As a parent of a child with a learning disability and ADHD, I would hope the general room teacher would have many qualities in their inclusion bottle. I would hope they would be understanding and aware of my child’s different needs and struggles with their disabilities as well as their strengths. I would like to see them use those strengths to adapt classroom behavior and academic expectations to help my child be successful on a daily basis. I would hope they would have the patience that would not let the frustrations that come along with LD and ADHD to stop them from helping my child to be successful and included in the general education classroom.

 I would like to see that not just the teacher accepts my child for who they are but the others students as well. It would be nice to see that the teacher provides teaching opportunities for both my child and the other students in the room of how to include children who learn or act differently than themselves.

I hope my child’s teacher will work with both the special education teacher as well as any specialists that see my child so that my child is being provided consistence and cohesive support. I also give the teacher permission to speak to previous teachers to discuss any accommodations or interventions that helped them to be successful in previous years. I would also hope that the building principals would work with any staff that may work with my child to have consistence expectations and consequences including recess and lunch room aides.

Another approach I would like to see in my child’s classroom in a cooperative learning environment. I believe that this both helps my child with her lack of social skills as well as learning from her peers on skills/material that may be too difficult for her to understand on her own. I would like to see a classroom set up to help my child learn to deal with struggles she may have with her peers or working with peer groups not just independent work. I also believe this gives my child the opportunity to be more active and gives her a release for her energy while still actively participating in the learning process. I would also like to see my child’s classroom provide brain breaks throughout the day giving my child as well others in the room time to refocus and transition easier.

I find consistency works best for my child and hope that my child’s teacher provides a schedule that is as consistent as possible. Also that they provide clear and consistent expectations and consequences for my child and do not accept excuses or “let things go this time.”

A few questions I may have for my child’s teacher:

1. What type of organization do you use in your classroom for handing in work? Notes? Unfinished work? Schedule? Other? I like to try to keep the same organization at home so that there is consistency both at home and school.
2. What kind of accommodations may you try with my child’s tendency to blurt out in class? Fidget?
3. Is there any extra work we may do at home to help our child with the work she is accountable for in class?
4. What type of interventions are you or the SPED teacher using for my child’s LD? I know that the process for learning skills has changed a lot from when I was in school and I would like to be sure to not confuse my child from what they are learning in school.
5. What expectations will my child have when it comes to homework? So that I can be there is no “confusion” on their part. ☺

Please let me know if there is anything I may do to help my child both at home and in the classroom. I hope we can work together to make it a successful year both for my child as well as the classroom. I look forward to speaking with you in the future and thank you for all you do.

1. What do you notice -- What IEP components are represented in these videoclips? (some of the components above might be reflected in the clips, but others will be missing. Your task is to identify what components are represented in the clips of the IEP meeting.)
2. Given that these are short clips, what has not been discussed that should be part of the discussion in the meeting? What IEP components are missing? (consult resources above to see components)
3. What is your impression of the IEP meeting?
4. If you were Kevin's advocate, what would you want to know, say, or be listening for?

While watching the IEP video, I noticed many of the IEP components we have discussed over the course of this unit. The first component was the setting of goals. Two different specialists were given the opportunity to state what the goals of IEP would be both academically and behaviorally. After discussing each goal, both specialists gave the benchmark goals for the IEP goal. It was also discussed briefly which classes those goals would affect. I noticed they also gave the parents an opportunity to ask any questions or share concerns about those goals. The second component I viewed was the discussion of how the student’s goals would be addressed as far as time and subjects. It was decided that the student would participate in Special Education support in English, Math, and Study Skills. The speech teacher discussed the child’s need for about 30 minutes of language help outside of the classroom teacher support. The social worker included his input on the time per week needed for his services. They also discussed if all of this would be enough support for the student to be successful in Science where he would not receive any Special Education support.

I noticed while watching the IEP videos that many components seemed to be missing. (However, I noticed a few references to things we may have not seen that were discussed earlier in the IEP.) One of the major components I felt we did not see was the student’s present levels of performance. Although we heard the basic goals for the IEP, we did not hear the discussion or see the data that supported the need for these goals. None of the people present at the meeting discussed any specific problems the student seemed to be having outside of the IEP goals stated at the beginning. Another missing component was measureable goals. Although many goals were stated, none of them seemed very measureable. They were very vague like “Kevin will make academic growth” and “Kevin will learn to watch for both verbal and non-verbal cues.” Also, it was never discussed how these goals would help the student become successful nor were accommodations or interventions discussed to go with these goals. There was no discussion of assessments to show that goals were being successful or met. A third missing component was a discussion of the student’s strengths. I never heard any discussion on what strengths the student had and how they would be used to support his goals.

 I felt that the IEP seemed to focus only on the vague goals and time limits of those goals. I never saw or heard what the actual classroom behavior problems were or how they were affecting his academics. I felt the IEP was however positive and very professional. The team seemed to be willing to work together for the good of the child and encouraged input from the parent. I would have liked to have seen more proof of how each goal would be measured and how the teachers might reach those goals. What the child’s strengths were and what had been accomplished previously should have been a part of the discussion.

If I were Kevin’s advocate, I would have tried to lead the IEP in the discussion of what his strengths were and how they might be used to support Kevin’s IEP goals. I would also like to know what behaviors both in and out of the classroom teachers, support staff, and parents were noticing and how the goals were picked in the first place. I feel that knowing this would help me in the discussion of specific accommodations and interventions that would take place to help Kevin meet his IEP goals. I would also be listening for how each goal would be measured and assessed for progress and completion so that I may understand how each goal would be monitored and adapted for Kevin’s needs.