

My Child at School

A Champions Together Course for Parents

Rules and Regulations

Session **1**



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My Child at Home

A Champions Together Course for Parents

Rules and Regulations

Session **1**



NAME _____

Welcome to

My Child at School

A Champions Together Course for Parents

Session 1
School

My name is _____, and I am your group leader. We will meet for three sessions in the My Child at School course. In each session, you will receive a new manual that contains information and activities. I will guide our group through the activities.

You might think you could just read these lessons yourself instead of listening to me, but part of the value of the course will be learning together and participating in the activities and discussions in the manuals. I'll appreciate your support.

Each session lasts about 90 minutes. New information is presented in each session. In the next two sessions, time is devoted to discussion of the activities completed between sessions. At the conclusion of the third session, we will hold a graduation ceremony. Those who attend all three sessions will receive certificates.

My Child at School is a very practical, take-it-home-and-use-it course. Between sessions, you will complete activities. Your work at home is the most important part of this course.

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Getting Acquainted

Please write my name and telephone number in your manual. I want you to feel free to call me between sessions if you have questions.

Group Leader's Name: _____

Group Leader's Telephone Number. (_____)_____

EXERCISE



PARTNERS

To get to know each other better, I will assign each of us to a partner. If we have an odd number in the group, I will take two partners. Then we will talk with our partners for two minutes. At the end of that time, we will each introduce our partner to the group and tell the names of our partner's children. If we learn any other interesting information about our partner, we can tell that too.

Group Leader. Assign partners. Allow two minutes. Begin introductions.

Partner's name: _____

Names of partner's children: _____

TELL THE GROUP



I'll introduce my partner first and tell the names of my partner's children. Then my partner will introduce me. We will continue until everyone has been introduced.

APPLAUD



APPLAUD AFTER EACH INTRODUCTION.

EXERCISE



NAMES OF GROUP MEMBERS

Now write the first name of each group member below. Need help? Check the name tags. This list will help us remember everyone's name.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Rules and Regulations

Session 1
School

When children are at home, parents are their teachers. When children go to school, you entrust their education to a new group of individuals. By working together with your child's educational team, you create overlapping spheres of influence to ensure the brightest possible future for your child.

Children in special education are eligible for many services at school, in addition to their academic studies. Sometimes these children begin school at a younger age, and sometimes they attend school in the summer.

There are many rules and regulations that your school must follow when providing an education for your child. In this session you will learn about the Federal laws pertaining to your children's education. Your state may also have additional rules and regulations. You may want to check with your State Education Agency to see if there is a guide for parents of children with disabilities.

EXPECTATIONS

EXERCISE

In what ways do you expect your family to benefit from your participation in this course?

Share with the group how you expect your family to benefit from your participation in this course.



TELL THE
GROUP

DESCRIBE YOUR CHILD

EXERCISE

Write down five words that best describe your child.

Lesson 1: Rules and Regulations

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, is the federal law that guarantees that all children with disabilities will be provided a full educational opportunity. This law states that:

- ✧ School districts are required to provide an individually designed, appropriate educational program for every child with a disability, at no cost to their parents
- ✧ Parents of children with disabilities must participate in the planning and decision-making for their child's special education program.
- ✧ Children with disabilities should be educated with children who do not have disabilities.
- ✧ Parents can challenge the decisions of the school system.

1. School districts are required to provide an individually designed, appropriate educational program for every child with a disability, at no cost to their parents.

This is the very core of your child's right to special education. The law requires that your local district provide an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for your child, no matter what her disability may be. Perhaps your child's disability is very complicated or severe. Perhaps there are no other children in the district who have the same disability, or maybe they are many years older than your child. Perhaps there are no teachers in the district who are trained in the area of your child's disability. No matter what the challenges, your local school district is still responsible for providing an appropriate education for your child. The district may need to hire a special teacher, consultant or classroom aide, or pay to transport your child to a nearby district to receive the necessary services. This whole program must be provided to the child at no cost to the parents. The law refers to this as your child's right to a Free Appropriate Public Education, or FAPE.

2. Parents of children with disabilities must participate in the planning and decision-making for their child's special education program.

No one knows a child as well as the parents. Your participation in planning your child's education is vital to the success of your children. When IDEA was revised in 2004, the U.S. Congress recognized that parents are the most

important piece of the puzzle that makes up their child's education. That's why the law requires a partnership between parents and their child's school district. Your responsibility is to champion your child's best interests. We'll talk in detail about how to do that in the next two sessions.

3. Children with disabilities should be educated with children who do not have disabilities.

In the past, children with disabilities were usually separated from other children. IDEA requires that all children have equal opportunities for education. The law now mandates that all children with disabilities should be educated in the Least Restrictive Environment, or LRE. This means that your child must receive his education with children who do not have disabilities, unless the nature and severity of his disability makes it impossible for his needs to be met. Your child's education team makes this decision — and the law requires that you are a part of this team.

4. Parents can challenge the decisions of the school system.

Sometimes, parents and the school district do not agree about the necessary services or appropriate program for a child. In such cases, the parents should first try to resolve complaints with the director of special education or the superintendent. If matters are not resolved to their satisfaction, the IDEA provides parents with the right to challenge decisions with which they disagree. That challenge will take one of three forms:

- × **Complaint — If parents believe that the school district has not followed the law, or that one of their child's educational rights has been violated, they can file a letter of complaint with the State Education Agency (SEA). The SEA will investigate the complaint and make a decision about findings and any necessary action that needs to be taken.**

- × **Mediation — If parents disagree with how appropriate their child's education program or services are, they may request mediation. This process involves having a trained mediator meet with both the parents and the school district to hear concerns and issues, and helping them find ways to resolve the disagreement.**

- × **Due Process — A due process hearing is a legal process to help settle disagreements between parents and the school district. The process may include lawyers and witnesses.**

EXERCISE



EXERCISE

When you have a concern about your child, it is best to talk first with the person closest to your child. If your concerns are not resolved, you would then approach the next closest person. Write the names below of the people you would contact concerning your child's education.

