

Ian's Hot Tips for IEP Meetings

- Ñ Arrange the table and chairs in a circular formation so all participants can see each other. In addition, sitting in a circle tends to relax the environment and put people more on an equal plane.
- Ñ Call a day prior to confirm meeting time and place. This shows you're down-right serious for this meeting.
- Ñ Come with file folders or binder with your child's records. The more professional looking the better. For better or worse, the way you present yourself and your materials also sends signals to others in the meeting. Ideally, you want to have a commanding presence in the meeting and professional utensils certainly help.
- Ñ Organize an outline of what you see as the key issues of the meeting and main points and concerns to plan around. Make enough copies of this outline for all at the meeting. This document gives you and the others a visual and can allow you to bring the meeting back into focus.
- Ñ Bring something visual or tangible that symbolizes or is a product of your child's success. For example, art project, photos, read a passage from book showing growth in reading, a video of a milestone at home. Also, make a brief list of other positive steps or items about your child, and as I said before, make enough copies for all in attendance.

The point of these exercises is to reinforce the notion that the meeting should be focused on the idea of success, what your child can do. Too often the meetings revolve on the child's deficits, not his/her strengths and abilities; therefore, the visual aid and the list can be used to bring the meeting back to capacity and success.