

A Parent's Guide to Using AI for Advocacy

In Special Education



**Key Facts
about AI and
Good Ways to
Use It**

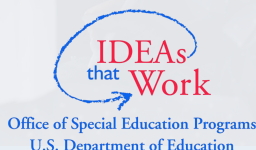
AI tools (like ChatGPT) can be powerful supports for parents navigating special education. This guide is designed to help you use AI confidently and safely – in ways that strengthen your advocacy, protect your child’s privacy, and support positive working relationships with your child’s team.



**Protection,
Privacy, and
Possible
Problems When
Using AI**



**Positive and
Productive
Ways to Use AI
in Dispute
Resolution**





Did You Know?

- AI makes mistakes — including about special education law and procedures.
- AI holds on to personal data. Information you type may be stored and used to train future AI systems.
- AI has affirmation bias — it tends to agree with or reinforce what you say, even when you are wrong.
- AI does not know your child, your school team, or your specific situation.
- AI-generated documents can sound formal and official but still contain serious errors.

Good Ways to Use AI

AI can be a helpful preparation tool. Consider using it to:

- Learn common terms (like IEP, FAPE, LRE)
- Organize your concerns into a clear, focused list
- Generate questions to ask at a meeting
- Think of collaborative, team-focused ways to raise a concern
- Practice how you might explain your concerns before a meeting
- Translate phrases or short communications — AI translation is generally accurate, but it's best to confirm meaning with a trusted bilingual person.

Example: You're preparing for an IEP meeting and want to bring up a concern about your child's reading goals. You can ask AI: "Help me make a list of questions to ask about reading goals at an IEP meeting." AI can give you a starting point — then you should review and adjust it based on what you know about your child.

Possible Problems with AI

AI answers the question you ask. It does not fully understand your family, your school team, or what your child needs right now. Additionally, AI does not understand how one action may impact another.

Before you act on AI advice, pause and ask:

- Will this help us solve the problem – or make it bigger?
- Is there a more collaborative step to try first?

If you are not careful, AI can:

- Suggest steps that escalate conflict
- Provide legal information that is wrong, incomplete, or does not apply to your situation
- Use language that sounds threatening or adversarial
- Put your child's private information at risk



Protect Your Child's Privacy

Information you type into an AI tool may be stored digitally and used to train future AI systems. Once shared, that information may not be possible to remove.

Most AI tools are not confidential. Avoid typing in:

- Your child's name, birthday, or other identifying information
- Staff names
- School or district names
- Your child's IEP
- Evaluations, reports, or detailed medical information

Privacy Tip

- Use general language to protect your family's privacy. For example:
- Instead of your child's name → say "my child"
- Instead of the school name → say "the school" or "the team"
- Instead of pasting from the IEP → describe the concern in general terms

Use AI to Get Ready – Don't Let It Decide for You

AI works best as a preparation tool, not a decision-maker. You can use it to organize your thoughts, understand terminology, or draft a starting point for a message – but always review what it produces before using it.

AI is risky when you:

- Copy and send an AI-written email without carefully reviewing it
- Let AI tell you when to “escalate”
- Rely on AI to decide whether to file a State complaint, request mediation, or file a due process complaint

Getting Better Responses from AI

How you ask questions matters. Try prompts like:

- “Help me write a calm, collaborative email to my child’s teacher about my concern that...”
- “What questions should I consider asking at my child’s IEP meeting about [topic]?”
- “What does FAPE mean in simple language?”

Always review AI responses critically – ask yourself whether the advice fits your specific situation before acting on it.



Be Extra Careful when Filing State Complaints and Due Process Hearing Requests

AI can help you understand the general process, but it often creates filings that are unclear, inaccurate, or missing required information. These errors can lead to delays, dismissals, or “no findings.” Before filing something formal, consider:

- Reading your Procedural Safeguards Notice (your rights document)
- Talking with your state Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) or Community Parent Resource Center (CPRC)
- Talking with your school district’s Special Education Director
- Speaking with your State Educational Agency about your options

Working Together and Protecting Your Rights Can Happen at the Same Time

Trying to solve problems early does not mean giving up your rights. You always have the right to:

- Request evaluations
- Disagree with decisions
- Ask for meetings and written responses
- Request mediation, file a State complaint, or file a due process complaint – at any time



A Simple Guideline

Before you act on AI-generated advice, ask:

“Will this help solve the problem – or make it harder to solve?”

Some AI-generated responses may sound confident and official but can push toward formal complaints or legal action before more collaborative options have been tried. Escalating too quickly can damage relationships with your child’s team and sometimes make it harder to get the outcome that is best for the child. Always consider whether a phone call, a written question, or a meeting might be a better first step.

Used well, AI can help you clarify the process, work collaboratively, and prepare you for meetings. However, if your use of AI escalates conflict or increases risk, slow down and consider getting human support.

