

Getting Help at School

by Kathleen Giordano, Education Specialist, TSA

It is common for a child with TS to need some modifications or accommodations in school; some children may need special education services while remaining in the general education setting. Sharing information and resources with the school, parents of children with TS can help the school understand their child. By developing a positive working relationship with school personnel, parents can play a vital role in enhancing and improving their child's school experience and academic performance, and getting help when needed.

RESOURCES

AN INTRODUCTION TO YOUR CHILD

- Many parents have found it helpful to provide a one page description of their child with a photo attached. Begin by writing a brief paragraph that introduces your child and his/her positive attributes so that the teachers see your child as a person who HAS difficulties rather than a child who IS difficult.
- Write a brief bulleted list of challenges and symptoms along with strategies that have been successful in the past
- Provide your contact information

AN INTRODUCTION TO TOURETTE SYNDROME

- The national Tourette Syndrome Association website at <http://tsa-usa.org> has a wealth of information and resources on Tourette Syndrome and co-occurring conditions. Please refer to the Education pages. Email addresses there can be used to ask specific questions regarding TS in education settings
- Basic written materials about Tourette Syndrome from TSA (e.g. the free [Tourette Syndrome Fact Sheet](#)) (See Suggested Additional Tourette Syndrome Resources below)

SPECIAL EDUCATION GUIDE FOR YOUR STATE

Contact the school's guidance office to request a PARENT'S GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION issued by your state's Department of Education (if there is one). (Every state may name it something different.) This will assist you in understanding your child's rights and show you how to go about setting up the appropriate supports

IEP, 504, SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

- For your child to be found eligible for an IEP, he/she must require special education service. Special Education services most often can be provided in your child's general education setting.
- If the IEP committee determines that your child is eligible for an IEP, the U.S. Department of Education states that OHI (Other Health Impaired) is the appropriate classification for children with TS.
- Achieving passing, or even good grades, does not necessarily mean that your child is not qualified to receive either a 504 Plan or an IEP.
- When speaking with school personnel, use the word "appropriate" when referring to 'education', 'supports', 'placement', etc. as this is what they are legally required to provide.

INITIAL CONTACTS WITH YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL

INFORM THEM OF YOUR CHILD'S DIAGNOSIS

Meet with school personnel to let them know that your child has TS and any other related difficulties. This is an important legal first step in ensuring that effective supports are provided

REQUEST EVALUATIONS

If you suspect that your child requires either accommodations or modifications from a 504 Plan or special education services from an Individual Education Plan (IEP), you will want to send a dated letter (keeping a copy for your records) requesting that a complete education evaluation be conducted in order to determine your child's areas of strengths and weaknesses. You will want to list all suspected areas of difficulty which should be evaluated. Attach a copy of the doctor's diagnosis of TS including any of the related disorders (ADHD, OCD, processing deficits, etc.) and literature from the Tourette Syndrome Association. (See sample letter below).

WORKING WITH SCHOOL STAFF

Prior to the beginning of every school term or academic year, request a meeting with teachers to provide them with resource materials, establish a working relationship, and answer any questions the staff may have.

At the first sign of your child struggling in school academically or socially, you will want to initiate the process of having appropriate supports provided so that your child can be successful

Keep documents, records, notes and information regarding meetings and phone conversations in a file for future reference.

SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL TOURETTE SYNDROME RESOURCES

It is always a good idea to prepare yourself by reading materials that TSA provides and to consider what specific supports would assist your child prior to meeting with teachers or attending a meeting.

There are many helpful articles available on the Education pages of the TSA website (tsa-usa.org).

1. Recommended FREE Articles

[TS IS MORE THAN TICS \(Other Important Issues to be Considered\)](#)

[RED FLAGS](#)

[TIPS FOR SCHOOL MEETINGS](#)

2. Available for a modest fee in our online store (items available for immediate download). Click [here](#) to go to the appropriate page in the TSA online store.

Educational Advocacy Manual (E119 and E119DD-downloadable)

Specific Classroom Strategies and Techniques for Students with TS (E115b and E115bDD-downloadable)

Catalog Of Accommodations For Students With TS, ADHD, OCD (E125 and E125DD-downloadable)

Workbook For Conducting A Functional Behavioral Assessment & Writing A Positive Behavior Intervention Plan (E126 and E126DD-downloadable)

Tourette Syndrome is a complicated disorder for which teachers often have not received training or information. Providing them with articles/materials can be helpful; however, it is best to not overwhelm them with too many all at once.

TSA Videos and CD Presentations - click [here](#) to link to the video page in the TSA online store
(Consider donating a video to your child's school)

"A Teacher Talks About Tourette Syndrome" (DVD12NM)

HBO-TSA "I Have Tourette's but Tourette's Doesn't Have Me" (DVD13NM)

Teaching Children with Tourette Syndrome: A Resource for Educators (AV02a)

SAMPLE SCHOOL LETTER TO REQUEST EVALUATIONS

Date:

Dear _____,

My child, _____, has recently been diagnosed with Tourette Syndrome by Dr. _____. Tourette Syndrome is a neurological condition which frequently is accompanied by other disorders. My child has also been diagnosed with (Ex: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Dysgraphia). I am concerned about the impact that these factors are having on his/her educational performance and social emotional well being.

I am, therefore, requesting that my child be observed and evaluated by the school psychologist or other appropriate professional/clinical school personnel as the first step in seeking appropriate supports so that my child may be successful.

I am including a letter of diagnosis from the treating physician and some materials from the national Tourette Syndrome Association to be shared with my child's teachers and the school psychologist. In the interim, I will be more than happy to meet with school personnel working with my child to discuss any signs or symptoms that (he/she) may be exhibiting in the classroom as a result of this diagnosis and what educators can do to assist (him/her).

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. I look forward to hearing from you soon and to working together with school personnel to provide an appropriate learning environment for my child.
Sincerely,

[Return to the TSA Home Page](#)

©2007-2012 Tourette Syndrome Association, Inc. / 42-40 Bell Boulevard / Bayside NY
11361 / 718-224-2999