

## Background:

Students who have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) can get services that have been tested by other educators and proven to work.

Before asking the school for a service or program for your child, learn about it yourself. You may want to find out if there is evidence that it works for children with issues similar to your child's. You may also want to have a recommendation from a doctor or other professional. A recommendation will help you make the case for your child. The professional's recommendation should state what the disability is and how the specific program will help the student.

## Script for what to say:

My child, [child's name], is in the [\_\_\_] grade at [name of school]. I'm requesting that the school provide [describe the program or service] in his IEP.

He struggles with [describe your child's area of difficulties]. He has [describe his disability, for example dyslexia or ADHD], which limits his ability to access what's being taught. It also limits his ability to learn and do well in a general education classroom.

[Name of the program or service] has worked for other children. Based on research, I believe it will help my child [describe specifics]. The school should provide [name of the program or service] so that my child can make progress in school. [If your child has tried the program or service, you can describe how that helped. You can also say if your doctor or other professional has recommended the program or service.]

## **The School May Say:**

We're not going to provide the program or service. We've developed our own program and curriculum that we think will help your child improve.

## Possible responses #1 (for in-house curriculum):

The job of the IEP team is to make sure that what my child is taught is based on solid education research. I'd like to see the research that proves that your program or curriculum has been successful. I'd also like to make sure it can meet the needs of students like my child. We need to agree on a program that is supported by research.

## Possible responses #2 (for a reading program):

The research on reading shows that a reading program needs to have a few things to be effective: (1) phonemic awareness (the ability to notice and hear sounds in words), (2) phonics (the ability to relate sounds to letters and words), (3) fluency (the ability to read accurately and quickly), (4) vocabulary (knowing words) and (5) reading comprehension (understanding what you read). Can you share with me the independent research that shows that your reading program does all that? Can you give me documentation that shows this program has been evaluated by outside researchers and was found to be effective?

**The School May Say:**

Our school doesn't have the funding for that program or service.

Possible response:

Under IDEA, schools must decide on services based on the needs of my child, not money. Our responsibility as an IEP team is to make sure my child receives the individualized services he needs to benefit from school. How can we make that happen?

**The School May Say:**

Our school doesn't provide that program or service. We don't do that.

Possible response:

IDEA requires that schools provide children with an education that meets their unique learning needs. I understand the school hasn't provided this service before, but my child's doctor says it is needed. There is also research that says that this service will help my child succeed in school. How can we work together to make this happen?