March 20, 2018

11:00‑12:00 am Capitol 3, Block 5

Advocacy Every Day: Parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

>>LISA WEISS: Everybody. Want to welcome you here today. This is the advocacy every day ‑‑ I'm happy to help you in any way. Water is in the back. Restrooms are outside the double doors, if you get hot or cold or need a temperature change, just let me know. At the end if the speakers would like, if you have any questions, let me know and I'll pass the mic around for you.

And I will let them introduce themselves.

Thank you. Welcome to Colorado.

>>LISA WEISS: We wanted to start in and introduce ourselves. We've been presenting together in this way as parents for a couple years now and we just felt it was really important for us to be able to ‑‑ is that better? We started feeling it was reel 0 important for us to share our stories and what we've kind of leaned on each other for all these years. I'll introduce myself first. My name is Lisa Weiss. I live here in Colorado. I have eye son who is 15 years old. His name is max he's in the 10th grade now. He's deaf. He does have bilateral cochlear implants. He's been a user of cochlear implants until this year when he took them off. We also use a mode of communication that gives him access called cued speech which you may have heard a little about at this conference or maybe you've never heard of it before but that makes our situation a little bit unusual and it's made advocacy a little more important to my situation. I'm an attorney, and that's how used on and I met in the first place, we're both are attorneys and we ended up having kids who have deaf and hard of hearing and leaned on each other hopefully for support in all kinds of ways and bounce ideas off each other. So that's probably what our conversation is about.

>> SUSAN FINGERLE: I'm Susan Fingerle. I'm also an attorney and we both work in special education doing legal work. Lisa and I were friends before we had our children. We're recent new residents of Denver. The goals of our presentation are to develop and strengthen care add ski skills to review parent goals at CPEI and CPSE and during all of those meetings. Advocacy is not something that necessarily comes naturally to parents. And being an advocate for your own child is very different than being an advocate from professionally or for your office or for your organization or for a client. And it's something that I think can be particularly hard to do for yourself and in particular. Something that parents have to develop skills to do for their deaf and hard of hearing children. Parents of deaf and hard of hearing children learn early on that you have to advocate for your child in all settings. We do view this all the time in all different settings at home, at school, in your community, in extracurricular activities, in social situations with your own family, with your extended family, with your friends. You have to learn how to tell your story and talk about the child and talk about choices you made and feel confident and secure doing that.

We also have to teach our kids to do that. And as they get holder through elementary school and beyond the roles change and they will begin to advocate more for themselves but you are generally the ones teaching them how to do that.

>>LISA WEISS: Yes, and they're needs are constantly changing. You're always kind of trying to teach them to tell their story and advocate for what they need and they want and why it is that they want it.

And it can be a tricky situation. And just a constantly changing process of they grow. Their needs just change.

>> SUSAN FINGERLE: I think Lisa and I despite the fact we are both attorneys are not particularly litigious or ‑‑ I think supportive. I mean, advocating for a child is hard enough. I don't think either of us are big supporters of fighting with school districts of fighting with the CPSE. I think we're both much more invested in consensus building and resolving conflicts early on before they become due process‑like conflicts. And I think the thrust of what we intend to talk about is how to prepare parents to go to IEP meetings you know fully ready to hold their seat at the table and participate in those meetings and teach the CSE folks or whoever it is you're talking to, the preliminary or classroom teacher about your child because we're all going to have to do that year after year situation after situation. Recently I kind of stopped telling the whole story and then I realized I needed to not just because there were new people but some ‑‑ you know we have switched schools. But you need to tell people. He didn't talk until 4‑year‑old and he said there was a situation where he didn't remember something and I really don't think he remembers. You have to understand where he came from to understand who he is now. We have to remember to go back and maybe not tell the whole story but the part of the story that's relevant to the conversation we're having.

>> As good as you know my ‑‑ I feel like my son is actually as really, really good advocate for himself but he also doesn't really keep in his mind a lot of things about him that I know as his mother and are relevant to the things that he needs now. Susan said this year has been interesting because Maddox has changed the way he wants to do things at school basically. He looks like a very different person to them and he has a hard time understanding why.

