IEP Do’s and Don’ts

1. **DON’T:** Segregate students with special needs into self-contained classrooms based on labels.

   **DO:** Make sure the IEP present level, goals, and service summary are completed first so that the student’s needs are identified. Later, further discussion can take place to determine the best placement for the student.

2. **DON’T:** Give parents/guardians the impression that you don’t offer services that aren’t currently provided by the school district.

   **DO:** Provide the service if the student needs it.

3. **DON’T:** Assume discipline policies and procedures supersede special education law.

   **DO:** Have staff trained in positive approaches to behavior support.

4. **DON’T:** Assume that an accommodation is expensive.

   **DO:** Use teamwork to devise creative, viable and economic solutions that meet students’ needs.

5. **DON’T:** Assume only your school district’s attorney needs to know about special education law.

   **DO:** Know the law. Pull together a team of stakeholders, consisting of parents, teachers, administrators and others, to regularly review case law and legislation and to monitor the school district’s compliance.
6. **DON'T:** Ignore your board policies and administrative procedures.

**DO:** Review your policies regularly so you know your responsibilities. For example, it is not unusual for school administrators not to know their district’s policy on discipline and how it fits in with special education.

7. **DON'T:** Support teachers who insist that a particular child doesn’t fit in their classrooms.

**DO:** Stress diversity and offer in-service sessions on inclusion.

8. **DON'T:** Support teachers who claim they don’t have time to make accommodations.

**DO:** Communicate the message that it’s the teacher’s job to make the time. Provide teachers with opportunities to learn how to make better use of available time and resources and to meet with others who have successfully dealt with this challenge.

9. **DON'T:** Support classroom teachers who say that all children—regardless of ability or needs—must be treated equally.

**DO:** Ensure that all teachers are aware of your school district’s policies and know their roles and responsibilities in supporting special education students. Make sure that general education teachers participate in IEP conferences and retain a copy of students’ IEP goals.

10. **DON'T:** Give a student’s parents the impression that you have all the answers about what’s best for the child.

**DO:** Conduct IEP meetings and other meetings with parents/guardians in a true team spirit. Recognize that each team member has important viewpoints that must be considered in order to make the best decision for the student.