



**Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc.**

*The federally designated Parent Training and Information Center for Washington DC*

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## **Fall Check-in with Your Child's School**

This is a great time of year to take a moment and think about how the school year is going and if any changes need to be made. School has been underway for about 8 weeks, and for many students, almost 3 months, so students and families have had a chance to get used to the new school year and get to know each other. Teachers have had an opportunity to learn where their new students are academically and emotionally, and have begun to understand what helps them learn, and what might be standing in the way of a great school year.

So now is a great time to touch base with your child's classroom teachers and see if there need to be any adjustments. If your student has an IEP or 504 plan, take a moment to review their plan and ask yourself if you think they are on track to meet their goals and if you don't think so, ask for a meeting to discuss what changes might need to be made. Ask yourself if the accommodations they have are working. Check in with your student too, and see how they feel about the school year.

Also, if you have worried that your child has a disability, now is a great time to discuss that with the school, now that everyone has gotten to know each other and settled in for the year.

If you don't know how to start that conversation, here are some great ways to begin. We have found that these starters work for emails and phone calls.

*Hi Ms. Jones, I am Shawn's mother and was wondering how he was adjusting to 4th grade? Is there anything I need to focus on at home that might help? He seems really tired at the end of the day and I wanted to make sure everything was going well at school.*

*Hi Mr. Washington, I am Kyia's grandmother and I was wondering how AP US History was going for Kyia? This is the first AP class she has taken and I don't know the best way to help her prepare for the AP Exam.*

*Hello Ms. Williams, this is Mark's father. I was looking at Mark's IEP and feel like he is on-track to achieve his academic IEP goals this school year, do you agree? However, I was a little worried about his speech language goals, because I haven't seen any progress at home on his /f/ sounds. Do you think we need to have a meeting to talk about his speech therapy? Can you ask the new speech therapist to send me a progress report?*

Establishing or strengthening your relationship now with your child's teachers can head off problems later in the year, or give you an idea of how to make the school year better for your student before problems become really big and potentially unhelpful habits get engrained. It also opens up the lines of communications so that teachers can share praise and problems with you as the year goes on.