

Dear HoG: Social Workers Attending School Meetings

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Dear HoG:

A friend of ours asked an HoG social worker to attend her child's special education meeting at school. Should we be doing the same thing?

--Curious

Dear Curious:

If your child qualifies for a special education plan because of bleeding disorder complications or other disabilities, it can be very helpful to have an HoG social worker with you during key school meetings. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) that is required by law for such children and teens must be based on their specific needs in school. The goal is to maintain the highest level of education with the fewest possible number of restrictions on a child's learning. When it is time to discuss how a bleeding disorder is impacting your child, an HoG social worker can help educate the teachers and other professionals in the room. For the same reason, it is also very helpful for your HoG nurse to attend the meeting. They can add their voices to yours in advocating for your child. And it is a great opportunity to help teachers learn all they can about bleeding disorders!

There is another important reason for you to have a support system with you: IEP meetings often involve lengthy discussions about your child's challenges and needs. It can be an emotional time for parents. It isn't always easy to hear and remember everything that is said. For that reason, having your HoG team by your side can help in the hours and days after school meetings. If you didn't hear something important, chances are one of them did. Would you like to read up on the IEP steps and federal laws protecting children with disabilities? This government web site is a great resource:

<http://www.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html>.