

Parent Concerns Letter Template

When I first started attending IEP meetings, the caseworker would ask what concerns I had for my child 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] and IEP Team,

I am/We are looking forward to our upcoming IEP meeting on [date]. Here are the parent concerns I/we wish to discuss with the team regarding my/our student, [name]. I am/We are 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.

Student Successes

Strengths

Future Planning



MI
Student
Advocacy
Services

[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. Not all of these will be applicable to every child].

Reading

Written Language

Math

Behavior/Social

Study Skills

Life Skills

Speech

Occupational Therapy

Physical Therapy

Vision

Assistive Technology

Accommodations and other suggestions that may help child learn

Medical Concerns

ESY

Other

[this can include any concerns in the past that were brought up but not addressed or that need to be brought up again for consideration]

Thank you for your time and commitment,

[Parent/s]