

An Extraordinary School Year

Tips for Starting the Year off Right!

1-2 WEEKS BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS

- Create or update your “[All About Me](#)” document (or something similar describing your child).
- Practice the school routine with your child (Get up on time, get ready, etc.). Social stories can be very helpful.
- Find and review your child’s IEP (If you can’t find it, email the school and ask them to email you a copy.).
- Verify that the “student strengths” and “parent concerns” sections are still accurate.
- Become an expert on your child’s IEP — know what supports/services your child is supposed to receive when school starts
- Familiarize yourself with your child’s rights
- Review the rights booklet provided to you by your school district.
- Attend or watch a rights workshop (you can find STEP’s basic rights videos on YouTube at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/user/TNStep>).

1 WEEK BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS

- If you have questions about anything in your child’s IEP (like who will serve as his/her para, or other matters you may need to know about before school starts), reach out to the Principal or special education coordinator at your child’s school.
- Attend any and all Back to School nights or other events that would allow you and your child to meet your child’s teacher.

1ST WEEK OF SCHOOL

- Meet your child’s teacher, paraprofessional (if they have one), principal, etc., if you haven’t already done so.
- Distribute your “All About Me” document to team and any relevant staff.
- Establish a school-to-home communication protocol with your child’s teacher, unless one has already been established.
- Sign up to volunteer in your child’s classroom or in the school, if your schedule permits. The more you can be in the class, the better.



1ST 9 WEEKS

- You may want to observe your child in school (if you are told that you aren’t allowed to observe, ask for a copy of the written policy precluding observations).
- Ensure that your communication system with the school is working.
- Offer DSAMT’s Down Syndrome Specialist training to your school.
- Schedule an IEP meeting, if necessary
- If you have ANY issues/concerns, ask for an IEP meeting
- Even if you don’t have specific issues, having an IEP meeting early in the school year is a good way to ensure that everyone is on the same page and that everything is working well for your child.
- You have a right to request an IEP meeting at any time, and the school is required to schedule a meeting within 10 days of your written request for a meeting.
- If the school is creating a new draft for the meeting, they must provide you with a copy of the draft at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

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