

Getting Organized for Your Child:

Here are some helpful tips and suggestions on collecting and organizing information about your child, their learning needs and all school-based records and documentation.

• Always Communicate in Writing

It is very important to keep detailed accounts of all school-based correspondence, communications and requests. By keeping organized and being consistent with your documentation, you can effectively and efficiently stay on top of your child's educational progress and hopefully avoid any miscommunications with school staff. If a conversation with staff occurs in the hallway, school yard or on the phone, be sure to follow up with an email recapping that discussion so that you have a written record.

• Keep an Advocacy Binder or Notebook

Collecting and organizing your child's information can be as easy as purchasing a three-ring binder and regularly adding documents in chronological order. Or you might consider creating sections to further categorize the information. Be sure to add a smiling photo of your child to the cover!

Be sure to include:

- Report Cards
- State Assessments
- School Transcripts
- IEP/504/Other Educational Plans
- All Progress Reports
- Evaluation Reports
- Samples of Homework Assignments
- Samples of Class Work
- Test/Quizzes
- Letters from School
- Emails from School Staff
- Records of Phone or In Person Conversations

• Organize Your Resource Information

Invest time in learning all you can about your child's learning disability and search out organizations that can be helpful along your journey. Seek out resources to help you understand what contributes to learning. Subscribe to a newspaper/magazine on the subject of education in order to keep abreast of current research. Learn about the special education laws both at the federal and state levels.

• Observe and Record

Keep a log or notepad available to jot down your thoughts during homework time, study periods or reading time with your child. Document your daily observations of your child at home and of the school observations given to you by the teacher. Ask your child to share their thoughts and feelings about school and their learning needs. All of these types of observations are important contributions to team decision making.

