



5 Reasons Why You Might Need a Special Education Advocate

By Steve Castle, Special Education Advocate, EduTherapy, LLC

A special education advocate can provide support to help you navigate the complex labyrinth of special education in public schools. Here are five reasons why you might need a special education advocate if you are the parent of a child with a disability.

1. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

IDEA is the federal law that ensures any student with a disability has access to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). This law, with its accompanying regulations is very complex. In most instances, school systems do not purposefully refuse to follow the law or properly implement the rules, but sometimes it happens. If you find yourself wondering if the school system is following IDEA, you might need a special education advocate.

2. Testing

The results of special education testing can be very confusing for anyone who doesn't have specific training. A special education advocate can often translate complex technical terms into plain English. If you don't understand the technical nuances of your child's special education testing results, you might need a special education advocate.

3. Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

For a child with a disability, the Individual Education Plan (IEP) is the "roadmap to success." An advocate can help make sure that the IEP is accurate and well written. If you are at all unsure of the quality, clarity or legality of your child's IEP, you might need a special education advocate.

4. Language and acronyms

People working in special education often use terms and acronyms that are quite impossible for a parent to understand. If you find yourself struggling to understand what people are talking about, you might need a special education advocate.

5. Teaching materials and methods

If you're at all unsure of the teaching materials or instructional methods school people are recommending for your child, you might need a special education advocate.

When you're trying to find your way through the complex labyrinth of special education, there is no need to go it alone. A special education advocate can help you find your way through this complex system, and provide the support you need to achieve the best outcome for your child.