

1. Be sure you know how to access your New York City Schools (NYCSA) Account.
2. Save every single correspondence sent to you by NYC Public Schools (formerly NYC Department of Education, NYC DOE, or simply the DOE).
3. Document every conversation you have with people at your child's school, the district office, or any other administrative entity. Include the person's name, contact information (email and / or phone number), position, and a brief description of what was discussed. Document these conversations in writing via a brief email following each important conversation.
4. Learn to effectively use email to communicate with your child's school, including teachers, administrators, and service providers.
5. Build positive relationships with your child's school personnel and staff, including "thank you" notes when you are especially appreciative. Remember that people who feel appreciated are more likely to go the extra mile for you and your child.
6. Keep a copy of EVERY email/letter you send; keep an organized filing system. Explore electronic organization systems.
7. Send letters of importance via email and/or certified mail, return receipt, or via regular mail to ensure no excuses. Be sure to place your return address in the top left-hand corner of the envelope. When sending via email, ensure that the email does not bounce back. You should also check your junk mail and / or your spam folder.
8. Always copy someone else on your emails. If you write to your child's school principal, copy the superintendent's office. Address your emails always one step up the chain of command.
9. Always do your utmost to attend IEP meetings where changes are being made to your child's program. Try to attend with a friend, partner, family member, or if you anticipate a controversial meeting, an advocate. You can also request a parent member in advance. Remember: the IEP meeting happens at your convenience in terms of date, time, and whether in-person or virtual.
10. After any IEP meeting, write an email confirming what was said and agreed upon by all members of the IEP team present at the meeting and copy the school principal.
11. If your child is old enough, let them come to the IEP meetings. If not, bring pictures and make sure team members refer to your child by name, for example, "Joey needs speech therapy," not "Your child needs speech therapy." At age 14 and after, your child will be invited to the IEP meeting to discuss transition planning and services.
12. Be aware of your dispute resolution options. Remember that you only have to agree to the initial IEP. After that, if you and the school disagree, you must request one of the dispute resolution options (mediation, due process/Impartial hearing, or state complaint) to stop the school from moving forward with their proposals.

Parent Training and Information Center (PTICs), such as [Sinergia's Metropolitan Parent Center](#), exist in every state across the United States. They are funded by the US Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs ([OSEP](#)) to work and support families of children with all disabilities from birth to 26 years of age; help families participate in their child's education and development; and partnering with professionals to improve their outcomes. To find your parent center that applies to your place of residency within the US and its territories, you can visit: <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/>

*This information is intended to be educational and is not legal advice. While Sinergia and the Metropolitan Parent Center try to ensure that all resources and links on this site are up to date, we cannot be responsible for the content of other sites. Sinergia and the Metropolitan Parent Center assume no liability for the consequences of using the information herein to advocate for your child or other children.*