



THE IEP COACH

Special Education Advocacy | theiecoach.com | (512) 865-1937

Case Study: How We Held Leverage Until the Work Was Done

A records-driven complaint, a partial dismissal, and a full win for one elementary-age child in Texas

Shared with the family's permission. The district is not named.

The Situation

A parent came to The IEP Coach after her elementary-age son, a student in a Texas school district, had been struggling for months. He receives special education services for a autism related disability. He had a behavior plan on paper, but it was not being taught, tracked, or followed in the classroom. The parent had raised concerns with the school directly and gotten nowhere. She needed someone who understood the system from the inside and knew how to make it work for her son instead of around him.

The Problem

The district had a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) on file, but there was no data showing the strategies in that plan were ever actually taught to the child or implemented with any consistency. A plan that looks compliant on paper but fails the child in practice is one of the most common and most damaging gaps in special education. When a BIP is not implemented with fidelity, the child does not just lose services, he loses the chance to build the skills the plan was written to teach him, and elementary-age children have the least room to spare. These are the years foundational skills either take hold or do not.

We filed a formal complaint with the Texas Education Agency on the family's behalf, built entirely around the district's own records and the absence of implementation data. The complaint raised three separate issues.

What Won This Case

- **Leverage was never released early.** The single best decision in this case was refusing to withdraw the complaint until the finalized IEP was in hand and the parent was satisfied. That leverage was held through the drafting and the ARD meeting, exactly where families usually give it away. Everything downstream flowed from it.
- **The reframe after the partial dismissal.** When two of the three issues were dismissed, we did not relitigate them. We redirected that evidence into the surviving issue, and the district's own lack of implementation data became the centerpiece of the case.
- **The frame was changed and held for weeks.** This was never allowed to become a conversation about the child's behavior. It stayed focused on the district's failure to teach and document, from the first meeting to the last signed document. That frame produced an on-the-record acknowledgment from district leadership and led the district to adopt the parent's skill-based goals and BIP language, including a courtesy edit it was not required to make.

- **The resolution was built on performance, not promises.** Compensatory services were tracked on a separate schedule with dated deliverables. Progress-monitoring meetings were scheduled early, and the family's outside clinician was brought to the table. The agreement was written so it could be verified, not just trusted.
- **The room was won without a war.** A warm tone, credit to the team, and patience throughout. Leverage was spent precisely and cashed in collaboratively, at an ARD meeting, the Texas term for the IEP team meeting, rather than a due process hearing. That approach yields more for a child than a fight does.
- **The parent was kept in front of every decision.** Complex items were translated into plain language at each step, the family's own red lines were protected without exception, and full credit for the outcome went to the parent, not to us, when the case closed.
- **We knew when to stop.** At the close, cosmetic items with no real operational effect were let go rather than fought over for the sake of fighting. Knowing the difference between a point worth holding and a point worth conceding is what keeps a family out of a war they do not need.
- **Every document was verified line by line.** Before the complaint was closed, every final document was checked against both the signed agreement and the meeting record, so nothing that had been promised got lost on the way to paper.

Why This Wasn't Luck

A result like this is not an accident, and it is not a matter of getting a favorable district on a good day. It comes from a process we run on every case: a pre-meeting system that goes to work the moment the district sends its drafts, a full counter-package built before the deadline instead of during it, every single ask tracked in writing so nothing gets quietly dropped across a multi-week negotiation, and a final verification pass against both the agreement and the meeting record before anything is considered closed. That process is what turns a strong outcome into a repeatable one, case after case, family after family.

Why This Case Matters

This family's situation is common. A plan exists. The paperwork looks fine. But nobody is checking whether the plan is actually happening in the classroom, and by the time a parent notices, months of instruction and skill-building have already been lost. The path out of that is not a fight. It is a strategy: build the case on records the district cannot dispute, hold your position when the first answer is no, and do not let go of leverage until the work is verified and done.

That is the approach we bring to every family we work with.

If your child's plan is not being followed, or you are staring down a denial and do not know what to do next, we can help. Request a consultation at theiecoach.com or call (512) 865-1937.