



## REGULAR EDUCATION TEACHERS & SPECIAL EDUCATION:

### An Important Part of the Puzzle



Children with disabilities are guaranteed a free appropriate public education (FAPE). There are two criteria typically used to determine if a child is receiving FAPE: compliance with IEP procedures and receipt of meaningful educational benefit. General educators impact both of these.

For most students with disabilities, FAPE is provided in the general education classroom. For the few children who are not educated in the general education classroom, there's still an expectation that many children will be involved and progress in the general curriculum. Because the IEP meeting is the time the IEP team members come to agreement about how to provide the child with FAPE, it's important that the person who knows the most about the general education curriculum (i.e., YOU, the general educator) actively participates in the meeting. Another way general educators impact

### Here's some tips for navigating the IEP Process:

#### BEFORE

**Provide Input.** Although special educators are generally charged with drafting the annual goals, they need input from the general education teachers to do so. The data needed from the general education teacher may be gathered in various ways (e.g., pre-IEP meetings between the special and general educators, questionnaires completed by the general educator, or discussions during the IEP meeting). Regardless if the special educator requests this information before the IEP meeting or during the IEP meeting, as the general educator, it is helpful for you to be prepared to provide this feedback and information. When preparing this feedback, keep in mind that you need to come up with the child's information in the proposed education

#### DURING

**Ask questions.** If you don't understand a term used by another IEP team member during the meeting, it's likely the parent doesn't understand the term either—so ask for clarification.

**Communicate Respectfully.** Just like any other time you communicate with parents, it's best to start with something positive about the child before discussing areas for improvement. When communicating with the parents and the other members of the IEP team, carefully choose your words because the words you use can either hurt or

#### AFTER

**Refer to the IEP when planning.** You are responsible for implementing the IEP as it pertains to your class. When writing your lesson plans, refer to the child's goals, accommodations, and modifications so you can incorporate them into your lessons. If there is something you don't understand in the IEP document, ask the special education teacher for assistance.

**Track the child's progress.** Data must be used to determine if the student is making progress toward meeting those goals. This means the child's teachers need to have a way to keep track of the data needed to determine if progress is being made.