

***Advocacy Every Day***

***Parents of Deaf and  
Hard of Hearing  
Children***

*Presented by*

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# ***Who We Are***

We are both parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. We are attorneys and were co-workers and close friends before we had our children.

# ***Parents Of Deaf Or Hard Of Hearing Children Continuously Advocate***

## PRESENTATION GOALS

- Develop and strengthen parent advocacy skills
- Review Parental Roles in Early Intervention, CPSE and CSE processes
- Support positive communication and relationships

# Definition of *advocacy*

: the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal

: the act or process of advocating something

**We parents continuously advocate for our children. We also continuously educate people about our children. We do this at home, in our families, in our communities and at the schools our children attend. We do this in social situations, at the doctor, at sports and extracurricular activities.**

**We teach our children to do the same for themselves. As they grow roles and needs change.**

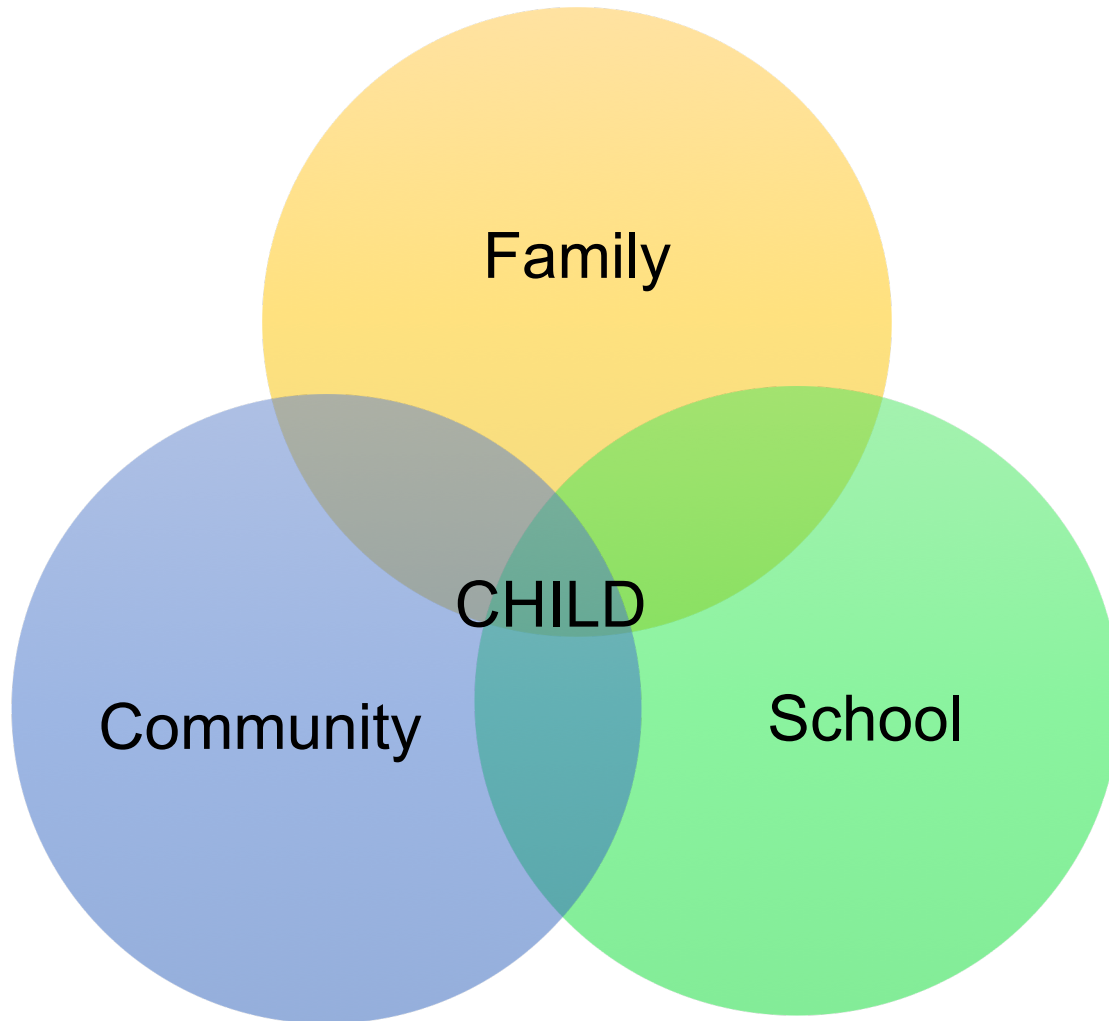
# ***You Know Your Child Best***

Parents are the best advocates and the best experts for their own children

Come to the table prepared and ready to fully participate

The law recognizes your family's input and preferences.

