

SOME TIPS

Parents often find meetings with schools and local authorities very difficult. If this has been your experience in the past, you may find some of these tips helpful:

TRY TO STAY CALM.

Try to stay calm. Make a conscious effort to breathe steadily.

AVOID TALKING TOO FAST!

Avoid talking too fast! Take a deep breath and perhaps count to 5 while you gather your thoughts and then speak clearly.

AVOID INTERRUPTING PEOPLE

Avoid interrupting people inappropriately. Let them finish speaking and then query anything that you disagree with or believe to be wrong.

IF THINGS DO GET HEATED OR TRICKY

If things do get heated or tricky in other ways, it's fine to say, 'I'm sorry, but I do get very emotional about my son'. Most people will respond empathetically to this.



IF NEED BE, ASK FOR A FEW MINUTES OUTSIDE

if need be, ask for a few minutes outside to calm down. This is a reasonable request, and most people will agree to it.

REHEARSE BEFOREHAND

Rehearse beforehand what you want to say. Make some notes in advance, or learn a script by heart. (The problem with this can be that if someone else says something unexpected, it can throw you completely).

USE 'I' STATEMENTS

Use 'I' statements e.g. 'I'm not sure I agree' rather than 'You're wrong'. This puts the focus on you as a person and your views.

TRY NOT TO TAKE COMMENTS PERSONALLY

Try not to take comments personally. If you feel you are being criticised unfairly, it's fine to say, 'I feel I'm being blamed'.

LISTEN CAREFULLY

Listen carefully to what other people say. They may have some valid points or useful information. If so, then say so. Then, when you get the chance, build on those comments to move the meeting forward.

IT CAN BE HELPFUL TO PARAPHRASE

It can be helpful to paraphrase what other people have said. This can help you to check that you have understood what they are saying, reflect on it and potentially move the meeting forward.

REPEATING

Repeating what people have said back to them can be a useful technique if you seriously disagree with them e.g. 'So you're seriously saying that my son is completely happy at school?'

IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING

If you are struggling to get a serious answer to a key question, another useful technique is to keep repeating it in different ways.

ASKING OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Asking open-ended questions can also be useful, e.g. 'Do you have any ideas about how we can help my son to make friends at school?'

OTHER SOURCES OF HELP



ENQUIRE

Enquire, Enquire - The Scottish advice service for additional support for learning the Scottish advice service has lots of tips and guidance on working with schools and handling meetings. N.B. The terminology used in Scotland can vary from the rest of the UK.

THE BRITISH DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION

The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) Empowered Parents pack has lots of guidance on working with schools, most of which will also apply to parents of children with DLD.

To contact Afasic please use one of the following:

Telephone: 020 7490 9410

Email: info@afasic.org.uk

Website: www.afasic.org.uk