

# Student Involvement in the IEP Process



## Ways/Suggestions to Talk to Your Child about His/Her Disability

- Acknowledge your child's disability
- Emphasize your child's strengths
- Don't paint the disability as an insurmountable obstacle
- Timing matters
- Be honest
- Know when to stop talking. Too much may be too much
- Invite your child to ask questions
- Discuss who is going to be helping your child
- Remember that they are just kids



---

## Your Child Participating in the IEP

---

Your child's teacher will be setting aside time to discuss with students their strengths, interests, preferences and personal accomplishments prior to the IEP meeting. This strategy does double duty- IEPs will be informed by student input while students become increasingly more self-aware! If appropriate, students will have the opportunity to present their input during the meeting.

When your child participates in the IEP meeting, it can have a powerful effect. Just having your child at the meeting can make the IEP process come more alive. Requests and suggestions that come directly from your child can carry more weight than when parents voice them. Many parents are sometimes surprised when they hear their children speak about their disability, their educational desires, and their goals for the future. And sometimes teachers learn things about their students that they didn't know before.

Depending on your child's age and ability, the role he or she plays as an IEP team member can be as broad as your own or limited to what you and your child feel most comfortable with. When your child is part of the IEP process, the program can be much more worthwhile to him or her, instead of something to put up with. Taking part in IEP meetings also helps your child learn to speak up for him or herself and develop valuable self-advocacy skills.