
- You don't have to sign the IEP at the meeting. You can take it home to read and compare to your notes of what transpired at the meeting. You can call IN*SOURCE with questions.
- If this is your child's first IEP meeting, the school cannot provide any services without your signature on the IEP.
- If this **is not** your child's first IEP, it is very important to remember that the IEP can be implemented without your signature. You must submit your disagreement to the IEP in writing to the school within 10 days. (Date it and keep a copy. Call IN*SOURCE with questions.) IAC 7-42-8 (a) (2)
- Keep in mind that building a good relationship with school staff is the best way to achieve good results during your student's school years.
- **Remember, if things are not going well, you can request to stop the meeting and reconvene at a later date.** You can contact IN*SOURCE for assistance – 1-800-332-4433 or www.insource.org