

INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO BECOME AN EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE FOR YOUR CHILD

1. Obtain copies of your entire school file. See Letter No. 15.
2. After receipt of copies of your entire school file, ask the school to perform comprehensive evaluations in the following areas:

Speech/Language Assessment
Behavioral functional Assessment
Sensory Assessment
Cognitive Assessment
Physical Assessment

See Letter No. 4 to request assessments.

3. If you disagree with the evaluations, request independent comprehensive tests to be performed at Vanderbilt's TRIAD Center for Autism. See Letter No. 8 to request these independent comprehensive assessments.
4. Check your teacher and the assistants certifications to teach your child on the Tennessee Department of Education's Website to see if they are certified to teach your child under the No Child Left Behind Act.
5. Write a letter to the School Requesting information about the credentials of the teacher and the paraprofessionals requesting confirmation of the information about the teacher and assistants qualifications. See Letter No. 17 to request this information.

Prepare a school binder as follows:

1. Write a narrative summary about your child and the problems that your child has currently and areas in which you feel the school has failed the child in providing a free and appropriate education for your child and place under Tab 1.
2. Under Tab 2 place a copy of the School's entire file with copies of the IEP's, Report Cards and Evaluations furnished by the school. Place a copy of the letter in the binder where you requested the school's file and any correspondence replying to your letter in this section as well.
3. Under Tab 3 place a copy of all Independent assessment in the binder with tabs separating the reports.

4. Obtain a copy your child's records from your pediatrician and place in the binder under Tab 4.
5. Add copies of the teacher's certifications and letters received from the school regarding this subject and copies pulled from the internet website for the Tennessee Department of Education.
6. Type up a table of contents for the school binder and place in front of your binder.
7. Have an advocate and/or legal representative review your school binder.
8. If you disagree with the IEP that was created at the meeting do not sign the IEP. Take a few days and think about the IEP and ask your advocate or legal representative for suggestions prior to signing the IEP. Write above your name that you disagree with the IEP and you are only signing that you attended the meeting.
9. Contact your Legal Representative to file a due process complaint.

Congratulations!

You have just become an effective advocate for your child. You have gone the distance and you and your attorney will be effective in obtaining services for your child.