



Long Island Advocacy Center

FOR THE LEGAL RIGHTS OF STUDENTS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

March 2025

NEWSLETTER

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month:

Developmental Disabilities Month is observed in March to raise awareness and support for people with developmental disabilities and to create a more inclusive community. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), developmental disabilities are defined as impairments in physical, learning, language or behavior areas, and include:

- Autism spectrum disorders
- Cerebral palsy
- Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder
- Learning or intellectual disabilities
- Hearing loss
- Vision impairment
- Other developmental delays

The NYS Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) reported that *"This year's National DDAM theme is "A World of Opportunities," and it aligns with our ultimate vision: to create a world where people with developmental disabilities have the same opportunities as people without disabilities. We envision a world where every person is empowered to advocate for themselves and be who they truly are."*

Spring is Annual Review Time. Are You Prepared?

What is the Annual Review?

The Committee on Special Education (CSE) is required to meet at least once a year to review your child's IEP, educational progress, and to make recommendations for the following school year. This is called your Annual Review meeting. Typically, Annual Review meetings take place in the spring to allow as much data and information to be available when making decisions and recommendations for your child's program for the next school year. It's important to remember that any recommendations made at your Annual Review (i.e. changes to your child's IEP placement, services, and accommodations) will only be implemented at the start of the following school year.

But wait: I don't think my child is making progress at school. Do I have to wait until my annual review to address this?

No! If you have concerns about your child's educational progress which you want to discuss and address for the current school year, you have the right to request a Program Review CSE meeting. If you have already had your Annual Review and a plan is in place for next year, it's not too late- contact your Special Education Department, in writing, and request a Program Review CSE meeting. You should be communicating regularly with your child's team and paying attention to the progress reports provided to you. This will allow you to know more about how your child is progressing.

How can I get the best results for my child at my Annual Review?

Preparation for your child's annual review CSE begins well before the actual meeting.

Throughout the schools year you should:

- Communicate regularly with your student's team;
- Participate in school functions;
- Attend PTA and SEPTA meeting;
- Review all report cards and progress reports;
- Speak to the IEP team prior to your CSE meetings;
- Review all evaluations;
- Consider the need for additional evaluations and/or Independent evaluations;
- Compare current evaluations to prior evaluations to access progress.

What can I do to prepare for the meeting?

- Organize

Organize a binder which includes sections for:

- 1) general information (meeting notice, your child's IEP(s), your parent report),
- 2) school reports, test results, and/or any school communication about your child (report cards, IEP goal progress reports, work samples), and
- 3) private doctor and professional reports and test results (include your child's annual physical).

- Review Records
- Review all documents and progress reports
- Be sure to have all of the evaluations or progress reports PRIOR to the CSE
 - Decide on hoped outcomes
- Have a vision for your child and have a legally based rationale for your vision.
- Don't forget to consider behavior issues.
- If your child is 15 or older, think about transition services - what are your goals for your child after high school? What services does your child need to reach those goals?

Preparing for the meeting:

Think about Educationally Related Support Services (ERSS)-

- Psychological
- Social work
- Speech and Language
- Curriculum and instructional modifications
- Direct student support services
- Special instructions

- Think about Least Restrictive Environment

- Understand possible outcomes
- Research alternatives prior to the CSE

What can I do at the meeting?

- Bring Support
- Bring someone to take notes
- Fully Participate - Ask Questions
- Make the same argument over and over
 - Stay calm
 - Be positive
 - Use terminology based on law
- Recap your understanding of agreed services and issues left unresolved
- Keep meeting child focused
- Keep your comments brief
- Avoid "I" statements
- Avoid aggressive words
 - "If you don't"
- Use cooperative phrases
 - "How can we...?"
- Use clarifying statements
 - "What you are saying is..."

What should I do after the meeting?

- Send thank you notes
 - Documents what was agreed upon at the meeting
 - Documents what was not agreed upon during the meeting
 - Documents timelines and responsibilities
- Review your child's IEP
 - As soon as you receive it
 - Compare notes taken at the meeting
 - Check frequency and duration of all related services
 - Document any discrepancies IN WRITING to the CSE chair
 - You can request a CSE meeting at any time
- As for your Prior Written Notice if you don't receive one

What can I do if I disagree?

- Why are they saying no?
- Is it based on evaluative data?
- Can you receive an independent evaluation?
- Do you need additional evaluations?
- Does it have to do with school district policy?

If you still cannot agree consider:

If it is a sub-committee meeting

- Request a Full Committee

If it is a Full Committee

- Request to reconvene – Bring an advocate
- Due Process Rights
- Go to the Board of Education
- Go to the Superintendent
- File a State Ed Complaint
- Impartial Hearing – Hire attorney

PTIC Corner:

LIAC's PTIC has been busy collaborating with IncludeNYC regarding New York State's Alternative Assessment (NYSAA) with a live virtual FAQ and hangout event. During the event, our teams answered some common questions and concerns about NYSAA from parents, caregivers and school professionals, as well as chatted about different graduation pathways and requirements. To learn more about NYSAA, see:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CNHIXl59bvASNfkHcMIjyeLi83RhQnqd72nreXeiOqc/edit?usp=sharing>

LIAC can help Reach us today

Visit us online at www.theliac.org
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