And it's ‑‑ you know, Susan reminded me about how much ‑‑ how much these people probably don't know about where max came from. He's been in different school districts. He's been in a different state that hadn't known him since he was a little boy. It has ‑‑ are we doing okay? And it has become really important this year at 15 to be letting them know where he came from and why it is that he's asking for this thing he needs now. It's very important.

>>LISA WEISS: Are we having a technical problem?

>> Check check check 1, 2.

>>LISA WEISS: Is it just my voice? That scares me. I think the group of people who work with your child are, as we satisfied earlier are your family, your community, your school. And the goal of creating a cohesive team in whatever environment you're in to support your child in their development and their career as a student and as a person who's part of a community, we all need to come prepared to talk about our child from your family's perspective.

And to be prepared that there might be conflict or disagreement and be prepared to talk through that without hurting a relationship that you're probably going to have for a long time. I always think about in schools, I mean most of us live in school districts for the good part of our child's career. Not most, many parents will live in a from kindergarten to high school. That's where your home is and where you made a decision to raise your children and you're going to be talking to your same bro festals for a really long time. Professionals. And those relationships are ‑‑ there's a great benefit to having a positive relationship to those people. I think for all of our deaf and hard of hearing kids, access is the central issue. Participation is main. We want our kids to have the most level playing field they can have. And access means lots of different things. It's full participation.

You know, in their education. In their choices of modes of communication. And the choices that we make for them when they're young and changes that might happen as they grow and develop.

Access through technology to their identity, to their community, particularly for parents who are hearing parents to have ‑‑ provide access and to their children to the deaf community and to deaf role models.

Social skills to IEPs 504 plans and all sorts of other public accommodations which are through the ADA a really strong support of our kids' needs. Our particular expertise because we have been special education lawyers the whole time we've had kids really is in the education and that's how we came to decide that we were going to start presenting this several years ag. It's been really helpful for us. We already are very well versed in the system and language of special education and the laws but not everyone else is. We wanted to help parents in understanding how they can help out and prepare themselves best for being part of the team.

We have a really important role in the IEP team and I know a lot of times people hear IEP team and they're thinking school team and they're thinking professionals who are dealing with their kid in the school but the general ‑‑ even the general education teacher or the teacher of the deaf or the audiologist. The special education laws intended to make the parent the whole child, not just the child at school. It's the whole child. We know our kids better than anyone else on that team knows our kids and we have to be prepared to talk about them. We have to be prepared to talk about the challenges that we see them havings out in the community. We have to be prepared to talk about the challenge they're having at home and we have to be prepared to talk about the things that they do well. And the things that ‑‑ everything about them. You are the person, you're the people who have to be able to create that picture for the IEP team. It's very important. I'm just looking at slide to see what it is that we've said. But that's exactly what I'm saying.

It's ‑‑ it's ‑‑ we really are ab integral part of the team. And I know as max has grown, he has ‑‑ he's always been the focus of our IEP discussions and obviously, an important part that has he's become a stronger advocate for himself and making decisions for himself, that I'm so happy he is making for himself it takes the pressure to be making the decisions for him and being his voice. It's the most important part. You have to be ready to be a full participant and the education system can be pretty tricky and corn fusing.

>>LISA WEISS: Like Susan said the partnerships are important. It's supposed to be a team. In my experience has been a team of people who are really putting their heads together to what it is they might node to be able to access their education fully and everything about it. And how it is we can meet those needs.

>> The law allows for your input and your child's input and you really are your child's best advocate. It can be very intimidating for parents to sit ‑‑ you ‑‑ sometimes it's easier to feel like they're the team and you're invited to attend the meeting.

And that's certainly not the way the law looks at the role of parents. Particularly deaf and hard of hearing parents and families due to Title II of the ADA. But you know that your choices about communication and ‑‑ are primary parts of the decisions that are being made about the student.

