

SPED Parent News

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Top 3 Tips on Preparing for the ARD Meeting

1. Frequent communication is a key to success

- Don't make the ARD meeting a special event, but just another meeting in an ongoing dialogue.
- At the beginning of each school year, find out who your child's case manager is and establish a method of regular communication that works for both of you (email, phone, notebook, etc...). The case manager is an important point of contact for ongoing communication.
- Meet with your child's team face-to-face or by phone periodically throughout the school year so there are no surprises when you get to the Annual ARD meeting.
- Do your homework before the Annual ARD - contact teachers to find out how your child is doing and bring up any concerns you have so the school has time to prepare a good plan.

2. Make a list of your concerns and questions, and review your rights

- Before every ARD meeting, make a list of your concerns and what you feel your child needs to be successful in school. Prioritize your list and focus on the most important needs.
- Be realistic in your expectations. Understand the difference between educational need and medical need. Schools are only required to provide services that meet the educational needs for your child. Know your compromises as you go into the meeting.
- Take your list to the ARD meeting and make sure your concerns are addressed and questions answered.
- Do not sign "agree" if you disagree. Know your rights (see your Notice of Procedural Safeguards).

3. Organize your child's ARD paperwork and evaluations

- The ARD document is your child's plan and a legal document. It is your agreement with the school for the services they will provide to help your child be successful in school. The evaluations are the roadmap for the plan. It is important to keep these documents in a safe place so you can find and refer to them.
- A 3-ring binder is a good way to keep your ARD paperwork organized. You will need a 1 1/2" to 2" binder; divider tabs; and a 3 hole punch.
- You might want to include some or all of the following sections in your notebook: current ARD document; previous ARD document; evaluation documents; progress reports, report cards, test data; school communication; medical information; work samples; Procedural Safeguards; Parents Guide to the ARD Process.
- Take your notebook to every ARD meeting and be sure to add new documents as soon as you receive them.

In This Issue...

~ Top 3 Tips on Preparing for the ARD meeting

~ Know Your Rights - Understanding the Notice of Procedural Safeguards

~ Parent Information Center

~ Contact the Co-op

Parent Information Center

The Parent Information Center is a “one stop shop” where you can find helpful information to assist you in understanding the Special Education process. The site may be accessed through a link on the co-op website, or by going directly to this web address, <https://sites.google.com/pisd.us/parentinformationcenter>

On the site you will find:

- ♦ Helpful websites and parent friendly resources
- ♦ Lunch and Learn Parent Training handouts and recordings
- ♦ Student Introduction Portfolio examples
- ♦ SPED Parent Newsletters
- ♦ Procedural Safeguards, ARD Guide, IDEA Manual
- ♦ And More!



Know Your Rights - Understanding the Notice of Procedural Safeguards

At least once a year, usually at your child’s annual ARD, you will receive a booklet called the Notice of Procedural Safeguards. Aside from your child’s ARD documents, this is probably the most important information for you to understand - your rights and the rights of your child regarding special education. Here is a very brief overview of the topics covered in the Procedural Safeguards. We encourage you to read and understand this document.

1. **Definitions of parent, foster parent, and surrogate parent**
2. **Child Find** - the process of identifying children who may have disabilities and need special education services.
3. **Prior Written Notice** - the school must give you written notice prior to changing or refusing to change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of your child or the free appropriate public education provided.
4. **Parental Consent** - the school must obtain your informed consent before performing an initial evaluation, a reevaluation, and the provision of initial services.
5. **Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)** - you have the right to request an independent evaluation at school expense if you disagree with the evaluations done by the school.
6. **Discipline Procedures** - If your child violated the school’s code of conduct, the school must follow certain discipline procedures if it removes your child from their current educational placement.
7. **Voluntary Private School Placement by Parents** - You have specific rights, regarding services provided by the public school, when you voluntarily place your child in a private school.
8. **Transfer of Parental Rights** - All parental rights under federal special education law transfer to your child when they turn 18, unless you take steps to become their legal guardian.
9. **Resolving Disagreements** - parents have several options for resolving disputes with the school including State IEP Facilitation, Mediation, Written Complaint, and Due Process.

A copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards may be obtained from your child’s school or is always available on the Texas Legal Framework website at framework.esc18.net

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The Atascosa-McMullen Special Education Cooperative provides support services to Pleasanton ISD, Poteet ISD, Jourdanton ISD, Charlotte ISD, and McMullen County ISD. We can be reached at 830-569-1355. For more information about the contents of this publication, please contact Lynse Pawelek, Executive Director.
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