

Parent Concerns Letter Template

Parent Concerns Letter

When I first started attending IEP meetings, the caseworker would ask me for my parent concerns about a week before the meeting. I'd usually think about it for a short time and give a two or three sentence paragraph. I now realize how much I missed out on by taking that approach. The parent concerns letter is an opportunity for you to be the expert on your student, to prioritize all of your concerns as well as long and short term goals. Is the goal for your student to go on to college, to gain employment or to live independently? What do they need now to make those goals achievable in the future? If they have a lot of needs, which ones do you think should be prioritized now and which ones can wait?

An IEP is needs driven, not diagnosis driven. Every support and service has to have an identified need to be put into place. This is also a place to put concerns that are frequently ignored by the team in case you need to go to mediation or due process. It can also be helpful to discuss strategies tried at home, as well as behavioral and medical concerns. I would also include any areas of need not identified as well as any data you may have to support what you are asking for.

I submit my parent concerns letter at least two weeks prior to the initial or annual IEP meeting. That gives the team time to think about our concerns and draft appropriate goals, if necessary. I have found that my letters give the team members a place to start when drafting goals which makes their job somewhat easier. I also feel heard and included when they don't just add my concerns to the IEP, but actually incorporate elements of them into the present levels, goals and supplementary aids and services. I also find that it decreases "surprises" at the IEP table and leads to a more collaborative meeting.

Here is a sample template that you may adapt to meet the needs of your student.

Date

RE: Student's Name

Dear [Teacher/Caseworker],

I am looking forward to our upcoming IEP meeting on [date]. Here are the parent concerns I wish to discuss with the team regarding my student, [name]. I am sending it to you in electronic format so that you can copy and paste it into the *Parent Concerns* portion of the IEP in its entirety. I will also send in a signed hard copy of this letter for my student's files.

[Introduction: Start with the positives like accomplishments your child has had recently. Give specific examples]



MI
Student
Advocacy
Services

We have seen tremendous growth in our son, Johnny, this year. In addition to learning all of his numbers, letters and colors, he can also identify all of the pre-primer sight words. He has had less behavioral issues and has even made a friend in his general education class.

[School-based contributions to the improvement, if applicable. Speak about specific teachers or support staff methods and describe how this methods, activities, etc. carryover at home]

Mrs. Smith's social skills group has made a huge impact on Johnny's ability to communicate with his peers. The structure and consistency have allowed him to develop confidence and relate to others in his class. He also had a conversation with another child in his occupational therapy office recently where he used the techniques Mrs. Smith had taught him.

[Areas of concern: identify problems or weaknesses that you think need extra work. I like to break it out into areas of service that are applicable to my child: Reading, Written Language, Math, Behavior/Social, Study Skills, Life Skills, Speech, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Vision, Hearing, Other and describe each. I also add any new medical concerns, a ESY and if I have any concerns about eligibility category. Keep the focus on the student and present specific data, rather than feelings and emotions].

Reading

In the previous IEP, we had a goal that Johnny would read at Fountas and Pinnell reading level B. He is currently reading at a level A, while grade level is level D. I believe that additional interventions may be necessary to increase his proficiency.

Written Language

As we've discussed in the past, I am concerned that Johnny's lack of progress in written language is primarily due to his lack of fine motor skills. In his last OT evaluation dated 1/1/20, it was noted that he could not properly grip a pencil which is most definitely hindering his ability to fully participate in the curriculum. We should evaluate his current OT service levels and determine whether assistive technology would be warranted.

Math

Behavior/Social

Study Skills

Life Skills

Speech

Occupational Therapy

Physical Therapy

Vision

Other

Medical Concerns

ESY

[Any additional recommendations not addressed above: Again, be specific]

Thank you for your time and commitment,

[Parents]