

Family Checklist for Effective School Meetings

Becoming Organized

Keep a file system of all information, phone calls, meetings and appointments.

- Use a **notebook**. Record all meetings, phone calls, and conversations.
- File your child's documents: school reports, psychological assessments, and other relevant reports. Many people find using a binder with dividers helpful.
- File school work samples for reference and sharing with new educators.



Parent-Teacher Meetings

- Sit down with your child. Go over their work/tests, and ask them if they have any concerns or difficulties. In some situations, you may need to observe and/or tune into your child in the best way that he/she communicates. Discuss and/or observe their social situations so you can understand that perspective as well.
- Document strategies that you have noticed to be effective. Be prepared to share them.
- Stay positive and focus on the student. Listen to the teacher's concerns, suggestions, and questions. Make suggestions as well.
- At the end of a meeting summarize who is doing what and when - including yourself. Take notes for home including actions to be done as part of team. Request a follow-up meeting.
- If there is a difficult situation that does not improve, involve others who know your child as needed. This could be specialists, support professionals, and others. Ask for another meeting so you can be supportive of both the classroom teacher and your child.
- Maintain ongoing communication with the teacher to monitor your child's progress.

Virtual Meetings

- Prior to your meeting, send a list of agenda items or themes you would like to address to the principal or contact who is leading the meeting.
- If you are planning to have a friend or family member attend the meeting for support and/or to take notes, let the school know ahead. Offer to give their email to the school/person coordinating the meeting so they can send the link for the meeting. Or ask if they would like you to forward the link.
- Check your technology (sound, camera, quality) before the meeting begins.
- Choose a quiet place away from everyone if your child/student is not involved in the meeting. That way they won't feel uncomfortable hearing people talking about them.
- Join the meeting a few minutes ahead of time so you don't miss anything.
- Ask for the school's meeting notes with the actions that everyone had, including the family.

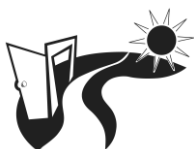


School Planning Meetings (IPRC, IEP or Transition Meetings)

- We recommend that you always bring someone with you to important meetings. You could bring your spouse, a neighbour/friend and/or a support person. Ask someone to take notes for you.
- Always let the school know in advance that you are planning to have someone/others come with you to the meeting and who they are.
- Get to the meeting early. Sit where you can be best supported. Sit between your spouse and your friend/note taker, between other support people, next to your spouse, etc.
- Bring any information that you feel is important, i.e. reports, background documents, information about what your child is doing at home.
- Start the meeting by sharing a picture of your child.
- You may also decide to share a **one-page profile** describing your child, or the **vision** for your child's future, or, you may have a **transition booklet**.
- Stick to a few main issues and work through them so everyone will feel hopeful about success, rather than going through a long list of concerns.
- Be flexible and open to considering new ideas.
- Stay on track, avoid making it personal, and stay positive.
- Ask questions. Ask people to slow down, repeat, and clarify if necessary.
- If you are taken aback or surprised by something that comes up in the meeting, **let people know that you will need more time** to think things through before making a decision. Take the time you need whether it is overnight or a few days. **You can always ask for a second meeting.**
- At the end of the meeting have someone or yourself summarize the action items; who is doing what and when, including yourself.
- Thank everyone for their time.
- Follow up on the action items within a reasonable amount of time.



Developed for families by



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