

How can you use the Supreme Court's landmark *Andrew F.* decision to strengthen your child's IEP? Use this worksheet to identify issues you're concerned about and to find ways to talk about them using *Andrew F.* language.

**Your concern:** The IEP doesn't seem to have a plan to help your child reach grade level.

# 1

## Talking Point

### The services and supports in the IEP must help your child meet grade-level standards.

List the areas where your child is below grade level:

Why do you believe the IEP won't help your child reach grade level in this area?

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**Suggested script:** "I understand that the IEP is supposed to help my child achieve grade-level standards. However, my child is behind in \_\_\_\_\_, and it doesn't seem like the IEP has a plan to help my child catch up. How can we work as an IEP team to help my child achieve at grade level?"

*Note: This talking point may not apply to kids with significant cognitive disabilities. The school must still provide challenging content, but it may use alternate academic standards appropriate to each child's needs. This decision is made on an individual basis.*

**Your concern:** The IEP seems to offer the same programs or services that didn't help your child make progress in the past.

# 2

## Talking Point

### The IEP must be "reasonably calculated" to help your child make progress (and school staff must truly believe it will do so).

List the areas where your child hasn't made progress:

Have the services or program in each area changed?

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**Suggested script:** "I know that the IEP needs to be 'reasonably calculated' to help my child make progress. Since my child has not made progress in \_\_\_\_\_, I feel it's time to look at how \_\_\_\_\_ strategy and/or service has worked. If it's not working well, what other options should the team consider?"

**Your concern:**

The IEP doesn't address your child's behavior issues.

# 3

*Talking Point*

## The IEP must include behavioral services and supports that your child needs in order to learn.

List the areas where your child's behavior is getting in the way of learning:

What types of services or support do you think may help?

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**Suggested script:** "I know that my child has the right to services and supports to help with behavior. However, the IEP doesn't address \_\_\_\_\_. When can we talk about including behavioral supports and services to help my child make progress in school?"

**Your concern:**

The school hasn't offered compelling explanations for its decisions about services or accommodations.

# 4

*Talking Point*

## The school must have a compelling explanation for why the services in the IEP will help your child make progress.

List decisions the school hasn't fully explained:

What else do you want to know about the decision?

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**Suggested script:** "I know I'm entitled to prior written notice of school decisions, as well as cogent and responsive explanations of those decisions. But I haven't gotten an answer about \_\_\_\_\_. Can you provide a fuller explanation of how this decision offers my child a free appropriate public education?"

# 5

## Talking Point

**As a parent, you help decide whether the IEP has the input it needs to be appropriate for your child.**

List parts of the IEP that need more input from experts:

What experts do you think should be consulted?

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**Suggested script:** "I am aware that my child's IEP must have the expertise and input of the entire IEP team, as well as any other information that helps. When can we sit down and revisit all the information we have on hand, including outside evaluation results and notes from the private tutor?"

# 6

## Talking Point

**The IEP should be "ambitious" about your child's future and what can be accomplished.**

List where you feel your child's IEP goals aren't ambitious enough:

What goals would you like to see?

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**Suggested script:** "I know that my child's goals should be appropriately ambitious. Even if my child is behind in academics, the IEP goals should aim to help my child catch up. When can we look at present level of performance and put services and supports in place, so we can set goals that allow my child to meet the same standards as his peers?"

**Your concern:** You don't think your child's goals are challenging enough.

# 7

## Talking Point

### Your child must have the chance to meet “challenging” objectives.

List the areas where you feel your child isn't being challenged:

What ideas do you have to make the goals more challenging?

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**Suggested script:** “I'm aware that my child's IEP must include goals that align to state academic standards. I also know that the instructional strategies should allow my child to meet challenging goals. Given my child's present level of performance, can you explain how these goals are challenging?”

**Your concern:** The IEP team didn't collaborate enough with you when creating your child's IEP.

# 8

## Talking Point

### It's not enough for the school to simply go through the motions and check boxes on the IEP.

List ways in which it seemed the school was simply “checking the boxes”:

What would you like to discuss and collaborate with the team on?

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**Suggested script:** “I'm concerned that the IEP team is just going through the motions, and that this IEP isn't designed for my child's unique needs. When can we review the IEP through the lens of my child's specific needs and make sure we're doing more than running through a checklist?”