

Assertiveness

While you are working with the school team, there will also be times when you need to disagree or make an assertive statement. It is important to keep in mind that your message should be clear and direct but not aggressive or hostile. Avoid making overstatements and using words that indicate absolutes. Overstatements or exaggerations of your point will hasten a loss of credibility.

Also avoid putting the other person on the defensive. Even the most hardened criminals will always fight to justify themselves when put on the defensive. Attack issues, not people.

Assertiveness is:

1. Knowing and understanding your rights
2. Knowing and understanding your child's rights
3. Asking questions anytime you need clarification
4. Repeating a question until it is satisfactorily answered
5. Insisting that all persons who should be at an ARD meeting are there, including someone in authority
6. Keeping a paper trail of all communication regarding your child's education, sending copies to the appropriate people, and requesting copies of records from the school
7. Monitoring to be sure that the IEP is being implemented, followed and progress is being made.
8. Knowing that you are a full partner in planning your child's education program and expecting to be treated as such
9. Letting people know that you are willing to compromise to resolve issues, but are willing to go to mediation or due process, if necessary
10. Learning all you can about your child's disability and needs
11. Knowing about available resources and using them
12. Finding out who the right person to talk to is, knowing who the key persons are, and trying all avenues within the school
13. Praising and thanking people when appropriate
14. Never saying "I'm just a parent"

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