



POWAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

I Wish I Knew * PARENT LIAISON SERVICES

I wish that I had known who to reach out to for knowledge and support when my son first qualified for an IEP. The learning curve was a vertical line straight up, and I could not have foreseen that journey would lead me here to Poway Unified School District. I am the Parent Liaison for the Special Education department of PUSD. I have been helping parents through the IEP process since 2000 and work with families of students with special needs at all PUSD school sites--students age 3-22. My role is to facilitate communication, education, and understanding of special education paperwork (IEP's), placement, regulations, and community resources for our families. I work collaboratively with IEP teams to provide support to both the families and staff who work with the student. This includes supporting families at IEP meetings and/or taking parents on observations to classes recommended by an IEP team. I have also worked to support and represent families at special needs focused workgroups within PUSD, as well as, throughout San Diego County. My son had an IEP from age 4-18 so I have both personal and professional experience. I am not an advocate, but someone who is there to help both families and PUSD staff have a positive, supportive, and child-centered relationship.

I have compiled numerous resources that you may find helpful. Please contact me for additional organizations or insight on IEP's, services and supports.

Here are some local organizations. Many offer direct support options, workshops and other local resources:

- **Poway Unified Special Education Dept.** Go to <http://www.powayusd.com/en-US/Departments/Special-Education/Special-Education> and find "SPED Parent Resources" for information on numerous supports.
- **Exceptional Family Resource Center (EFRC)** www.efrconline.org
- **YMCA Youth and Family Services** <http://www.ymca.org/yfs>
- **San Diego Regional Center (SDRC)** (858)576-2996 www.sdrc.org
- **Learning Disabilities:** www.LDASanDiego.org (includes local classes), www.ldonline.org
- **San Diego Family Magazine Special Needs Resource Guide:** <http://specialneedsresourcefoundationofsandiego.org/special-needs-resource-list-san-diego/>
- **San Diego Autism Society** (619)298-1981 www.sd-autism.org
- **National Foundation for Autism Research (NFAR)** www.nfar.org

I am also a member of Poway's Community Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC is a state mandated group established in each Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) to work as a liaison between special needs families and the school district. The group is comprised of parents and school district representatives. Guests are welcome to attend our regular monthly meetings. Please check the PUSD website at <http://www.powayusd.com/en-US/Departments/Special-Education/Community-Advisory-Committee>

Ask me those "I wish that I knew" questions to help you through the IEP process and special education services. The District is dedicated to partnering with families to support our students. I look forward to working with you!

Gina Zanolini, PUSD Parent Liaison
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"I wish I knew the road to take
I wish I knew which choice to make
I need to accept there is no one mold
I just may need someone's hand to hold"
- *Gina Zanolini*