



## VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

### Common Education Challenges

Families living with autism spectrum disorder often look for tips on how to handle the many different challenges that may arise. “Real life tips for kids with autism” is a series of practical videos and resources presented by the experts at Children’s Specialized Hospital.

Within the educational process parents might kind of encounter some struggles along the way. They might want more services for their child, they might want different services for their child, whether we are talking about early intervention or once they turn three and they’re within the school system. So, at the early intervention level ,I can suggest reaching out to your service coordinator, telling them what your concerns are, telling them if there’s any outside professionals giving you recommendations of what needs to change or what needs to be different to get everyone on the same page and working together and even communicating with each other to kind of make a plan that best fits the needs of your child.

Once your child’s within the school system you’re going to get assigned a case manager and if there’s any questions or concerns or if you want to see things done differently at any point, you can reach out to your case manager. You can even call a meeting to get everyone around the table at the same time to kind of discuss what your concerns are, what they’re seeing in the classroom, to go from there because you’re part of that team. When your child enters the school system, and even in early intervention, you’re a valid member of that team. You shouldn’t ever feel funny about saying. “Hey wait I see this going on what are you guys seeing in your environment?”

So within this process, you as parents might be getting recommendations from your outside therapist, doctors, pediatricians on what your child needs and a big challenge is bringing that to the table to the school system and having them see, okay here’s the recommendations from all these outside people, they’re going to do their own evaluations and have their own recommendations and then you got to kind of meet somewhere in the middle.

If you disagree with your school and you haven’t reached middle ground from what your outside therapist say and what your opinion is and what the school wants, then basically at that point you need to find out what your rights are as parents and the process you need to go through to file a complaint or go through due process or mediation. When you’re going through the process with the school, when you’re creating your IEP, or your individualized education plan, they should have given you a copy of what your rights are and what you need to do to go to the next step if you disagree.

Whether you're in agreement with the school or in disagreement with the school, parents really need to make sure that all their communication is documented. The best way to do that is through email because everything is time and date stamped through email. If you are sending a written letter or written document, just make sure that you get a return receipt or if you're hand delivering it, make sure someone signs off "this is what I got on this date" and save all that. Creating a binder or big envelope for all that information is a really great way because some of this stuff, some of the requests, some of the things you might be asking for are going to have maybe dates attached to it so within twenty days you need to this or within thirty days you need to do that.

When you go to these meetings, note taking is a great way to show the entire team that you are making sure that you are getting down everything that is being said. You can even record the meeting. You just need to let, in most school districts, you need to let them know that you are going to record it, so they can bring their own recording device. So as long as you let them know prior to the meeting, that shouldn't be a problem. If you happen to have a phone call, and obviously you can't record the phone call, but if you happen to have a phone call with a professional, what you can do is then shoot them an email with kind of the main talking points of that phone call so that you have written documentation of what was said during that phone call.

If a school personnel, district, team, comes to you and says "You know what, we just don't do that here, that's not something that we can provide for your child." They can't really say that. It's not about what they can do it's about what that child needs and it's perfectly acceptable for you as a parent to say "Hey you know you might not do that right now because there might not be another child that needs that, but if this is what Johnny needs to be successful in this classroom or be successful in this school then we need to figure out how to get it for him."

An advocate can help parents during these team meetings, during these IEP meetings, to kind of push a little for the services that they want and they really know the law on top of it whereas a parent might not be confident in the law, might be new to the process so they are basically a second party really pushing and advocating for that specific child to get the services that they need to work with the school system, to make what they have within the system, work for their child. Autism Speaks, Children's Specialized Hospital, and a lot of other organizations can help families, when they are experiencing educational challenges, access a lot of these resources that they can use to help them along the way.



Through a partnership with Kohl's Cares, Children's Specialized Hospital is improving access to care for children with special health care needs.



[RWJBH.org/CSH](http://RWJBH.org/CSH)