

Meeting Madness

by Nancy Bowden, Director of Advocacy

At times, working with the public school system may feel challenging for parents and educational surrogates whose child has special needs. Consider, how overwhelming is it to be told by school and/or District personnel that they do not feel your child would qualify as a child with a disability, and then they proceeded to direct you away from a Determination of Eligibility? Or, have you been frustrated sitting down for your child's Initial Determination of Eligibility, IEP/Re-Evaluation meeting to be asked matter of factly by school and/or District personnel that *you're okay with moving forward with the meeting, right*, even though a General Education teacher, Special Education teacher, itinerant staff (OT, PT, SLP, Vision/Mobility, etc.), and/or District representative is not available to attend the meeting? Or... You can probably add to the list of different ways you have felt caught up in a public school system that may not always feel as if it has its best interest in your child's education at heart. It can all lead to meeting madness...not knowing what role you have the right to play in determining your child's education.

End the meeting madness; take control by learning what the law requires. Educating yourself on the laws pertaining to Special Education and General Education is a step you can take to help you know what is and is not required in your child's Initial Determination of Eligibility, IEP and/or Re-Evaluation meeting. Knowledge is power, and together, you and your child's Advocate can make a powerful IEP for your child that truly is an Individual Education Program.

Here is what the federal law requires regarding the education of children with special needs:

Federal Registrar, August 14, 2006

34 CFR Parts 300 and 301

Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities and Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities; Final Rule [Note: start at page: 46753]

And here is how Colorado has interpreted those requirements:

Code of Colorado Regulations

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Colorado State Board of Education

RULES FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S
EDUCATIONAL ACT

1 CCR 301-8