You really are your child's best advocate and you ‑‑ none of us can rely on the recommendations of school districts for decisions about hour our children. I think school districts even with the best of intentions often times don't have a very deep amount of experience about the needs of deaf and hard of hearing children. It's a low incidence disability. Often times my son has been the only deaf child in his school. And that's very common, that's a very, very common experience for deaf and hard of hearing kids. He was excited. The school district doesn't have the resources but even with the best of intentions parents have to bring the knowledge they gained through early intervention and through CPSE. They have limited programming options and may not know ‑‑ they don't know ‑‑ hopefully they will. But I mean, I think it's incumbent upon all of us to really come prepared.

I mean, school districts, sperm ed teams often know a lot about large disabilities. They know a lot about autism and the disabilities that that they're going to shall ‑‑ you know in their service on a day‑to‑day basis. They may not have any experience with deaf and hard of hearing children. They may live in a place where there are very, very few service provider options.

>> It's the same thing as kind of our families, if you're a hearing family and you don't have any other deaf members from it, your child may be the first deaf person you ever met. My son is the first deaf person I ever met. So thinking about that, and a school that maybe that's never met a deaf person, it's a real learning curve for them. And if you're attending conferences like this, you're doing over and above what a typical parent would be doing to learn about their child and what their child needs and it's important that you bring all of that request you. That you feel empowered to bring all of that knowledge and all of that information that you have about your child and the field of deafness, about the over all everything that you learn about deafness is important for them they may not have gotten it from anybody else.

>> I should have asked this but how many of you are parents? Thanks. I think with mentioned at the beginning and then we started talking. So services are provided in schools in different ways they're provided through the IDEA. Through state regulation, some states adopt the IDEA wholesale for the most part. Some have an delay of state regulations which expand upon the IDEA and create additional obligations on school districts.

Each state is different.

And something that we should all be aware of the laws and regulations in our own state.

>> That giant pack of information they give you at one time of year and probably your IEP meeting, that's where you get all the information about what your state laws say. And even though you might not want to read that whole thing, you might want to just become familiar with it enough that you feel like you know what's this in there. That's what they're required to give you every year to sure that they're giving you notice of what the laws are related to your child's education.

>> Services depending on the age of children are provided through early intervention. Through the preschool education, through the CSE, through 504 plans. Under Section 504 of the Rehab Act.

And under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

I've lived in three states in three years. And we moved from the city out of the sit and IEP form changed. Each time it changes you have to really look at the form and look at how it's structured. It's very different here. It depends on what computer systems they all buy. But state to state. Parents should be familiar with the forms you can go on your state's Web site and see a blank form. You should be familiar with it and understand the purpose of each section. They should find a part of the draft up there. It's a draft. Not the final IEP and the more you're familiar with the information that should be in each section and it's usually like annotated on your state's Web site. Read procedural stave guards and notice that the school district provides to you. It's not the most exciting thing. It states who should be at meetings, some states have different people who should be at meetings and they should all be there. If they're not at your meeting you say I don't want to have a meeting in will the special ed teacher can be here for the whole time and not because it's their break and they're going to run in for 10 minutes and have goals. But because you want them to sit there and talk about your child's performance

>> If you're wondering about something and you're realizing that there's someone that you're meeting that would have that answer that's not there, then you probably want that person there.

You shed tell them who our bringing if you're planning to bring anyone. If you want the audiologist to be there and the school district says they can't or they didn't invite them. You can invite them or say they're at another school that day. They have to change the meeting if you want the educational audiologist to be there or they can provide a report or call in. There's reasonable ways to work things out but the answer that oh, they work at ABC school on Wednesdays is a ‑‑ you know an appropriate way to ‑‑ if you think they should be there and generally probably should. Some of these slides I don't know why they do this but forgive me while I click through.

I think the most important thing parents can do in having successful outcomes at IEP meetings is preparing.

We're all constantly preparing but actively preparing for that IEP meeting as if you were ‑‑ hopefully the way staff members are preparing for the IEP meeting.

Well in advance. Think about whether or not you know it's an annual review or a triannual review. Think about what assessments if any the school intends to conduct.

what assessments you any your child may need ‑‑ you think your child may need. Sometimes school districts are kind of conservative about staffing reasons for a million reasons about what assessments they think a child needs if you think happens a lot. Request they go do it and do it well in advance of the the meeting. This is kind of an annual year long process. Hopefully recommendations will happen in well of assessments that happen before the meeting. Be prepared to tell your story year after year.

