1. ATTITUDE AND EMOTIONS
   - Don’t yell. Drop your voice when you feel anger.
   - If the other party seems to be acting in good faith, respond in-kind.
   - Focus on how to get your partner(s) to do what you think they need to do.
   - Never threaten anything you are not fully prepared to carry out successfully.
   - Imagine yourself as the advocate for someone else’s child.

2. FLEXIBILITY
   - Keep an open mind
   - Locking down invites resistance.
   - Dialogue invites creativity.
   - “Model” what partnership looks like.
   - You can set a time limit on trying new ideas and then review for success.
   - Ask the student what he or she thinks may work.

3. DETERMINATION
   - Flexibility in HOW a problem gets solved is not the same as WHETHER it gets solved.
   - Not everything is worth going to war on.
   - Ask: is this my issue or my child’s?
   - What if you hear: “We’d love to but we don’t have that service.”
     Response: “Then WE agree then that the service is needed. Tell me how we are going to go about getting it.”

4. CREATING A PAPER TRAIL
   - Even if you remember what people said, you need to be able to PROVE it.
   - Maintain records, letters, correspondence, and notes written at the time events occurred that show what transpired.
   - Get organized. Create a workable filing system—one you can keep up.
   - Best Practice: You may never need it, but paper provides evidence if needed.
   - Document (IN WRITING): important things that happened, requests to the district, your responses and district responses phone calls and replies.
   - Send a positive, reasonable, factual written note summarizing phone calls and that creates a record of what transpired.
   - Demonstrate:
     1) appreciation
     2) reason for call
     3) disability-related
     4) a history of problem
5. **KNOWLEDGE**

- Help educators understand your child’s disability.
- Keep it SHORT. Keep it SIMPLE.
- Create an outline that includes symptoms and the strategies that work.
- Include your expert to help you.
- ASK: what will we do to support the team’s understanding so that my child's needs are met?
- Learn about rights and responsibilities in the law: Study. Attend workshops. Use good books.
- Call your local Parent Training and Information Center for assistance and resources.

*From DREDF, dredf.org, 2/2/09; Adapted from: Wright’s Law www.wrightslaw.com*