

Parent Guide: Helping Kids Speak Up in IEP Meetings

Elementary School (Ages 6–11)

- Ask your child what they like and what’s hard at school.
- Say: “Your IEP is a plan to help you do your best.”
- Practice sharing by role-playing.
- Let them introduce themselves or share one goal.
- Praise their effort for speaking up.

Middle School (Ages 11–14)

- Talk about strengths, challenges, and what helps them.
- Set one academic and one personal goal.
- Role-play asking for help.
- Have them read part of the IEP or share an “About Me” letter.
- Talk after the meeting about what went well.

High School (Ages 14–18)

- Remind them they are the most important voice in planning.
- Help them talk about career, college, or life goals.
- Encourage them to lead part of the meeting.
- Teach them to agree or disagree respectfully.
- Reflect together after the meeting on what to improve.

Parent Role at Every Age

- Model self-advocacy at home.
- Remind them their input matters.
- Celebrate even small steps.
- Give tools (checklists, journals, visuals) to help them share their thoughts.

