

How can you use the Supreme Court's landmark *Andrew F.* decision to improve your child's IEP? Use this worksheet to identify issues you're concerned about and to find ways to talk about them using *Andrew F.* language.

Your concern: The IEP doesn't seem to have a plan to help your child reach grade level.

1

Talking Point

The services and supports in the IEP must help your child meet grade-level standards.

List the areas where your child is below grade level:

Why do you believe the IEP won't help your child reach grade level in this area?

Suggested script: "I understand that the IEP is supposed to help my child achieve grade-level standards. However, my child is behind in _____, and it doesn't seem like the IEP has a plan to help my child catch up. How can we work as an IEP team to help my child achieve at grade level and advance to the next grade?"

Your concern: The IEP seems to offer the same programs or services that didn't help your child make progress in the past.

2

Talking Point

The IEP must be "reasonably calculated" to help your child make progress (and school staff must truly believe it will do so).

List the areas where your child hasn't made progress:

Have the services or program in each area changed?

Suggested script: "I know that the IEP needs to be 'reasonably calculated' to help my child make progress. Since my child has not made progress in _____, I feel it's time to look at how _____ strategy and/or service has worked. If it's not working well, it may be time to consider other options. Does the team feel we have enough information, or do we need to gather more evaluative data or bring in more expertise to help inform changes?"

3

Talking Point

The IEP must include behavioral services and supports that your child needs in order to learn.

List the areas where your child's behavior is getting in the way of learning:

What types of services or support do you think may help?

Suggested script: "I know that my child has the right to services and supports to help with behavior. However, the IEP doesn't address _____. When can we talk about including behavioral supports and services to help my child make progress in school?"

4

Talking Point

The school must have a compelling explanation for why the services in the IEP will help your child make progress.

List decisions the school hasn't fully explained:

What else do you want to know about the decision?

Suggested script: "I know I'm entitled to cogent and responsive explanations of why the school is making certain decisions. But I haven't gotten an answer about _____. Can you provide a fuller explanation of how this decision offers my child a free appropriate public education?"

Your concern:

The IEP wasn't developed using the appropriate expertise and input.

5

Talking Point

As a parent, you help decide whether the IEP has the input it needs to be appropriate for your child.

List parts of the IEP that need more input from experts:

What experts do you think should be consulted?

Suggested script: "I am aware that my child's IEP must have the expertise and input of the entire IEP team, as well as any other information that helps. When can we sit down and revisit all the information we have on hand, including outside evaluation results and notes from the private tutor?"

Your concern:

The IEP goals aren't ambitious enough for what your child can accomplish.

6

Talking Point

The IEP should be "ambitious" about your child's future and what can be accomplished.

List where you feel your child's IEP goals aren't ambitious enough:

What goals would you like to see?

Suggested script: "I know that my child's goals should be appropriately ambitious. Even if my child is behind in academics, the IEP goals should aim to help my child catch up. When can we look at present level of performance and put services and supports in place, so we can set goals that allow my child to meet the same standards as his peers?"

7

Talking Point

Your child must have the chance to meet “challenging” objectives.

List the areas where you feel your child isn't being challenged:

What ideas do you have to make the goals more challenging?

Suggested script: “I'm aware that my child's IEP must include goals that align to state academic standards. I also know that the instructional strategies should allow my child to meet challenging goals. Given my child's present level of performance, can you explain how these goals are challenging?”

8

Talking Point

It's not enough for the school to simply go through the motions and check boxes on the IEP.

List ways in which it seemed the school was simply “checking the boxes”:

What would you like to discuss and collaborate with the team on?

Suggested script: “I'm concerned that the IEP team is just going through the motions, and that this IEP isn't designed for my child's unique needs. When can we review the IEP through the lens of my child's specific needs and make sure we're doing more than running through a checklist?”