

**ADVOCACY AND PARENT PEER SUPPORT
IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS:
WHY YOU WANT US AT THE TABLE**

CST Statewide Meeting
April 19, 2016

Deb Ramacher, MSW, CAPSW
Wisconsin Family Ties

- What's 'special' about special education?
- What do educational advocates/consultants do?
- Why use a Wisconsin Family Ties parent peer specialist?

WHAT IS SPECIAL EDUCATION?

§300.39 Special education.

(a) General.

(1) Special education means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the *unique* needs of a child with a disability

(3) Specially designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this part, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction—

(i) To address the *unique* needs of the child that result from the child's disability; and

(ii) To ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that he or she can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children.

SPECIAL EDUCATION IS COMPLICATED...



<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/acronyms/>

<http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/laws-procedures-bulletins/procedures/sample/forms>

<http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/proc-safegds-wcover-updated-7-16-15.pdf>



IEP



BRACE YOURSELVES

IEP SEASON IS COMING



"Oh and I'm so excited for our IEP meeting tomorrow!"

Said no one. Ever.

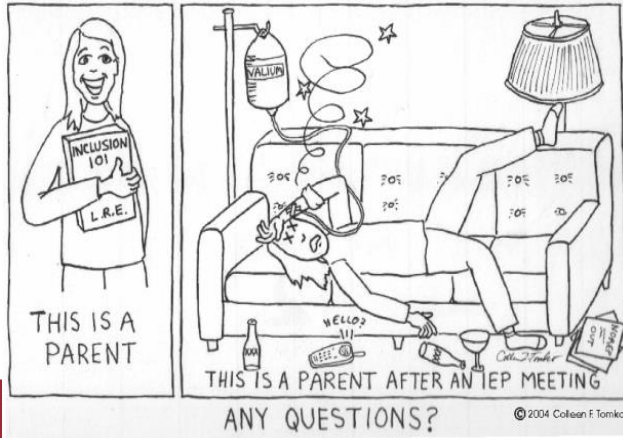
adiaryofamom
someecards
user card



Hey girl. That IEP meeting was draining. Let me get you a glass of wine.



THE PARENT SIDE™



"Honey, I know they said to prepare for an IEP meeting, but don't you think this is a bit extreme?"

your e cards
someecards.com




THE “A” WORD

Advocate – one that supports or promotes the interest of another – Merriam Webster



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVOCATES...

- Know the law, but are not usually lawyers
 - Have knowledge about strategies and interventions
 - Have knowledge about area resources
 - Can help to improve relationships between schools and parents
- 

DIFFERENT KINDS OF EDUCATIONAL ADVOCATES

- Paid educational consultants
- Attorneys
- Volunteer advocates
- Peer support






Wisconsin Family Ties

WHAT IS A PARENT PEER™ SPECIALIST?

A person who has:

- at least one year of experience as a parent or primary caregiver involved in the day-to-day care of a child or adolescent with a social, emotional or behavioral challenge.
- successfully navigated the process of obtaining mental health and/or substance use services for his/her child, the need for which has persisted for a period of at least one year;
- received specific training to provide support to families and to help equip parents with the confidence and tools to better meet their families' needs;
- because of his/her lived experience, a genuine understanding and appreciation for the challenges faced by families;
- substantial experience with two or more service systems including, but not limited to, mental health, substance use, public education, child welfare, juvenile / family court, and corrections

Wisconsin Family Ties' Parent Peer™ Specialist Services

- Supplying information so families can better understand and participate in the systems serving their children
 - Helping families get their needs met
 - Giving emotional support and guidance through a maze of services
 - Helping families to identify strategies that they can use in their homes to reduce conflict and encourage prosocial behavior
 - Helping families to identify and implement strategies to develop collaborative working relationships with the systems that serve them
 - Acting as an objective liaison between families, schools, case managers and service providers
 - Advocating for filling gaps in services and supports that can help a child flourish
 - Ensuring that school plans are effective and appropriate
 - Providing telephone support at times needed by families
 - Offering hope and encouragement in challenging times
 - Helping families become better advocates for their children
- 

Wisconsin Family Ties also provides services to child-serving professionals, including:

- Assisting child-serving professionals to better understand the parent perspective
- Identifying strategies for working with children and youth with challenging behavior
- Identifying strategies for engaging families (especially those that previously have been difficult to reach)



REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Wisconsin Family Ties –

Intake line – 800-422-7145, press option 5, email - intake@wifamilyties.org

Deb Ramacher – 715-246-4778, deb@wifamilyties.org

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction – www.dpi.wisconsin.gov

Wisconsin FACETS – www.wifacets.org

WSPEI (Wisconsin Statewide Parent Educator Initiative) – www.wspei.org

Disability Rights Wisconsin - www.disabilityrightswi.org

