



Parent Training and Information (PTI) Program

TIPS TO HELP YOU ADVOCATE FOR YOUR CHILD

1. Take someone to the meeting with you. It helps to have another person to listen and take notes for you. You can tape record the meeting to review later or share with a relative, friend, or your child's private service provider.
2. Go to the team meeting (or any conference about your child) prepared. Take information about your child's strengths and needs and what you see at home or in other settings.
3. The image you project makes a difference;
 - Carry written information in a file folder, notebook, or expandable file to the meeting.
 - Arrive promptly. Being on time shows that you think this is an important meeting and that you are ready to conduct business.
 - Shake hands and/or acknowledge other people at the meeting as you are introduced to them. If no one else begins the introductions, you do it.
 - Sit with other team members. This shows that you are part of the decision-making team. Sitting between the people with power makes the statement that you are an equal in the process.
 - Speak clearly and look at the other team members while you are talking.
4. Make positive statements, such as "I expect", "I understand", and "my child needs".
5. Ask questions and ask for clarification of anything you do not understand.
6. Remain as friendly as possible. Separate the people from the problems. Do not allow yourself (or others) to deal in personalities.
7. Focus on the issue at hand. Do not be sidetracked by other issues such as past experiences, the district's lack of funds, or what "all the other children" are doing.
8. Make your proposal and expect to get what your child needs. Be flexible enough to accept minor revisions but be firm about the major issues.
9. Feel confident enough to end the meeting if it seems that no more progress can be made. Tell the other team members that you would like to continue working with them and set an appointment for a fresh start.
10. Sometimes necessary team members begin leaving the meeting before decisions have been made. If this happens, stop the meeting and reschedule a time when all team members can attend and finish the negotiations.
11. Follow up with a letter. If you are satisfied, state what the agreements were. If you are not satisfied, explain your position, your understanding of their position, the next course of action, and your timelines.
12. Remember that you are advocating for your child. If you do not do it, no one else will.

We have Parent Training and Information (PTI) Offices throughout the State. Contact our main office toll-free at 1-800-572-7368 (v/tty), wapave9@washingtonpave.com or visit our website www.washingtonpave.org for the office closest to you.