You may feel that you've told it before but there may be a new person there who doesn't understand that your story, that your child was late diagnosed or didn't have access to language until 2‑year‑old. Or were diagnosed. There were parts of the individual child that are relevant year after year, my son didn't talk until 4 years old. Not full on talking. It informs who he is today still and I think it's important that I let the new middle school teachers know who he was because just him sitting at the table you might not realize that until you got in there and spoke to him. He speaks less now that he's 13.

But review the current ‑‑ think about how much the child may be pulled out of the classroom. Think about whether the teachers are pulling into the classroom.

Things change from where they're in first grade and second grade as they get older. There are lots of reasons that services may happen in a different manner.

Consider comforted factor in discussing these issues. Ask for a draft of the IEP in advance. Meeting. The team is looking at it hopefully ‑‑ meeting maybe just in advance of the meeting but it is completely appropriate to ask to see it yourself so you know what their thinking about. In most cases you will because you will have been talking to the staff already probably.

But it's good to kind of not be reading it for the first time at the meeting if they are considering it. You may completely agree with it but also may not. You may be talkings to people regularly but it may not be everybody that's sitting at that team but not everybody sitting at that time is having the daily or weekly conversations that you might be having where your child's teacher. Communicate on any issues that you'd like to discuss which may be issues of first impression. I think IEP meetings can get derailed if for the first time ever you are letting them know they want to make a really big clang or that the request ‑‑ sometimes it's better to you can go through the meeting. If circumstances are that for the very first time it comes up at the meeting and the meeting doesn't get completed, then the meeting can be continued on a neither day. Meetings can be scheduled for an hour. You should be going section by section. Starting with the present levels of performance. Inasmuch as you should feel free to request the school district to do any assessments. You should also ‑‑ if you have private assessments from a private audiologist. Or any other private provider. If you wish you could share those assessments with the team they don't have to adopt them wholesale but they have to consider them.

And I think really important I think each year is eye new year.

Just like it's a new year for kids in school. It's a any year for the IEP as well.

Every child makes progress in the course of a year, they certainly should be making progress in the course of a year and the IEP should reflect that. The IEP could be changing if the IEP could change more than once a year. The requirement is that your IEP team has to update and review the IEP once a year. If there's nothing to prevent a team from meeting more often than that if necessity need to and if your child needs that. I think there are nuts and bolts recommendations make an outline, bring it to the meeting. Put it on the table. Check it off as you get through your issues. Come prepared with your own ideas and also be open minded about any representations that the school district can make. Speech services, technology.

Include all your questions that you prepared in advance at home when you're calm and not ‑‑ you know, sitting at a table with all the people. Consider something I think is not often or maybe not often number for IEPs kids who are deaf and hard of hearing training for the staff. The staff really ‑‑ our children don't necessarily need that much intervention. But often times the staff ‑‑ particularly in a mainstream setting needs to be trained on how deaf children you know, participate in the general education classroom.

>> And how your child participates. My son ace itinerant teacher of the deaf in every email we get she says something like if you met one Dave child, you've met one deaf child. They're all unique and they all have different needs and you have to consider them in that way. They all have different needs.

>> I'm not saying the school districts need to hire outside consultants to come in and consult staff about the needs of deaf and hard of hearing students. But certainly the teacher of the deaf can do that. The teacher of the can meet introductory with your child's general education teacher or special education teacher and train them on how to use the technology. How to how to check for understanding and how to rephrase things to make sure that that child is understanding. Often times teachers ‑‑ I didn't know anything about these things. But don't understand how hard it is for a student to listen all day long with hearing aids or an implant. They don't understand it's not the same as putting then you can see that hearing through a cochlear implant is not the same as hearing for people who are ‑‑ who don't have ‑‑ you know, hearing loss or aren't deaf. And most people don't know that. Unrest unless they've had a personal experience.

