



Preparing for Your Child's Pupil Evaluation Team (PET) Meeting

Going to a Pupil Evaluation Team (PET) Meeting to meet with teachers and administrators can seem a bit overwhelming, but it is important to remember that as a parent or guardian, you are a key part of this team. There is much more to a child's life than only the hours they spend at school, and as a parent, you are the best representative of your child's life outside of school. By being prepared for the PET meeting, you can make the meeting a better experience for you and more productive for everyone involved. Here are some ideas to help you prepare and organize for the meeting.

☆ Prepare some basic information about your child:

1. Medical History and Support Information
 - Does your child take any medications?
 - Has your child experienced any medical problems this past year which may affect his or her schoolwork?
 - Has your child ever been hospitalized or had any chronic health problems (ear infection, etc.)? At what ages?
2. Developmental History
 - At what age did your child learn to walk?
 - At what age did your child learn to talk? Words? Sentences?
3. Attitudes and Relationships Towards Adults and Peers
 - How does your child get along with you (the parents)? Other adults? Brothers/Sisters? Other children?
4. Independent Living Skills
 - What kinds of self-help skills does your child have (toileting, grooming, etc.)?
 - What kind of daily living skills does your child have (cooking, laundry, telling time)?
5. Known Positive Reinforcers
 - Does your child respond well to verbal praise?
 - What type of material things does your child enjoy?
6. Observable Mood Or Energy Patterns
 - Does your child's energy peak at a certain time of day?
 - Do your child's moods fluctuate greatly?
7. Child's Mode of Learning
 - Does your child learn easiest by seeing things? Hearing things? Doing things?
8. Child's Strengths and Interests
 - What are your child's strengths?
 - What is your child interested in?

- ☆ Take a few minutes to write down some questions that you want to ask and bring that list with you so you'll be sure to remember them.
- ☆ Request copies of evaluation reports before the meeting, read them over, and mark any places that you are concerned about or have questions about. Meet with someone before the meeting to go over the reports to get your questions answered.
- ☆ Make a list of some of your goals for your child that you would like to see met, and some services that you would like to have provided for your child.
- ☆ You may bring a tape recorder, batteries, and tapes. Tell everyone that you will be taping the meeting, and use the tape as a resource in case you have any questions or concerns when you get home.
- ☆ Bring relevant paperwork such as things sent from the school, any outside evaluations that have been done, and anything else pertaining to your child's schooling such as work samples or tests.
- ☆ Be informed. Know the special education laws for the State of Maine as well as what your rights are. Teachers and administrators know the laws because it is their job. A copy of the special education regulations can be obtained from the Maine Parent Federation office. Call 1-800-870-7746 to request a copy.
- ☆ Bring someone with you if you feel uncomfortable going alone. They can be a "silent partner" to just listen and be supportive. As a courtesy, let the school know that someone will be coming with you.
- ☆ Have realistic goals and expectations for both your child and the school, but don't underestimate them, either.

Preparing information and thoughts in advance can provide new insights for both parents and teachers, and will also make the PET meeting more productive. It is important that everyone understand what is being said during the meeting. Do not be embarrassed to ask others at the meeting to further explain anything you do not understand, such as the purpose of tests, the expectations of the tests, or the next steps in the process. Positive communication between parents and professionals is critical to the success of the special education process and the education of your child.

For more information on this or other topics related to the needs of children with disabilities, call or write Maine Parent Federation at: P.O. Box 2067, Augusta, ME 04338; 1-800-870-7746 or (207)623-2144