

25 Tips for Effective ARD Meetings

Before the Meeting

- 1. Request a copy of any recent evaluations and drafts of present levels and proposed IEP goals.** Gather work samples and your child's most recent IEP as well as other relevant information. Consider if this information paints a full picture of your child and add any information you feel is missing.
- 2. Make a list of concerns you would like to discuss at the meeting.** Consider what is most important to help your child succeed and make academic progress.
- 3. Plan how you will handle issues where you and the school may not agree.** What information might support your position? Think of alternatives to offer if the school does not accept your first suggestion and consider where you are willing to compromise and what you are not willing to compromise on.
- 4. Contact other ARD committee members before the meeting to build a positive relationship and brainstorm ideas about your child's program ahead of time.** This may help the ARD meeting run smoother.
- 5. Invite someone you trust to attend the meeting with you to offer moral support, take notes, and help you stay on track.** This person should have special knowledge or expertise about special education or your child. As a courtesy, let the school know who will be attending the meeting with you.
- 6. If your child will be attending the ARD meeting, explain its purpose and what it will look like in a way they can understand.** Help them understand their opinions are important. Whether or not they attend, have a conversation with them to discuss what they think is important for their success in school.
- 7. Know your rights.** Review the IDEA regulations and accurate summaries. Take them with you to the meeting in case you need them.

During the Meeting

- 8. Remember, you are a very important part of your child's ARD committee and your input is valuable.** Share your thoughts, knowledge, insights, and concerns.
- 9. Keep communication respectful and treat everyone with dignity.** Focus on staying calm. Ask questions to ensure you understand what others are saying.



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10. Take notes during the ARD meeting. Focus on key points discussed, new or modified goals, accommodations, changes of services, or areas of disagreement.

11. Be sure present levels of performance are reviewed and you understand and agree with them before writing new goals.

12. Focus on your child's individual needs, rather than your idea of how to meet those needs. Others may have great ideas you haven't considered. Focus on how your child's needs can best be met in the least restrictive environment.

13. Encourage ARD committee members to use simple language when writing the IEP so it can easily be understood and carried out.

14. Be open to new ideas and strategies and be willing to compromise. As a parent, you want what is best for your child, but the school is only required to provide what is appropriate. This is known as FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education). Balancing what you view as best for your child and what the school views as appropriate can be a challenge.

15. Take a break if needed to speak with your support person, gather your thoughts, calm down, or just stretch your legs.

16. Sign wisely. You are not obligated to sign the IEP at the end of the meeting. You can take a copy of the IEP and consider it. After reviewing the document, you can choose to sign in agreement or disagreement or you can request to reconvene the meeting to discuss changes you would like made.

17. If you and the school fail to agree after reconvening the ARD meeting, you do not have to sign agreement. There are options for dispute resolution available when this occurs. These options are included in the Procedural Safeguards given by the school.

After the Meeting

18. Carefully review your child's IEP at home. Seek help if you don't understand the documents.

19. Keep your child's IEP and related documents organized together for future reference and easy access.

20. If appropriate, follow up with a thank you to any ARD committee member you found to be particularly helpful. Acknowledging their help and support builds good will.

21. Take time to discuss the IEP with your child in terms they will understand. Help them understand what services they will be receiving and how those services will help support them. Encourage them to be a self-advocate and bring up any concerns with you or their teachers.

22. Keep in contact with your child's teacher so you can effectively track and monitor their progress, new needs, or additional concerns.

23. Make sure the IEP is being implemented as written, including the frequency and duration of services.

24. If you have concerns with your child's progress, you can request an ARD meeting at any time. Requesting the meeting in writing is best practice.

25. Always keep in mind that you and the educational team will have an ongoing relationship. It will be beneficial for everyone to build and strengthen positive relationships.



The contents of this publication were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, #H328M200041, #H328M200042, #H328M200043, #H328M200044. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.