

Supporting Your Child While Waiting for an IEP

The time between when you first have concerns about your child's development and when their special education evaluation is complete can be a stressful time. Here are some ways you can support your child even before they have an IEP.

Communicate with your child's school

- Keep your child's teacher and school administrator up-to-date on where you are in the process of getting your child evaluated.
- Set up a meeting with your child's teacher to discuss your concerns, learn more about how your child is doing at school, and make a plan for reasonable supports that can be started.
 - For example, if your child is having a difficult time paying attention during large group activities, you may make a plan with the teacher to always give your child a seat very close to the teacher for large group times to help your child focus and also help the teacher redirect your child when needed.

Organize records

- Organize whatever documents you have regarding your child's growth, development, and educational needs over the years.

Do research

- You may not have an exact diagnosis at this time, but you can still help your child by doing research to learn more about what you think your child's needs may be.
 - For example, if you have concerns about your child's speech, it is helpful to learn more about speech delays in children generally and what activities families can do to support speech development at home.

Prepare your child

- Special education evaluations often require several appointments with different specialists. Your child will be interacting with different people and may even need to go to new locations with you to meet with these specialists. Do your best to schedule any appointments for times when your child will be ready to play and engage (e.g. avoid scheduling appointments near a meal or nap time).
- Prepare your child by giving a brief, simple explanation of what they will be doing. For example, "Today you will meet a new teacher. She will talk with you and do some activities. I will be here with you the whole time."