



Mission: To Mentor and Empower Families through Advocacy and Training to Improve the Quality of Life and Opportunities for Children and Young Adults with Disabilities

*EFFECTIVE
COMMUNICATION*



*“WE DO NOT
PLAN TO FAIL,
WE SIMPLY
FAIL TO PLAN”*



In this presentation we
will look at ways to help
you plan to have
successful meetings

COMMUNICATION

Many times, the greatest barrier to a productive meeting is the lack of good communication between team members, and a failure to plan.

So, what can you do about that?

COMMUNICATION INFLUENCES

- The emotional influence, this is your child,
- The atmosphere and attitude of the last IEP meeting,
- The reason for today's meeting,
- The seriousness of today's priority issue, and
- Feelings related to not being knowledgeable about the process or the lingo that is being used.

WHAT IS YOUR COMMUNICATION STYLE?

Spend some time reflecting on your communication style in your meetings. It may in fact, be a different style than in other areas of your life! There may be many influences that alter your typical communication style when it comes to dealing with your child's education.

PASSIVE

- Definition:
- not participating readily or actively
- influenced, acted upon
- receiving, enduring or submitting without resistance

“I’d love to say something about the gaps in the program they’re planning for John, but I’m afraid if I do that a couple of teachers may make it rough on him in other ways”.

PASSIVE

The feelings of passive parents are colored with frustration and with a sense of powerlessness. Someone else is always in control.

Are You saying what you think?

AGGRESSIVE

- Definition:
- unprovoked offenses or attacks
- making an all out effort to win or succeed, competitive
- pushy

“You WILL not fail my child! You WILL provide more reading instruction! I’m going to tell the superintendent of schools about this! And if he doesn’t do anything about it, I will go to the Board of Education!”

AGGRESSIVE

Risks

- Will antagonize others
- Sets up future conflicts
- Dreaded
- Temporary victories

EFFECTIVE

- Definition:
- adequate to accomplish a purpose
- producing the intended or expected result
- prepared

“The long term goals you’ve set up for Mary sounds fine. However, I can’t agree with the types of math exercises you have planned. When she’s learning a new concept, she needs to work with several approaches, not just with seeing the problem on paper.”

EFFECTIVE

- May not get the desired result
- Can still have conflicting ideas
- Requires Practice
- Requires Self-control
- Others feel respected and valued
- You feel better about your efforts
- Less likely to burn bridges
- More likely to get desired results

WHAT ABOUT PLANNING

Does Your Planning Style Mirror
Your Communication Style?

PASSIVE

- I don't have a plan, the school always runs the meetings.
- Most of the time I don't even know why we're meeting or who I am meeting with.

AGGRESSIVE

- My plan is to get them all together, tell them off and leave.
- I am planning to tell them that they can talk to my attorney!

EFFECTIVE

- I have an agenda with my issues in priority order.
- I have practiced exactly what I want to say. I have anticipated their responses to my requests and have a plan for dealing with their responses.
- I have a plan for avoiding being defensive or too emotional.

*Now that we have discussed
and hopefully identified your
communication style, let's
prepare for positive change!*

PREPARE AN AGENDA

PLANNING FOR YOUR MEETING

Prior to the meeting:

- Get your child's input, (what would he/she like to change at school?)
- Note recent comments/concerns from teachers and principals.
- Gather and review current information

PLANNING & PREPARATION

- Think about the changes that have occurred since the last meeting
- Ask yourself, “How did I feel about the last meeting and why? What would I change to make for a more positive or productive meeting?”
- Is there anything that you can change about your communication or demeanor that could make for a better meeting?

ORGANIZE FOR YOUR MEETING

- Choose a priority that must be addressed at this meeting and include it in your agenda.
- Think and make a note of what you want to say.
- Anticipate how the other person may respond.
- Plan an appropriate response to what you anticipate.

AT THE MEETING

- Be on time
- Greet each person, introduce yourself to anyone that you don't know
- Provide each person with a copy of your agenda
- Thank everyone for attending and taking the time for this very important meeting
- How you conduct yourself from the start can carry strong messages about your intentions

Change the Conversation to Change the Culture

- Encourage dialogue that is void of blame, history and negative attention.
- Separate the relationship from the substance, focus on the issue not the person.
- Recognize and understand emotions, theirs and yours. Don't react to emotional outbursts.
- Build a working relationship.

THINKING POINTS

- We work together toward common understanding
- Listen to understand, find meaning and agreement
- See all sides of an issue
- Admit that others' thinking can improve one's own
- Search for strengths and value others' positions
- Discover or create new options
- Make a prediction of misunderstanding
- You cannot change the past, so concentrate on the future

AVOID PITFALLS

- Stay focused on your agenda, but allow others to address their issues.
- Don't derail your own meeting by being defensive.
- Minimize criticism and pay compliments at every opportunity.

WHY IS EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IMPORTANT?

- You have a right and responsibility to be effectively involved in your child's education.
- You're more likely to have meaningful input into your child's education when you are effective.

OUTCOME

- MORE PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS
- IMPROVED COMMUNICATION WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS
- BETTER EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR OUR CHILDREN!

DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT 'EM!

- A PLAN
- YOUR BEST COMMUNICATION SKILLS