

Breaking Through Denial

Does your child's behavior inhibit the learning of self or others? That is the question the special education regulations ask you to answer about your child's behavior. Admitting that your child's behavior is challenging and needs to be addressed in the educational setting only indicates an area of need in which your child requires support to be successful. Special education regulations require a school division to address EVERY area of need, even when that includes behavior. The Virginia regulations echo IDEA and its implementing regulation by requiring the IEP team to consider the use of positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports to address a child's behavior when it impedes the learning of that child or others.

The Virginia Department of Education further requires IEP teams to address identified behavior before it interferes with a child's ability to access learning. You know your child best. So when the team convenes to begin the evaluation process, to discuss eligibility, to draft the present level of performance and to draft the other components of the IEP share your concerns about your child's need for positive behavior support.

Denying your child needed support in any area may prevent your child from gaining full access to the free appropriate public education guaranteed to every child with a disability by law. It may be helpful to keep this thought in mind when considering what information you will share with the IEP team. When you are honest with yourself and the IEP team about your child's challenges, there is a better chance that the team can draft an individualized educational program that will appropriately support your child. With appropriate supports, your child will have the greatest opportunity to be successful in school.

So don't deny... Identify! Every area of need in which your child requires supports to be successful in school. Even when it includes behavior!