

# I NOW UNDERSTAND THE IEP PROCESS

I called Families Helping Families of Greater New Orleans (FHFGNO) because my son was not getting what he needed at his school. My son's name is Rex. He is six years old and has Down syndrome. Rex spent most of his time in a self-contained classroom with nonverbal children at his school. He is nonverbal and receives Speech Therapy twice a week. When I called FHFGNO, I spoke with Nicole Desroche. I provided her with my son's current evaluation and IEP. We met, and she went over both documents word for word. It took hours. She explained to me my rights as a parent and Rex's rights as a student. With her help, I listed out



everything I thought Rex needed to assist him with his education along with things he should already be getting. I brought all the information to his IEP meeting.

There was a lot that needed to change, in Rex's situation. I learned that Rex is entitled to anything I think will help him, including a communication board and Dynavox. I also learned that he should be getting more inclusion time than he is and that the IEP is a federal document. If the IEP is not followed, the school is breaking the law. I can ask for an IEP meeting anytime I feel there is something that needs to be changed or discussed.

FHFGNO helped empower me to understand the IEP process and what to do in order to get my son's educational needs addressed. I no longer have to worry about what the school is doing because I know, and they know, that they must follow the IEP as it is written. Rex now has the resources and services he needs to reach his full potential.

Because of FHFGNO, I feel certain that my son is getting a better education because they have given me the knowledge and tools I needed to advocate for my son now and in the future.

*Christen Rodrigue*



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