MEETING PLANNER

Helpful tips for planning and organizing school meetings.
With thanks to Rick Moore and the Moore family.
LDABC Meeting Planner

If your child is experiencing academic problems at school, you or a teacher may suspect your child has a learning disability (LD) and needs additional support and accommodations, or an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

The LDABC Meeting Planner is designed to help you plan and organize meetings with teachers and educators, to shape and effectively navigate through available options, towards the common goal of helping your child to succeed in school and beyond.
What To Do — Part 1

Visit or volunteer in your child’s classroom
If your child is in elementary school, there are many opportunities to volunteer in the classroom. You will be able to observe conditions and routines, and see how your child responds to instruction. Classroom visits should be arranged in advance with the teacher.

Create a file of your records
Purchase a three-ring binder that is at least 2” wide, with dividers and clear plastic document sleeves (these are for documents you don’t want to hole punch).

Place all the paperwork into sections, beginning with kindergarten records. Separate each category with a divider and label appropriately with tabs.

Collect and compile the following:
- Report cards
- Recent samples of your child’s work
- Results of most recent evaluations
What To Do — Part 2

If your child has recently received an individual evaluation at school, be sure to request a copy of the report prior to the meeting. If you have had your child assessed privately, be sure to share the results with school personnel prior to the meeting.

Note: You have the right to inspect and review any education records relating to your child that are collected by the school district. You may request a copy of your child’s educational records at any time.

- Bring any communications with the teacher and/or school
- Share your impressions of your child’s progress
- Include details about academic performance as well as social and behavioural issues
- Refer to work samples and/or school reports that substantiate your comments and concerns
- Discuss your perspective on your child’s strengths and weaknesses, and relationships with family and friends
- Express concerns regarding your child’s lack of academic progress
- Give your input regarding strategies that are (or are not) working for your child
- Offer your input regarding other areas, such as behaviour plans, strategies and technology that may help support your child’s learning
- Keep electronic copies of documents and emails

Be sure to organize all of these records neatly and take them with you to the meeting.
At the Meeting — Part 1

Arrive early
Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the time your meeting is scheduled to begin. This will give you time to collect your thoughts and focus on the important things you want to say.

Remain calm
Meetings can be stressful and emotional, but advocating for your child is worth it. Above all, you must be:

- Cooperative
- Respectful and reasonable, yet persistent
- Positive

Bring a friend or family member for support
It’s helpful to have a family member or friend who knows your child accompany you for support, and if necessary, take detailed notes. As taking notes is difficult while participating in a discussion, your support member may be able to do so without distraction. Alternatively, you may plan to record the meeting to digital media or even tape — be sure sure that you make clear your intentions to record the meeting beforehand, and explain that you are doing so for your own records.

Request introductions
Ask everyone at the meeting to introduce themselves and explain their role. Have anyone you brought to the meeting introduce themselves and explain their relationship to your child.
At the Meeting — Part 2

Be sure to record this information in your meeting notes:

- The amount of progress you would like to see your child make in the coming year
- Any particular methodology you think would be well suited for your child
- How progress toward the goals will be measured and how frequently progress will be reported to you. Progress reports should be based on objective information, not just teacher opinion or observation.
Things to Remember

Each child is different. Therefore, each situation and Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be unique. Some teachers have a significant amount of experience working with LD children, others do not.

The Supreme Court of Canada ruling, *Moore v. British Columbia (Education)*, has entrenched in law your child’s right to a free and meaningful education. Ideally, your child’s teacher will be more than willing to do everything possible to ensure that takes place.

The British Columbia public school system has a human rights obligation to educate ALL children. **If you feel your child is not getting the SUPPORT he or she needs and is being harmed by the lack of services available, you have the right to file a complaint.**

1. Talk to the teacher to explain your concerns. If you feel you’re not being heard...
2. Talk to the school principal. If your issues remain unresolved...
3. File a complaint with the School District Assistant Superintendent, or...
4. File a complaint with the School District Superintendent

Talk to the Learning Disabilities Association of BC (LDABC), talk to other parents, and **BE EMPOWERED!**
References & Further Reading

Speaking Up!
BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC) has provided a free, comprehensive parent's guide for student advocacy, which covers in greater detail many of the topics in the LDABC Meeting Planner, and more. You can view and download this handbook online at:

http://www.bccpac.bc.ca/sites/default/files/resources/speaking_up_2008.pdf

The Moore Case: Summary of Key Points
The Council of Canadians with Disabilities has provided a summary of the Moore v. British Columbia (Education) landmark decision, stating "that students with disabilities are entitled to receive the accommodation measures they need to access and benefit from the service of public education." (CCD website.) You can view the summary online at:


Know Your Rights (Guardian Edition)
The LDABC South Vancouver Island chapter has created this handbook for parents and guardians of children with Learning Disabilities (LD) and/or Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). The handbook is available free of charge for download at the following link:

About LDABC

LDABC’s mandate is to be the Provincial network and voice for persons with Learning Disabilities (LD) and those who support them. Founded in 1973, the association provides information and resources to ensure the full participation of children, youth and adults with LD in today’s society.

It is estimated that one in ten people in BC — approximately 400,000 — from all age, ethnic, and social groups, are affected by learning disabilities.

Our mission is to advance the education, employment, social development, legal rights and general well being of people with learning disabilities in the province of British Columbia.

Currently there are chapters in Victoria, Vancouver, Surrey, Vernon, Williams Lake and Fraser Lake Northwest. Each chapter provides direct community programming.

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