

Partnering Through Questions: A guide for parents of children receiving special education services

You are an equal member of your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. For the team to work well, it is helpful for all members to understand each other's perspectives. You are an expert on your child. Other team members have expertise in other areas. The following questions can help you gather more information from those other experts and work together as a team to develop a program for your unique child.

Questions for Understanding

- What does that look like?
- Would you tell me more about _____?
- That term (acronym) is unfamiliar to me. Would you please explain it?
- Can we look at other methods?
- Would you please rephrase that so I'm sure I understand?
- What strategies have worked well for students with similar needs?
- What will the school propose to do about _____?
- Can you explain how my child's needs were identified during the evaluation?
- Could you give me more specifics about _____?
- I think I heard you say _____. Is that correct?
- How long do we try this support before we determine whether it is working or not? Can we set a date to revisit the success of this support after that timeframe?
- Could you give a few examples of _____?

Questions for Data

- Could you please share data to support _____?
- What assessments were used to determine this support or placement?
- How is progress being measured?
- Can I see examples of my child's work that shows their growth?
- How often is my child's progress monitored and reported?
- Can we look at data trends over time to see if the current plan is effective?
- Could you share the research on the effectiveness of that method?
- You say the policy is _____. May I please have a copy of that policy to read?

Questions for Fostering Partnership

- What can I do to support my child's goals outside of school?
- How will we communicate between meetings?
- Would you tell me more about how decisions are made as a team when there are differing opinions and evidence?
- I've noticed _____ at home. What do you see in school?
- Do we all agree that _____ (summary statement)?



The key to partnering is communication. Members of the team must seek to understand. Practice listening and sharing. Your questions help shape a better educational experience for your child.