

*Podcast #5:*

*Before School Closes, Achieve 3 Extraordinary  
Results With Your Child's IEP Team (Part 1)  
Transcript*

1. Talk With Each IEP Member.
2. Get Feedback From Each Member On One Thing That Worked? And What Area They Didn't See Significant Improvement In As He/She Initially Hoped For? And What Can Be Done To Improve These Areas.
3. Get Their Feedback Of What Must Be Worked On In Terms Of Your Child's Development (Life Skills) For Next School Year.

**1. TALK/MEET/EMAIL WITH EACH IEP MEMBER**

Find the most convenient way for you to reach out to the members. If email is easier to get the feedback from each and then have a group discussion to address item#3, go for it. If you rather start a group discussion from the beginning via email, then choose this method. If you're able to meet each or all during lunch hour, that'll work too. But do it today! Reach out to each. Ask your child's teacher if you don't have any of the service providers' contact details.

For me, my child's team consisted of the behavioral therapist, inclusion specialist, classroom teacher (SDC) , assistive technologist, computer teacher (elective), speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, resource teacher and adaptive PE teacher. I have a larger IEP team because my child's challenges are a bit more.

Believe me, it was tempting to just go into summer not have this conversation, but then I guess that's not me. I really wanted to do justice for my child, especially knowing that she has trouble communicating and I have to continue to be her best advocate.

***2. GET FEEDBACK ON ONE THING THAT WORKED OR IMPROVED FOR YOUR CHILD THIS YEAR AS A RESULT OF HIS/HER EFFORT***

Generally, when we meet or discuss our child's educational progress with our IEP team, we typically focus on establishing or reviewing IEP goals or address concerns and issues impacting our child's educational needs.

However, this time around with school nearing to a close, I decided to put all my energy in accomplishing just one thing, the most important thing that will give me a glimpse into where the biggest improvement occurred. Where the highest impact occurred for my child.

I didn't want the session to focus on IEP goals met or unmet, although it was tempting to cover that area, I didn't. For one, I had already called for an IEP in the previous month to discuss these aspects. Also, by now having closely reviewing the quarterly reports, talking to her teacher regularly and teaching her at home as often as I could, I had a good sense and understanding of my child's current strengths and weaknesses.

Now, to do the one thing is difficult, I agree with you! because we have several other "IEP items" interfering our thinking., misguiding our actions and sidetracking our focus during such meetings. But staying focused with one thing made all the difference and keeping Ross Garber's quote in mind helps.

He says, “ **There can only be one most important thing. Many things may be important, but only one can be the most important**”. This I find saying to myself at every interaction I have with my IEP team members.

How did I conduct the meeting? Well, at the start of the meeting, I set the agenda. I was very clear and stated that I wanted this meeting to be different than other IEP sessions. This session was going to be

about collaboration and creativity. I emphasized to all that I fully recognize that in general, some ideas work and some ideas don't work for whatever reasons, but I would like to get their current feedback. This approach really put everyone at ease and saw their enthusiasm to share their creative approaches. Soon, I started to hear, “How about...”, “Why not...” “What if...”, “Let's do...” cross collaboration taking place.... what started out as linear progression in creative thought process was now geometrical!

**Now to the second part of item #2. What area did each not see significant improvement in as he/she initially hoped for? And what can be done to improve these areas.** I jotted down their responses with not getting into why not but what can we as her team do to help her achieve these areas that the team felt were important. Trust me, hearing this was tough but I just quietly listened.

Their individual feedback was so valuable and essential. To get the team to go into a review mode and get them to start to introspect on the one thing that really worked led to hearing more details from each that I wouldn't have heard if it wasn't for requesting their feedback. And getting the individual opinions and thoughts was a stepping stone to Item #3.

*3. GET FEEDBACK OF WHAT MUST BE WORKED  
ON IN TERMS OF YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT  
(Life Skills) FOR NEXT SCHOOL YEAR*

Finally, I wanted to know from each member what aspects of my child's development (life skills) needed to be strengthened so it can permeate into her nonacademic environments as well.

The team overall theme was that with opportunities for greater problem solving, independence, communication and social skills would allow her to thrive and excel. This was truly the most creative aspect of the meeting.

I'll get the actual details of the meeting in podcast #6.

## *Conclusion*

*Has it been a smooth year, no but reminding myself to drop in occasionally in the classroom, talking to aids and teachers after school sometimes, being accountable and holding others accountable have proven to be effective in navigating this school year.*

*And of course having a wonderful teacher who respects and encourages her students, challenges them to do their best and communicates and is open to parent feedback makes all the difference!*

*SO,*

- Take Time to Get Feedback, it's never too late.*
- Don't be Afraid to Ask What Worked/Didn't Work.*
- Plan Ahead Now.*

*THANK YOUR IEP MEMBERS!*  
*Have a wonderful Summer, Enjoy your time with your child!*