

## SPECIAL EDUCATION - COMMON PARENT ERRORS

Below are some common errors parents make, and suggestions on how to avoid them. This information will not apply to each and every situation, but the suggestions apply to most cases.

COMMON ERRORS	WHAT TO DO INSTEAD
Not advising the school about a problem in a documented way	Notify the school in writing and verbally about your child's problems and needs.
Not providing outside reports to the school in a documented way	Provide outside reports to the school, and keep proof that you gave it to them.
Not listening when the school says there is a problem	Ask the school to document the problem, in writing. Ask what they plan do about the problem, in writing. Get the answer, in writing.
Making important requests verbally (phone calls, hallway conversations, telling the wrong person, at parent-teacher conference)	Make important requests in writing, plus verbally, to an appropriate person, and send a copy to one other school person.
Not consenting to school evaluations, or asking to delay them	Sign assessment plans without delay. It is okay to ask for more assessment, but do not limit the assessments or nitpick their plan.
Relying on school evaluations for a complete picture of the child's needs	A private evaluation by a licensed clinical psychologist is often necessary to get an complete view of what the child needs.
Not responding to school communications	Always respond to school communications, or tell the school you need more time in writing.
Signing special education paperwork you do not understand, or don't agree with	If you do not agree or do not understand, write that on the paperwork and return it to the school.
Not responding to a proposed IEP because you disagree	It is better to sign that you disagree, than to be silent or delay.
Disagreeing with the entire IEP when only part of the IEP is a problem	Agree to as much as possible, and disagree where necessary, in writing (e.g., "I agree to eligibility, but the services are not enough").
Disengaging from the IEP process when the parent feels frustrated	Do not "go silent" for weeks or longer. This is held against parents. Write to the school with your concerns.