

# Advocacy



# Parents as Advocates

thoughtful  
emotional

educated  
organized

effective  
communicators  
knowledgeable

# Effective Communication

Speaking

Listening

Writing



# Listening Attentively, Speaking Clearly

- Positive demeanor
  - Appropriate dress
  - Smile
  - Open body language
  - Good eye contact
- Well organized
- Listen for
  - Facts
  - Understanding
- Speak clearly in even voice
- Ask questions

# Writing Well

- Use everyday language
- State your purpose in the first paragraph
- Explain what action you would like to see
- Keep it brief
- Finish the letter politely
- Include contact information

# Getting Organized

- Paper Control
- Challenges of Relocation
- Create a System



# Shopping List

- Two three-ring notebooks
- Three hole punch
- Highlighter
- #10 envelope
- Stamps
- Dividers for binder
- Calendar

# Medical Advocacy

- Organize records
- Gather information
- Talk to other parents
- Join STOMP





# Organizing Medical Records

- Phone log
- Research on your child's condition
- Copies of correspondence with insurance companies
- Important pages from medical and dental records
- Immunization records
- SCOR

# Learn about your child's diagnosis

- Ask professionals you are working with
- Education can be empowering or overwhelming
- Check library and Internet



# Getting the referral you need

- Your doctor might not know how
- Find out what has worked before
- Work with your healthcare provider



# Appealing TRICARE Decisions

- Read denial letter carefully
- Is the decision eligible for appeal?
- Don't be reluctant to question a denial
- Is the reason for the denial accurate?
- What are the time limitations?

# Who can help?

- Your TRICARE regional contractor
- Your Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinator (BCAC)
- STOMP
- (enter local TRICARE information)

# Educational Advocacy

- Organization
- IDEA and Section 504
- Evaluations
- Writing a good IEP
- Disagreements



# Organizing Educational Records

- Phone log
- Assessments/Evaluations
- IEP's
- Discipline reports
- Report cards/interim reports
- Correspondence to and from school system
- Immunizations and pertinent health records

# Educational Law

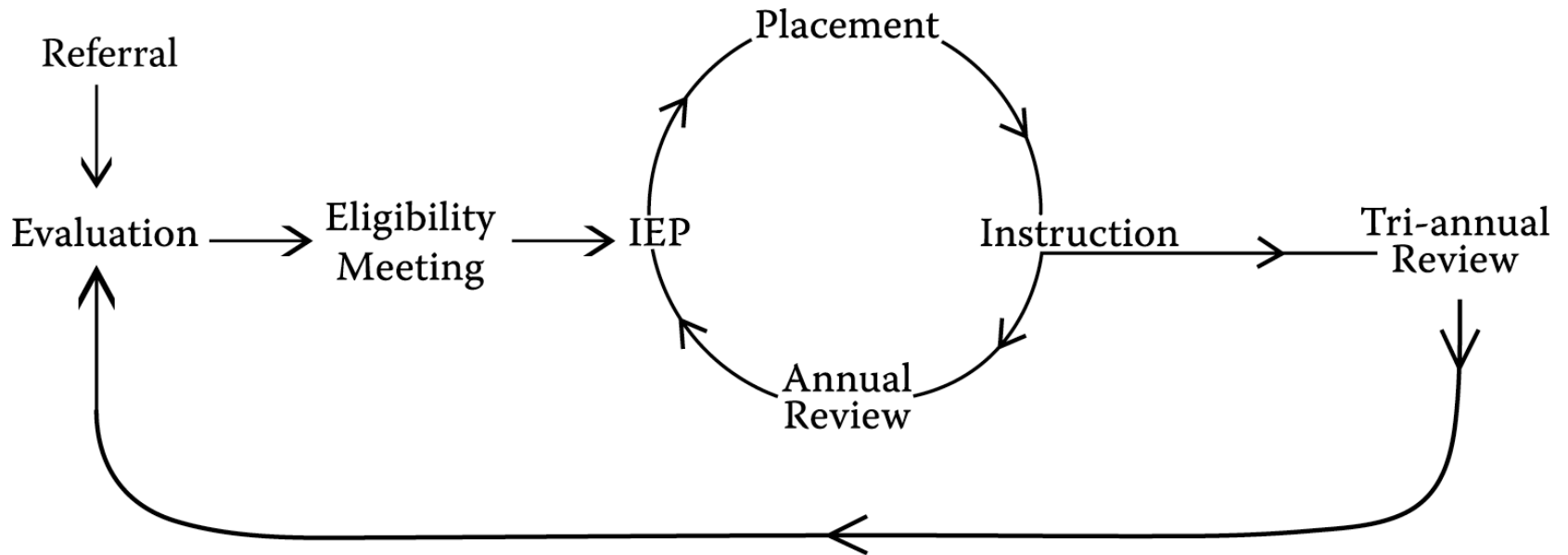


**IDEA**

**Section 504**



# Special Education Cycle



# Evaluation Vocabulary

- Battery
- Cognitive
- Composite Scores
- Criterion Referenced
- Normed Tests

# Do you feel the evaluation is inaccurate?

- Ask informally for more testing to be done
- Ask for an Independent Educational Evaluation
- Arrange a private evaluation

# Preparing for the IEP and Eligibility Meetings

- Read results of evaluations before meeting
- Have questions, comments, and suggestions written down
- Speak to parents who have experience with special education
- Bring a photo of your child and family
- Bring your child's education file
- Bring a spouse, friend, or family member

# Components of a Good IEP

- Your child's current level of achievement
- Areas where growth is needed
- Activities and services that your child will receive to encourage growth and learning
- How often and where your child will participate in services
- How your child's progress will be measured and at what intervals

# Potential Disagreements

- IEP was written before the meeting
- You disagree with the services offered
- IEP is not finished before the end of the meeting



# Dealing with Disagreements

## Public Schools

- Administrative Review
- Mediation
- Due Process

## DoDEA Schools

- Resolution Meeting
- Mediation
- Due Process



# Benefits Advocacy

## Federal and State

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Medicaid



# Teaching your Child to Self-Advocate

*“The reality is that our children are likely to outlive us. If we don’t give them the skills to survive when we are gone, what are we doing?”*

*~Heather Hebdon, Director of STOMP*



# Self-Advocacy

- Asking for help
- Accepting responsibility
- Participating in life planning

# Legislation

- Be informed
- Know your officials
- Call or write



# Resources

- Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)
- Specialized Training of Military Parents (STOMP)
- State Parent Training Center
- (enter information for your state)