It's more at the meeting bring anything and anyone you need to help the team understand what it is that your child needs. Parent a picture of your child. Help draft the goals. If you have an idea of what it is you think your child the next steps for your child's to accomplish in any different way in social emotional way and academic way. Bring your own ideas for goals. They'll likely accept them. They might hand you their goals. They might not be what you want. But you should feel free to say I think the goals should be for social education, I think the goals should be for managing the technology. And did you

>> Your input is extremely important. And they are open and happy to having your input because they're trying to do the best job that they can to meet the needs of your child.

And if you come prepared and fully participating and understanding the process, it makes it much easier for them to do their jobs and to do their jobs well for your child. Identify how progress will be monitored. How do you want to be told. How they're progressing toward their goals. How often do you want to meet. How often do you want to be communicating with them? Talk about that

>> It can be more frequent than quarterly with report cards.

If the situation was supplying young kids you'd like more frequent progress monitoring, you can ask them for it. Formally or informally. It doesn't have to be in a progress report. But it can certainly be provided on a monthly basis if that's what's important. Imagine a child who you know was recently many planted. Is that speech monitoring may be very, very critical and you might want to on after Thanksgiving

>> You might be you need more frequent communication because because you're trying to collaborate with outside providers. You can talk about that. And who it is that your child is working with outside of school. I know for many years max was working with a private speech language pathologist, has a private audiologist. Had private occupational therapy. Had all kinds of private things. Has a private therapist for social emotional needs. And that's important that you'll of that information is shared with the whole team. There are often ‑‑ there's just kind of a natural disconnect between the medical model and the educational model and the managing is done every six months and it's important the school team understands audiologically what's happening and you try as best you can to bridge that disconnect that's naturally there anyway.

>> I think despite all our best efforts. Sometimes conflict occurs.

I think it's something that we should be prepared for. Not anticipate, not expect.

I would certainly hope that conflict doesn't occur but it can ‑‑

>> I think it's a natural part. I think everyone ‑‑ you're working as a team and you come with different ideas of how to meet a certain need. You're coming at it from a different perspective than somebody else on the school team might be coming from and that in itself is a conflict.

>> It's been kind of a theme for this year's EHDI conference as well. Resolving conflict was having difficult conversations. I think sometimes the conflict can ‑‑ or the ‑‑ it's the anticipation of conflict. You're going to ask a school district for something is that you may feel uncomfortable asking for. Its's often times hard to ask for things.

>> They might be expensive. You might be anticipating that you're going to push back or they're going to say no. I think having thought through conflict resolution, could be sents is beneficial for all of us.

In the end these are people who are going to serve your child whether this year or for the next 12 years. And you're going to trust your child's education to them. It feels really bad to not a trustable relationship. I worked for a school district for working for the school district doing special education work as a lawyer for 15 years. It is a very challenging situation when those relationships have just worn away. We often got involved well after the relationship had been danged and fostering a positive relationship and working through any conflicts is beneficial to everyone, most of all of to our children. Disappointment can certainly happen, but it can also be the source of positive change.

>> Definitely, it can. It's a learning process. And I think what's been helpful for me is understanding that these are people who chose to go into the field of education because they care about kids and they care about educating them. They're certainly working within the constraints of the system that they work. But at the heart, they care about your child and focusing on your child and focusing on what it is you say your child needs and continuing to keep going back to this is what I think he needs and this is why I think he needs it and continuing the conversation in that way helps tremendously. They really do want to do their best. They want to do what's right because they're in the field of education for a reason. Even though conflicts arise, you might not agree op how you're going to get there, it's important to keep focusing on what it is that you're saying your child needs and why it is your child needs it and trying to come up with a way to meet that need. That's the purpose of the special education laws and it can be a catalyst for change. You can open people's minds. You can try to challenge them in ways f never each heard.

