



## Creating An IEP Notebook

Managing the needs of your children with special needs is a full time job. Add to that the mountain of paperwork that comes from doctors, evaluations, schoolwork, and IEPs, and you can quickly find yourself overwhelmed. As the parent, you are the most knowledgeable person about your child, and creating your own file can be instrumental in advocating for your child. The notebook is a very powerful tool in reviewing your child's history, recording what other professionals have said about your child, and keeping an accurate record of what the school has committed to and what they have actually done.

Written evidence will speak for itself, removing you from the middle.

### Materials to get you started

The first thing you'll need is a 3-ring binder, divider tabs, and a 3 hole puncher. Next you'll need to gather up all of your child's paperwork. Here are a few suggestions:

- IEP or 504 Plan
- Medical and or Psychological evaluations and testing
- Diagnostic reports
- Academic evaluations
- Recent report cards & progress reports
- Written correspondence with teachers
- Contact info for doctors and therapists
- Samples of your child's work, showing strengths and weaknesses, including classwork, homework, and tests
- Standardized test results

### A Few Tips on Documentation

Always keep the original document in your notebook. If you want to keep extra copies, create a box or filing system - this helps keep your notebook from filling up too quickly.

Dates are important! Every piece of paper should have the date you received it - mark the date yourself if needed.

It is important to note the following dates:

- Meetings with anyone at the school,
- When you send or receive any key documents,
- When you tell the school specific information such as, "My child is spending hours on what should be a 15 minute assignment,"
- Anytime your child is disciplined or suspended.

If it is in your notebook, it needs to have a date on it. This is very important when you need to establish a timeline.

### Putting it all Together

There are two schools of thought in organizing all of this information:

- One method is to create categories such as Evaluations, Work Samples, Correspondence, IEP, etc. You can buy a kit with a notebook, dividers, and tips to help you put it all together at [www.organized4kids.com](http://www.organized4kids.com).
- The other method, which is recommended by [www.WrightsLaw.com](http://www.WrightsLaw.com), is chronological. You create a master list of documents at the front of the notebook to easily locate the contents. When you add a document to the notebook, you simply add it to

the master list, which functions as your table of contents. One benefit of the chronological method is that as you acquire papers, you simply add them the notebook and the master list, without worrying about categorizing.

There is no right or wrong method to organizing the information. What matters is that it makes sense to you and that you are able to access what you need quickly.

You may want to keep your IEP binder in a tote bag where you also include supplies like pencils, pens, highlighters, and an IEP guide book. When you arrive at your next IEP meeting, you will know have all of the tools you need to advocate for your child, as well as a renewed sense of confidence that you are organized, knowledgeable, and prepared.

*This information was derived from an article written by Amy Perry published in the newsletter of the Autism Society of North Carolina.*