



Gold Advocacy

Ten MUSTS for Your Child's Special Education Success





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The following book was created by Attorney Laura B. Gold, a special education attorney, whose office is located in Reading, Massachusetts.

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Attorney Laura B Gold is not responsible for the consequences of the application of any information taken from this book. Laws change frequently and Laura B. Gold cannot guarantee that all representations are up to date.

Please consult directly with an attorney before making any legal decisions concerning your own unique circumstances.



1

Know your child's rights.

Knowing what State and Federal laws say about your right to special Education for your child makes it much easier to advocate on their behalf. There are many free resources available where you can find a significant amount of information in easy to understand language. It can also be very valuable to speak with a legal expert who understands the legal ins and outs in your state.

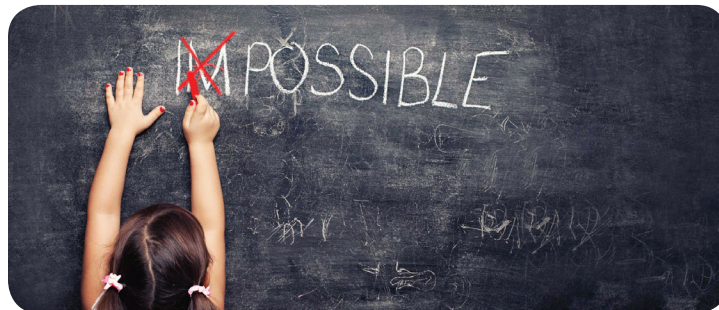




2

Educate yourself on your child's learning differences.

Every child is different and not all help is the right help. Make sure you have a full understanding of what makes your child's learning abilities unique so you can get the best help possible for them.





3

Keep organized records.

Keep copies of everything you send and receive from the school. You never know when you will need to find past information or when a conversation from a year ago will be a vital part of your case.





4

Build relationships with team members.

It is important that everyone working on behalf of your child is on the same page and working together. Don't just expect things to happen, voice your thoughts and concerns. Make sure to show respect and appreciation to the people on your team even if you disagree. This will lead to better communication and better outcomes.





5

Ask lots of questions to your Team.

Don't ever be afraid to ask questions. Like any legal matter, not understanding what is going on can lead to harmful results. You need to fully understand the process you are undertaking, so ask, ask, ask!





6

Remain calm and rational.

This often is a very emotional process. Your child's education, safety, and wellbeing are at stake. As parents you are fully invested in the future of your children, so it is important stay calm and polite. Try to understand all perspectives and then share your thoughts so you are more likely to be heard.





7

Give your input whenever possible.

Just because you are not an expert (yet) doesn't mean you don't have valuable insight. You know your child's needs and strengths better than anyone, and you are an equal partner in this process. Make sure you speak up and share what is on your mind, respectfully.





8

Talk to your child about school.

One of the best ways to learn about what is available to your child is to talk to them. Ask your child if services are being provided and how they are managing with them. Find out if they are struggling or if there is anything else that might be helpful to them. Your child is a wealth of information.

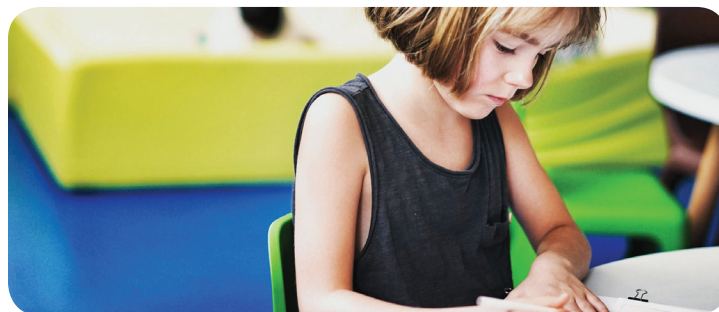




9

Communicate with the school on a regular basis.

To find out how your child is doing, check in with the school. Your child's progress is your responsibility just as much as the school is responsible for providing them with an appropriate education. Make sure to get updates on your child's progress often, not just at report card time.





10

Put everything in writing.

While phone calls can be more personal than emails, they can also be much more likely to be missed or forgotten. Do your best to leave a paper trail whenever possible, for example, following up a phone call with an email. That way you have a physical record of the conversation right there in your files.





Laura B. Gold

SPECIAL EDUCATION ATTORNEY

Juris Doctor from New England Law / Boston
Bachelor's Degree from Brandeis University

Serving for 13 years as an Essex County prosecutor for both the District and Superior Courts, where she prosecuted hundreds of criminal cases, including crimes against children, is what drew Attorney Laura Gold to focus on special education law.

No matter where you are in the process of helping your child, whether you are considering an initial request, seeking an IEP/504 meeting, or caught up in dispute resolution with the Bureau of Special Education Appeals, what matters most is the well-being of your child and Attorney Gold will do everything in her power to make sure they get what they need.

Accreditations:

- Juris Doctor from New England Law / Boston
- Bachelor's Degree from Brandeis University
- Massachusetts Bar Association
- Board of Directors for Massachusetts Citizens for Children
- Special Needs Advocacy Network (SPaN)
- Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN)
- Special Education Surrogate Parent Program (SESPP)
- Admitted to practice in Massachusetts State and Federal Courts
- Admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of the United States
- NBI (National Business Institute) Guest Speaker