



Empowered, Energized and in Control of my Daughter's Education

My name is Scarlet and I am the proud mom of Victoria, a beautiful little girl who learns differently. Victoria is ten years old and has a diagnosis of asthma, ADHD, and an anxiety disorder. She has been a distance learner for the entire 2020-2021 school year because of her asthma. She has a 504 plan in place; however, no one was implementing it and it showed in her schoolwork. Since LEAP is around the corner, I wanted to make sure all my daughter's teachers were on board with her accommodations.

I made many attempts to work with the school, but they were non-responsive. I decided to call Laura Nata at Families Helping Families of GNO to help me navigate communication with the school.



I told her that I had scheduled a meeting with the school, but the Administration staff was only going to give me 30 minutes of their time. Ms. Laura laughed and said, "Well, there is always another day." The scheduled meeting did go over the half hour. Since staff excused themselves for school duties, Ms. Laura asked for a follow-up meeting so I could address all my concerns. I had no idea that she and I would be working on an agenda that same day to prepare for the follow-up meeting. She had me email some questions to the school Administrators beforehand; once those questions were answered, I removed them from the agenda so we would have time to focus on issues that needed more attention.

We had the meeting the following week and I was able to address all my concerns! I even showed them their shortcomings in handling Victoria's 504 plan and discussed my frustration over their poor communication with me. We have a few questions left about the summer program, but since the last meeting we have had much better communication and the teachers are making sure her accommodations are in place.

Ms. Laura has continued to help us. She provided me with tips on how Victoria can track her weekly activities and even sat down with her and explained her 504 accommodations in a way that she could understand them. She also told me to be sure Victoria participates in future 504 meetings that address her education. This has certainly been a learning experience for both of us.

Ms. Laura is still coaching me on how to become an effective advocate for Victoria's best interests, but one thing is certain: Victoria's future is looking better. It has been a while since I felt so empowered and energized and in control of my child's education. Thank you, Ms. Laura, for the love and dedication you have for children like mine!

Scarlet Garcia



Changing Lives Every Day