

AHA/ Sample Letters



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President, AHA
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Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism Association, Inc. (AHA) has for the past 21 years worked to educate and support parents and professionals in the New York area and across the country through our twice yearly conferences, website, support meetings, newsletter and electronic listserv. This new page was added to our website to assist parents in their role as advocates for their children. As Peter and Pam Wright are often quoted as saying, "If it's not written down it didn't happen" but I know from personal experience that the simplest letter is often difficult to formulate.

The *sample letters and chart* were written by attorney and AHA board member Susan Deedy, Esq. as suggestions and guides for you to use. After receiving her law degree from CUNY Law School at Queens College Ms. Deedy was at the General Counsel's Office of the City University of New York and later worked for the New York City Board of Education in the Office of Legal Services handling special education and employment discrimination. She has worked in the private sector for many years representing parents of students with disabilities. These letters below can be found on our site at the following address in word and pdf format.
http://www.ahany.org/re_letters.htm

There are letters for the following situations -

1. Request for Referral to Special Education:

In order for a student to receive special education services pursuant to the IDEA, a parent must make an initial referral to their school district. Attached is a sample letter from a parent to the Committee on Special Education to begin the evaluation process.

2. Request for Evaluation: If the evaluations conducted by the CSE have not been forwarded to the parent in advance of the meeting as requested in the initial referral, the parent may send a letter to the CSE chairperson requesting the evaluations upon which the IEP team will be relying at the upcoming CSE meeting.

3. Requests for Participants: A "notice letter" scheduling the CSE meeting will be sent to the parent indicating who will be present at the CSE meeting. However, sometimes the actual participants may change after the "notice letter" is forwarded to the parent and before the actual meeting. Therefore, the parent may choose to send a letter: 1) asking who specifically will be in attendance on behalf of the district and 2) notifying the CSE chairperson of any individuals that will accompany the parent at the upcoming CSE meeting.

4. Requesting a Copy of Student's Education File: A parent may at any time request a copy of the student's educational file pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

5. Memorializing a Discussion or Meeting: Subsequent to a CSE meeting or any important discussion between the parent and school staff, a parent may choose to memorialize the discussion in the form of a letter to the district.

6. Checklist: A checklist of questions to ask and items to observe can be a helpful tool when a parent is viewing a proposed program.

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