

Practice Meeting: Tonya

Background

This is an annual IEP meeting being held in May, near the end of the school year. Tonya is a 4th grader and has been at this school since kindergarten. She was diagnosed with a mild intellectual disability at the beginning of 2nd grade.

Parent

You are raising Tonya alone, and often seem overwhelmed. You have been concerned all school year that Tonya is not making progress. You want Tonya to “catch up” to her peers. You are concerned that Tonya is not able to complete her classroom assignments. You try to help her at home, but she gets frustrated, and you do not know how to work with her to make it easier. You also have to help Tonya’s younger brother with his homework, and there is not enough time. When you get off work, you have to pick up the children from the after school care program, start a load of laundry, cook dinner, and help the kids with their homework. Tonya gets frustrated and cries.

Assistant Principal

You are the PEA Representative for this meeting. Your knowledge about special education is limited, and you do not know much about Tonya. You are a strong supporter of your staff and trust that they know what they are doing.

Special Education Teacher-Meeting Facilitator

As the meeting facilitator, your first job is to go over the agenda, including assigning the roles of timekeeper and IEP writer (you may need to explain what these people have to do to fulfill these jobs) You also allow the team members to introduce themselves.

Because your meetings are standardized, you follow the agenda and discuss each agenda item. Remember to use the post-it notes to “park” items on the parking lot if the topic is not being discussed at the time.

Your primary responsibilities will be to identify the area of conflict and to facilitate the resolution.

You provide 55 minutes of small group instruction for reading, math, and written expression every day. This is your first year working with Tonya, and you have not seen much improvement. You believe that Tonya would be more successful in a self-contained environment.

Hint: always be curious and ask questions.

Fourth Grade Teacher

You like Tonya but sometimes working with her is overwhelming. You have tried things like using short directions, assigning one task at a time, giving her extra time to complete work, and pairing her up with a strong reader. You feel that you cannot give her the attention she deserves.

School Psychologist

You were the evaluator for Tonya when she was found eligible for special education services and you will also be the evaluator for her triennial reevaluation next year. You know that her test scores placed her in the mild intellectual disability category in all academic and adaptive areas. You also discussed her educational strengths as having age appropriate social skills and the ability to follow directions. Her weaknesses include reading, written expression, and math. Your input included service minutes for reading and writing in the resource room but you believe that Tonya could be successful in the general education classroom for the other subjects with some accommodations and grading modifications.