BEFORE A DECISION IS MADE, KNOW WHAT TO ASK.

Questions to ask at an eligibility meeting

Eligibility meetings are high stakes. The team is deciding whether your child qualifies for special education services under IDEA, and that decision shapes what the school has to provide. These questions help parents and caregivers understand the process, the data, and your rights before you leave the room. Write the answers down, and if you don't follow something, ask the team to explain it again.

About the evaluation

1. **How did my input as a caregiver factor into this decision?**
   Your observations at home are part of the evaluation data. Ask how your input was considered, not just whether it was received, and where your letter or form shows up in the report.

2. **Did this evaluation look at how my child is functioning across different settings, not just one classroom?**
   A complete picture includes more than one setting, since one place may not show the full impact of your child's needs. Ask which settings were observed and who was asked.

3. **Did all members of the evaluation team agree on this determination?**
   Eligibility decisions should reflect team consensus. If there was disagreement within the team, you are entitled to know that. Ask who disagreed, and ask for it to be noted in the record.

4. **What do the scores and findings mean for my child's day-to-day experience at school?**
   Numbers and categories matter less than what they mean in practice. Ask the team to connect the findings to your child's classroom, and for a real example if you hear jargon.

5. **If my child is found ineligible, what supports are still available to them at school?**
   Ineligibility does not mean your child gets nothing. General education supports, a 504 plan, or RTI services may still be options. Ask what is available and who to contact about it.

MY NOTES

After the team decides

6 **If my child is found eligible, how will the IEP be developed and who will be involved?**

Eligibility is the beginning of the process. Ask who will be on the IEP team, when the first meeting will be scheduled, and what your role will be in building the plan.

7 **Who else should receive or be made aware of the information from this evaluation?**

The findings may matter beyond school. Your child's pediatrician, private providers, or other support people may benefit from them. Ask who they would recommend sharing them with.

8 **If I disagree with this evaluation, what are my options?**

You can put your disagreement in writing and request reconsideration, and mediation is available before escalating further. A parent or legal guardian can also request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) at the district's expense. Ask the team to explain that process before you leave.

9 **What would need to look different for my child's eligibility to be reconsidered later?**

Circumstances change. Whether your child is found eligible or not today, ask what would warrant a reevaluation and how that process gets started.

10 **Am I required to sign anything today, and what am I agreeing to if I do?**

Know exactly what your signature means before you sign. You don't have to decide in the room: ask for a copy of the evaluation report and take documents home to review first.

MY NOTES

Still processing what was decided at the meeting? I can help you understand what it means, what comes next, and how to push back if you disagree.

Book a free 15-minute consultation at myaccessadvocacy.com or call (804) 420-2273.

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