Tested Tips for IEP Meetings

Parents and the IEP Meeting
- Organize questions and define areas where more information is needed
- Outline what they want their child to learn
- Bring a picture of their child
- Ask, "If this were your child…."
- Don't necessarily "sign" at the meeting—take documentations home, process, discuss, consider, and share with significant people in child's life
- Look for opportunities to express gratitude to teachers and school staff
- Bring someone
- If compromising, define how and when to evaluate if the plan is working
- Try to remain calm
- Saying " I don't know what you mean" is demonstration of confidence and competence

Teachers/School Staff and the IEP Meeting
- Explain crucial nature of parent's involvement and what will happen at the meeting
- Invite parents to bring anyone they wish
- Explain who will attend from the school district, why, and ask parent if anyone has been left out
- Schedule a convenient time and location, and ample time for the meeting
- Establish if parent(s) need help with transportation or childcare
- Invite parents to review relevant documents prior to meeting and encourage classroom visits
- Keep parents apprized of progress on an ongoing basis

During the Meeting
- Everyone introduces himself or herself and explains why they are there
- Set an agenda and time-frame for the meeting
- Speak in clear, plain language-avoid jargon and discipline specific
- Have specific materials available that are referred to
- Focus on the child's individualized needs
- Listen carefully
- Maintain confidentiality
- Do not hurry
- Be honest and trust that others are also
- Be willing to say, "I don't know"
- Involve student for at least a portion of the meeting, if it is appropriate

After the Meeting
- Review and evaluate what worked, what didn't work
- Consider what should be incorporated into future meetings
- Consider building a meeting tip file for each child –sources of anger, joy, etc.
- Write down specific suggestions about things parents can do at home to help