>> I think of this example when my son was in preschool I went to a School for the Deaf. And every year at his IEP meeting we talked about him transitioning back to our local school. You wanted him to say there and I would we have conversation. I was aware of the fact that the school district thought that if he came back to our district, he should go into a self‑contained kindergarten class. And I can't want him to. But each year they were happy to let him remain at the School for the Deaf so we never really had to have the conversation. I knew that was their plan because they thought that given the size of the class ram he was in he would need ‑‑ because at the School for the Deaf there were 7 kids in the class, he would need that level you support and I didn't think he did. But I avoided the conversation and we didn't what top have it add we weren't going there because he stayed there through 1st grade the School for the Deaf. So when it came time to have that conversation when he was going to transition out of that school, look, Mike, I told her how I felt. Not only am I not interested it would be great if you had an option between a self‑contained classroom and a general classroom they didn't have an integrated class until kindergarten or first grade actually not until middle school and I went and had a conversation with her privately because I didn't want to have it at the meeting, I didn't want ‑‑ I was getting anxious about it. I had a conversation with her in advance so we could have the meeting without it looming out because you should talk about the other stuff before you talk about programming recommendation. I think it helps his transition that we all ‑‑ she knew how I felt and they considered where my husband and I were willing to go before we were all sitting in the room and we'd already spent two hours talking through the entire program recommendation.

It worked out in the end

>> I think we've both done that. We chose a mode of communication for my son when he was little that isn't widely used. We haven't worked in a place where we were using that mode of communication. So it's been really important for me to be that expert in the thing that we have chosen and to help education them and make them more comfortable with understanding what it is. It's been largely successful. I don't ‑‑ I can't remember a year living in Colorado. We moved from New York and we moved from New York to Colorado when my son was in 1st grade and I can't remember a year when I didn't have coffee with one of my son's teachers toe just talk about him and talk about what it was we were doing. Kind of consensus building and building the relationships to build consensus, I think, can be a really valuable way to avoid conflict. It's very important to think of the situation as parents and schools. Or parents and districts. It's really intended to be a team. You're intended to be a member of the team and if you think of the team as individual people who are all there trying to learn and trying to give their input into how to meet your child's needs, that is really what it's supposed to be about. The people you need to do that with and be understanding is important and can help to feel more like a team.

>> It happens as a big transition time. I used to participate in the work group to parents whose 4‑year‑old were transitioning into from like a preschool parents are always steeps and so, like, anxious and so worked up because the schools are trying to prepare them for these meetings and while preparing them making them really, really nervous that they're ‑‑ the kid has had speech five times 60 times three years and they're really concerned that the school district's not going to do good and they're not going to have the appropriate level of services that their not going to have teacher of the deaf services every day.

That they're not going to have A or B, or C that they have come to rely on. And I think to ‑‑ and they were talking about hiring lawyers already. And we would always try to recommend to the parents to meet with your school districts. Tell them how you felt. Ask them why they feel that way. Why do you think we son should go into a self‑contained classroom you may not agree but you're going have a better outcome if you know where they're coming from

>> If you personalize it.

>> And hopefully they'll listen to where you're coming from as well. Weans building is not always easy. It requires time and every on the everybody's part and trust and creative thinking and ownership mindedness but it is a very, very valuable skill for parents of kids with IEPs or 504 plans.

Do y'all have any questions for us? I think we have five minutes?

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: I have a question about attachment to the IEP. Recently we've been hearing a lot from parents of kids with disabilities, especially deaf kids attaching a safety plan and kids have emergency in the school. What needs to happen and who needs to be responsible to make sure that those kids get to safety? My question is can this be pushed by PNS as something that needs to to be attached to the communication plan or other plans or is this something that a little bit icky.

>> I think that would vary from state to state depending on what the safety plan means. But I know that I have talked about a safety plan for my son for the last several years. And developed a safety plan that's kind of unincorporated into his IEP. It's a very valid thing to be developing. And it's a need that you should bring to the IEP team. As far as pushing it, I guess I'm not exactly sure what you mean by that you before I think that making sure that there's a plan in place that everyone is thinking about for the safety needs of your son is a part or your child is a part of the IEP.

>> When we got to the point we say no and I say my child has to have it. Because I heard from somebody saying what happens if there's a tag but they're not responsible for the kids in the mall. They're responsible for the kids in the school. If that request is rejected do I have a leg to stand on?

