

## Special Education: How to Use a Parent Input Statement to Benefit Your Child's Education

Do you attend your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings, and wish there was a way for you to have your opinions taken seriously? Do you sometimes leave the meeting, and wonder if they heard anything you said? This article will discuss a way for you to have your opinions heard at your child's IEP meeting.

A parent input statement is a one page statement, where you can give written input into your child's education. You can include: things that work for your child, things that don't work, academic struggles that they have, behavioral difficulties, any educational or related services that you believe they need, extended school year (ESY), assistive technology (AT).

For Example: Your child with a learning disability who is 8 years old, is receiving Wilson Reading instruction from his teacher. The program, amount of time to be used, and teacher training are listed in Johnny's IEP. You have concerns that the teacher has not completed the required training program, and that the program is not being used for the recommended amount of time (a big problem, in a lot of school districts). Your parent input statement could say:

I am pleased that at the last IEP meeting on Jan 3rd that you agreed to the Wilson Reading Program that was recommended by our Independent Evaluator. Specific training for Mrs. Jones, and amount of time working on the program (90 minutes a day) was written into my son's IEP. Mrs. Jones told me in a phone conversation on March 5 that Johnny is only receiving 30 minutes a day of the Wilson Reading Program, and that she has not completed the required training. Because the training and the 90 minutes a day of the Wilson reading program is on my child's IEP, Brooke school district is in non compliance with my child's IEP. I hope that as soon as possible, you will rectify this problem. My son Johnny has the right to a free appropriate public education, which I believe he is being denied due to your non compliance with his IEP.

Mary Johnson

The parent input statement is an important way that you can give your opinion. The input statement must be attached to your child's IEP. IDEA 2004 specifically added a section under Evaluation procedures that states . . . including information provided by the parent.

### Tips for writing input statement

1. Keep it short, maximum one page.
2. Use facts as much as possible. In the above example a phone call with the child's teacher, was discussed.
3. State what educational and related services you think your child needs, and why.
4. Discuss academic progress or lack of academic progress, and what you think needs to be done about it.
5. Include any adaptations, modifications, educational or related services that are helping your child learn.

By using these 5 tips you can write an effective parent input statement. Bring enough copies for everyone at the meeting, and make sure that it is attached to your child's IEP. A parent input statement is a good step in learning to be an effective advocate for your child's education.

### About the Author

JoAnn Collis is the parent of two adults with disabilities, has been an educational advocate for over 15 years, an author as well as a presenter. Her recently released book *Disability Deception; Lies Disability Educators Tell and How Parent Can Beat Them at Their Own Game* helps parents learn advocacy skills to be an assertive and persistent advocate for their child. To sign up for a Free E newsletter, send an E mail to [JoAnn@disabilitydeception.com](mailto:JoAnn@disabilitydeception.com). Check out her Web site <http://www.disabilitydeception.com>

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