

Advocacy Scripts for Educators in IEP Meetings:

Practical Language for Building Clarity and Confidence

Purpose & Overview

IEP meetings can feel overwhelming for families, and sometimes even for educators. Teachers often know what they *want* to say but struggle to find the right words in a high-stakes meeting. This worksheet provides **ready-to-use advocacy scripts, sentence frames, and strategies** that educators can use to communicate clearly, stay student-centered, and avoid conflict escalation during IEP meetings.

Why Scripts Matter

- **Consistency:** Helps staff use clear, strengths-based language.
 - **Confidence:** Supports educators who feel nervous in formal settings.
 - **Clarity:** Ensures parents understand complex information.
 - **Collaboration:** Encourages trust and reduces adversarial dynamics.
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Advocacy Scripts by Scenario

1. Sharing Student Strengths

- “One of [Student’s] biggest strengths is ____, and we see this shine when ____.”
- “We’ve noticed progress in ____, especially when provided with ____.”

2. Explaining Present Levels

- “Here’s what the data show about where [Student] is right now. With support, [Student] is able to ___, and without support, ___.”
- “This helps us know where to begin with goal setting.”

3. Introducing Goals

- “Based on the baseline data, we’re proposing a goal that focuses on ___ because it will have the biggest impact on [Student’s] access to learning.”
- “Here’s how we’ll measure progress so you can see growth over time.”

4. Addressing Parent Concerns

- “Thank you for sharing that concern. Let’s look together at how the data and supports we’re discussing address this need.”
- “Would you like us to note this priority in the Parent Concerns section of the IEP?”

5. Discussing Accommodations

- “This support doesn’t change the standard—it removes barriers so [Student] can demonstrate what they know.”
- “We’ve observed that [Student] works best when ___, so this accommodation ensures consistency across classes.”

6. When There’s Disagreement

- “I hear your perspective, and it’s important that it’s documented. Here’s what the data currently show...”
- “We may not fully agree right now, but here are the options we can explore together, including mediation if needed.”

7. Explaining Services

- “This service is designed to directly support [Student] in meeting the goal we just reviewed.”
- “Minutes are matched to the intensity of need we see in the data.”

8. Wrapping Up the Meeting

- “Before we close, let’s make sure we’ve captured all of your input. Is there anything else you’d like documented today?”

Advocacy Do’s and Don’ts

Do:

- Use strengths-based language.
- Reference data, not opinion.
- Invite parent and student input throughout.
- Clarify jargon with plain language.
- Document everything discussed.

Don’t:

- Minimize or dismiss concerns.
- Use legalese without explanation.
- Rush through complex sections.
- Assume silence = agreement.

Role-Play Practice Prompts (Staff Training)

- **Scenario A:** Parent requests more speech services. Practice explaining baseline data, proposed goals, and service minutes.
 - **Scenario B:** Parent questions a behavioral accommodation. Practice explaining its purpose in plain language.
 - **Scenario C:** Parent disagrees with placement. Practice acknowledging concerns and explaining procedural safeguards.
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Quick Reference Script Bank

- “What we’re proposing today connects directly to the data we reviewed in the Present Levels.”
 - “Here’s how this support will look in the classroom day-to-day.”
 - “This goal is ambitious, but achievable with the supports we’re putting in place.”
 - “We want to make sure your input is reflected—would you like me to read back what I’ve documented?”
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Action Starter: Try Tomorrow

- Choose one upcoming IEP meeting.
- Identify **one area where you often struggle to find the right words** (e.g., explaining data, responding to parent concerns).
- Practice 2–3 scripts from this worksheet in advance.
- Use them in the meeting and reflect afterward on how they impacted the discussion.