>> It depends on each child's circumstances to have a safety plan and I'm presuming we're talking about the type of school safety issues that we all have to think about way too frequently. As part of the IEP itself, certainly the school should have a safety plan for any sort of building evacuation or issue for children who are deaf who may not hear instructions the same way they have safety plans for kids with allergies. It would depend on circumstances. Whether it was an every day occurrence or and God forbid worst case scenario occurrence like medication, those are safety plan issues as well but whether or not it's part of the IEP, the school should have one and they should share it with you and you should feel comfortable that your child's needs are being occurred in what they're doing. I don't know if it has to be part. IEP itself. With you it should certainly being a plan that's shared with you. Children traffic with school and have special needs. If you traveled on, say, an overnight or an scented trip with your school, your needs may be different in a different setting. You may nod have to hit the IEP but the school needs to have a plan to address that child's needs on a train or bus or in a different setting.

>> Just on that issue there's something called SMART911. Online you can register online and let people know that you have ‑‑ what emergency services people know that there's an individual in a building or school or attending a program that has a special need. Of all times. Smart 911. Thank you, that's good to know.

>> Thank you, we did actually have a safety part within the IEP during the elementary school years.

And what it said was that she would be the first inline during any evacuation whether it was a deal or not.

And we didn't have anything whatsoever. It seemed like a very reasonable thing to request.

And that's what happened, every time there was an evacuation, whether it was a drill or not. She just went to the front of the line. Easy

>> Well that makes perfect sense. I know often times children with ‑‑ you know, with substantial communication issues or children with autism. There will be all sorts of safety issues built into IEPs to protect those children in a school setting. And the example that you gave is a perfect one. Safety issue weigh out these worst case scenarios, situations might be a little bit more challenging because schools are doing all sorts of things. It would be good to know what all our schools plans were. I know the kids know. By that isn't always shared with parents as much as shared with children.

>> Okay.

>> Thank you guys for sharing all. This I have a quick question. I've got an almost 3‑year‑old starting out about to do our very first IEP process and we've been able to build good rapport with the district so far. We've had a lot of meetings that have gone very well. But I was curious sometimes it seems like the district personnel, there's no question that there's no malintent, they don't ‑‑ they absolutely are in those positions because they love and care about the kids but have you run into a place where they're very easy, have they have a lot going on an IEP meeting you can't do it in an hour but we had things happen just like they wanted to do the placemat before we'd even had our IEP meeting. So just some things like that where we've had a great relationship but how do you pro yes, sir through that? I've heard things like a facilitated IEP thrown around but again we haven't had any contention yet. But I just kind of wonder in situations like that where you could only nicely say so many times, guys, I really think we ought to talk about our needs before we place her.

>> You are want to see a draft of the IEP before the meeting and sit down for each section because the placement program should be in the very last part after everything else is determined and on balance, if you're very happy with the placement program that's great to know that that's going to end up where you want it to be. But I think you should feel more than comfortable saying you want to go through the entire IEP from the beginning to the end go through the present levels and the needs. Go through the goals and services and sit down as a team and talk it through. You're that if they don't know that gate but maybe you should ‑‑ two more dates and get them locked in because this always happens at the end of the year and everyone is so busy, I would put your intentions up front so they know where you're coming from because if your child is turning 3, you might be talking to these people for a long time. At least you can set that relationship up so they where you're coming from fast till payings is a great process.

>> Yeah, it's great.

>> Yeah, it helps everyone to stave op track and gives the neutral person that makes sure sha you good through the whole process. So, if you go have facilitation ability wherever you live, it is a really good idea.

>> And if you were to request a facilitator, out of the gate, and then I think there's any issue with doing that. You don't need to have a bad meeting to have a facilitated meeting. You may have to say I'm really interested in facilitating so they understand you're not like preemptively kind of put putting someone else in there. I think it's incredible.

>> It takes the pressure off the district people and they can be present.

>> Meeting manager.

>> Yeah, it's nice. And it usually isn't seen as some kind of a ‑‑ you know, parent who is going to have a problem. Just a parent who wants to make sure that the process is followed and they understand everything that's going on. No, no. It's not part of that. You live in Colorado. Thank you, thank you. If you have any more questions, we'll be around.