

Background:

IDEA provides for technology services as part of a student's IEP. For students with learning and attention issues, the use of software programs, voice-recognition software and other assistive technology can make a huge difference.

Before asking the school for equipment or software, make sure you have information about the technology. You may want to look into research about whether it works for children like yours. You may also want to have a recommendation from a doctor or other professional. This report should identify the child's disability and explain how this AT will help the student make educational progress.

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 [name of assistive technology] in his IEP.

He struggles with [describe how your child's area of difficulties]. He has [describe his issue, for example dyslexia or ADHD], which limits his ability to do well in a general education classroom.

[Name of assistive technology] is based on educators' research. It will help my child [describe specifics, for example improve written language skills]. The school should provide [name the assistive technology] so that my child can make progress in school. [If your child has tried the assistive technology, you can describe how that helped. You can also say if your doctor or other professional has recommended the assistive technology.]

The School May Say:

Our school district doesn't put technology into the IEP.

Possible Response #1:

I'm sorry, but my child needs this (name of assistive technology) to be able to make progress in school. He needs it to do well in a general education class. I'm concerned that if it's not written into the IEP, he won't get it. I have information here on how the school can get this (name of assistive technology).

Possible Response #2:

We did a trial with this (name of assistive technology), and it improved my child's education by (describe how it helped your child). If we don't write this into the IEP, my concern is that my child won't have the supports he needs to

achieve the goals in his IEP. I have information here on how the school can get this (name of assistive technology).

The School May Say:

We don't have funding for technology.

Possible response #1:

I understand that (name of assistive technology) may be expensive. However, learning to use this technology is critical to my child's learning, IEP progress and future. We can't end the conversation because of money.

Possible response #2:

Under IDEA, schools must decide on technology based on the needs of my child, not available funding. Our responsibility as an IEP team is to make sure my child is able to have the support needed to benefit from school. How can we work together to make that happen?