Teacher:

Principal:

Special Education Director (if in district):

Superintendent:

Special Education Director (if outside the district):

State Education Agency:

EXERCISE



SPECIAL EDUCATION CONCERNS

Sometimes the thought of what special education involves and what it means for your children can feel overwhelming. As a group, let's come up with at least 15 words that describe what we think of when we think of children in special education, or of special education programs.

LIST OF 15 WORDS TO DESCRIBE SPECIAL EDUCATION

Let's go back to the list you wrote at the beginning of today's session – the five words you wrote to describe your child. Share the words on your list with the others. What are some of the similarities and differences between that list and the list we just created?



TELL THE
GROUP

Lesson 2: Parent Training and Information Centers

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has created over 100 Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs) for parents of children with disabilities. OSEP also created six regional Parent Technical Assistance Centers to help the PTIs.

The Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers has a website with resources to help parents including books, booklets, and handouts. Many of these are available in several languages. Some of these handouts are provided for you today, such as:

- × Evaluation
- × IEP Goals
- × Informed Parent Consent
- × Related Services
- × School Accommodations
- × Understanding the IEP Process

These handouts will help you learn many Special Education terms. More handouts can be view at www.taalliance.org.

A child must have one of the following conditions listed below in order to be eligible for special education services:

- × Autism
- × Deaf-Blindness
- × Deafness
- × Emotional Disturbance
- × Hearing Impairment
- × Mental Retardation
- × Multiple Disabilities
- × Orthopedic Impairment
- × Other Health Impairment
- × Specific Learning Disability
- × Speech or Language Impairment
- × Traumatic Brain Injury
- × **Visual Impairment**

BECOME FAMILIAR WITH TERMS

Become familiar with Special Education terms. Take a few minutes to look through the handouts from the Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers. Mark or highlight any of the topics that are of special interest to you.

Share with the others the topics(s) that you think are of most interest to you and why.



EXERCISE

TELL THE
GROUP

START A FILE OF INFORMATION ABOUT SPECIAL EDUCATION. INCLUDE THE HANDOUTS. IDENTIFY YOUR LOCAL PARENT TRAINING AND INFORMATION CENTER. 

TAKING IT
HOME

Key Points

Let's review the key points from this session:

- × The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, is the federal law that guarantees that all children with disabilities will be provided a full educational opportunity.
- × Parents of children with disabilities must participate in the planning and decision-making for their child's special education program.
- × School districts are required to provide an individually designed, appropriate educational program for every child with a disability, at no cost to their parents.
- × The U.S. Department of Education has created Parent Training and Information Centers for parents of children with disabilities.

Taking It Home

You have learned about the rules and regulations concerning Special Education. You have learned about special services schools must provide to Special Education students. You have received handouts from the Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Center. Listed below are your activities for the week.

As I read each activity, write your initials as a commitment to your family and the parent group to complete the task before the next session.

ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK

Parent's Initials:

- _____ 1. I will start a file of information about special education. I will concentrate on areas that would benefit my child and his or her specific needs.
- _____ 2. I will identify my local Parent Training and Information Center.
- _____ 3. I will write down three questions or comments about the resources from the Parent Center handouts and discuss them with the parent group next week.

Closing the Session

Take home this manual to remind yourself of your activities for the week. You have my name and telephone number so you can call me during the week if you have questions. I will collect the pencils so we will have them at the next session.

Group Leader: Collect pencils.

The next page in this manual is a tear-out page. You can place the tear-out page in a prominent place in our home (like on the refrigerator). You can check each activity as you complete it.

The lessons you have learned in this session are just the beginning of My Child at School. In the next two sessions, you will continue to build on what you have learned. We will also take time to talk about your activities.

APPLAUD



APPLAUD FOR A GREAT FIRST SESSION! COME ON, A BIG HEARTY ROUND OF APPLAUSE.

Activities for the Week

ACTIVITIES FOR WEEK #1

Check (✓) when completed

- _____ 1. I will start a file of information about special education. I will concentrate on areas that would benefit my child and his or her specific needs.
- _____ 2. I will identify my local Parent Training and Information Center.
- _____ 3. I will write down three questions or comments about the resources from the Parent Center handouts and discuss them with the parent group next week.



Academic Development Institute

Founded in 1984

The Academic Development Institute (ADI) works with families, schools, and communities so that all children may become self-directed learners, avid readers, and responsible citizens, respecting themselves and those around them. ADI's vision is of an American landscape filled with distinct school communities reflecting the hopes and dreams of the people intimately attached to them. To this image of the school as a community, ADI is devoted. When the school functions as a community, its constituents (students, parents, teachers, staff) associate with one another and share common values about the education of children. At the root, members of the school community assume responsibility for one another. Those children become our children, and parents are not external agents, but full partners in the education of their children and of each other's children. Teachers are not isolated practitioners of pedagogy, but professionals integrated into the web of community and buoyed by common purpose.



Academic Development Institute

121 N. Kickapoo Street

Lincoln, IL 62656

(217) 732-6462

(217) 732-3696 (fax)

www.adi.org

