



## I Am Now Aware That I Have a Voice in My Son's Education

My name is Hoa Nguyen, I am the mother of Kevin who is 17 years old and diagnosed with Autism. Kevin attends Kenner Discovery High School in Kenner. I was having problems with his school. Kevin's teacher kept calling me to come pick him up from school because of his behavior. The school then decided that Kevin would have to attend school virtually because of his behavior. Kevin was not happy. He likes being in school and looks forward to seeing his teachers and classmates. He was going to school virtually for two weeks when I remembered Families Helping Families of Greater New Orleans (FHF) helped me with some school problems when my son was in 4th grade.

So I called FHF for assistance with what was going on at Kevin's school and to find out more about Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI). I spoke with Ms. Thuy. I was so glad because she communicated with me in Vietnamese, as it is my native language. I asked Ms. Thuy for information on SSI. We applied in the past but were not eligible due to our family income. She emailed me the information, which was translated in Vietnamese. I now have a better understanding on SSI and know the requirements to apply. I then explained to Ms. Thuy what was going on with Kevin in school, she asked if Kevin had a Behavior Intervention Plan in place and explained what it was. I informed her he must not because his special education teacher would always call or text me to come get him.

Ms. Thuy provided me with educational information and it was most helpful. I am now able to read the information in my native language and have much a better understanding of my son's education rights. I did whatever the school told me and was not aware that I could have a voice. She also provided me other suggestions, such as allowing Kevin to attend all the IEP meetings, keeping better school records, and writing down everything that happens when the school calls me to pick him up.

Ms. Thuy referred me to Mrs. Nicole with whom she works with and is the Education Staff. Mrs. Nicole has been assisting us with Kevin's school issues. She attended Kevin's Amended IEP meeting virtually and was very helpful. Kevin is going to in-person schooling again and is glad to be back. He has been optimistic about his future and wants to further his education because he loves math. Ms. Thuy continues to be here for me and still helps me translate.

I would like to thank Ms. Thuy and Mrs. Nicole for all their help. It has been a great relief to know they are here to support my family and me during this difficult time.

*Hoa Nguyen*