# Who is on your child's team?



# ***Knowledge And Skills Are The Keys To Building Cohesive Teams And Resolving Conflict***

Be prepared to talk about your child's needs from your family's perspective and understand that there may be conflict about how to effectively address those needs.



# ***ACCESS IS CENTRAL***

As parents we have to ensure that our children have access to the most level playing field possible.

The goal of access is full participation.

- modes of communication
- education
- technology
- identity
- community roles
- relationships
- social skills
- IEPs and 504 plans and public accommodations

# ***EDUCATION***

Most conflict centers on the development of the IEP.

A natural imbalance of power exists that can result in parents feeling undervalued in the IEP process.

You are a full member of the team and your child best advocate using you skills and knowledge.

Parents have a specific “role and responsibility” in their child’s education, and rights to participate fully as a member of their child’s IEP team. From the time of identification to their child’s graduation from high school, parents are encouraged to be actively engaged in developing, facilitating, and monitoring the IEP and its process. IDEA in spirit and letter supports this, and “parental involvement is an essential component in deaf child’s academic success.”

Marschark, 2007





Parents have to ensure their child's needs are met and at the same time build good partnerships.

# ***You Are Your Child's Best Advocate***

- Parents cannot rely solely on the recommendations of their school district. Even the best school districts with the best intentions may have difficulty with Deaf/Hard of Hearing programming.
  - Lack of expertise or experience with Deaf/Hard of hearing students
  - Limited programming options
  - Limitations in interpreter support
  - Challenges in hiring and retaining qualified staff

# ***Services Are Provided In School In Different Ways***

- IDEA and State Regulations
- Early Intervention, CPSE, CSE
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- ADA

# ***Individualized Education Programs***

IEP forms and requirements vary from state to state.

Parents should be familiar with their state's forms and requirements.

Review the sample IEP form of your state and understand the purpose and requirements of each section.

Read the Procedural Safeguards notice provided by your District. It sets out your child's rights and your rights.

# ***PREPARE***

- Well before the meeting think about what assessments may be needed and ask school district to provide
- Parents are full and equal members of the team
- Have an opinion and be informed
- Be prepared to tell your child's story each year
- Review the current IEP and think about what the services really look like
- Discuss with your child
- Ask for a draft of IEP in advance of meeting
- Communicate issues you would like to discuss
- Share any private assessments you want the team to consider
- Each year is a new year



# ***MAKE AN OUTLINE***

- Come prepared with your own ideas and have an open mind about the district's ideas.
- Communication needs
- Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Speech Language Pathologist
- Technology
- Accommodations
- Staff In-service/Training/Education
- Other services



# ***At The Meeting***

- Bring any support you have and inform the school district
- Paint a picture of your child
- Help draft goals
- Discuss your child's present levels
- Identify your child's strengths and needs
- Set goals for your child based on grade level expectations
- Devise a plan to support your child in reaching those goals
- Identify how progress will be monitored and shared
- IEP meetings have no time limit

# Benefits of Resolving Conflicts With Informal Issue Resolution

The parties, who know the student, control the outcome.

It bolsters relationships.

It respects that a child is at the heart of every disagreement.

There is a higher level of satisfaction, resulting in more durable agreements.

Less costly than more formal options. Cost is measured on the human and financial dimensions.





Disagreement and conflict can be the catalyst of change.

Understand the difference between positions (WHAT) and interests (WHY). Agreement lies in finding the interests behind the positions.

# ***Goal Is Consensus Building Not Positional Bargaining***

Consensus is the idea that everyone can support a plan. Consensus is not a unanimous vote, a majority vote, or vote of any kind. It is not 100% satisfaction.

A position is what a person wants or demands.

It is the predetermined solution that one believes will best solve the problem from their perspective at the moment.

A position is just one possible option for satisfying underlying interests.

## ***BUILDING CONSENSUS***

- Consensus is especially critical in IEP teams in order to reduce conflict and improve outcomes for students with disabilities.
- Consensus building is a process that strengthens IEP teams.
- Consensus builds good will, not disputes.
- Compromise.
- Mutual satisfaction.
- Agree to an outcome without getting all demands met.

# ***Consensus Requires***

- Time

- Active participation by all

- Good listening and communication skills on all sides

- Trust in the team process

- Open-mindedness

- Creative thinking

# Questions?

