



How to Navigate the Educational System

Adopted children often enter a new school system. The following information is about how adoptive parents can serve as educational advocates for their children as well as promote sensitivity in schools.

WAYS TO SERVE AS EDUCATIONAL ADVOCATES FOR YOUR CHILDREN

- Be prepared
- Be an educator
- Define success
- Be supportive
- Continue to learn
- Plan for the future
- Be proactive
- Be realistic
- Be an advocate
- Work as a team
- Join a parent support group

PROMOTING ADOPTION SENSITIVITY WITHIN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

- Volunteer to speak to classes about adoption.
- Familiarize yourself with adoption resources.
- Develop a lending library of adoption resources.
- Target guidance counselors.
- Network beyond your local school.
- See teachers as an advocate for your child.
- Keep it simple.
- Look for opportunities to educate student teachers.
- Sponsor a booth at a regional or state educational association convention.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO IF THEY SUSPECT THEIR CHILD HAS SPECIAL NEEDS?

- Request in writing a special needs assessment from the child's school.
- After a referral, an assessment team will evaluate the child's needs.
- If the child qualifies for special needs services, the parents and a team of specialists will develop a 504 Plan or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for the child. The 504 Plan or IEP is reviewed throughout the year by the parents, teacher and a team of specialists. The goals of the child are then evaluated throughout the year.
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QUESTIONS TO ASK IF YOUR CHILD NEEDS SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES

- How will my child benefit from the services?
- What academic, physical, social and emotional concerns should I have?
- What assistance will my child receive?
- How much learning time will my child have with his peers?
- Will we also discuss my child's abilities and strengths as well as special needs?
- What areas of learning will be focused on?
- How will my child's physical and mental growth be measured?

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