

What To Do When Your Documents Arrive

- ***Make a second set of copies to mail.*** Do not mark or write on these original documents from the school. If you need to prepare for a hearing, these are the documents we will use.
- ***Organize your working copies chronologically.*** File the oldest document on top, most recent document on the bottom.

Do not organize documents by category. Do not file IEPs, letters, or evaluations together. Instead, file documents in chronological order. This will give a clean picture of events.

Some documents have more than one page. For example, most IEPs have many pages. These pages may have different dates. Find the date of agreement (signature page) or execution that relates to the entire document or set of pages. Use this as the date for the document or set of pages.

- ***Examine each document carefully.*** Are there missing documents, correspondences, teacher notes? Take any documents you may have and integrate it with the district's copy, and cut off the upper right corner.
- ***Check everything. Take nothing for granted.*** We have fallen into the trap of reading documents with an uncritical eye when we assume that all evaluators are qualified and all dates are correct.

Regardless of whether your claim will be resolved informally by mediation or negotiation or in a formal due process hearing, you must understand that creating a paper trail of events, is the basis of your claim, prepare your documents carefully.

Having to plow through and understand hundreds or thousands of documents is time-consuming and exasperating. However, the payoff comes when we know the real facts and issues and how to prepare, when you can show evidence that supports your perception of how the facts apply to your issues.

Organization of documents can be completed for you for a fee.

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