

KIDS TOGETHER, Inc.

When a Professional Says...

by Colleen F. Tomko

If a professional says...	A parent hears...	Suggestions
In my professional opinion...	This is what I'm telling you to do, and I have the power say so. I'm the professional, you are not. My opinion is better than yours. (Parents already know that you are the professional, and that what you have to say is your opinion.)	Ask the parents how they feel about something first, then state how you "feel". Describe your thoughts, what it looks like and then ask the parents again what they think. Remember that parents are the best experts on their own children.
You need to trust us...	We are trying to get you to do what we want, please don't question us. (Parents don't need to trust you, and certainly not just because you say so. You need to earn their trust)	Ask the parents what would make them feel comfortable with your actions. Offer other resources for information and support.
What you need to understand Mrs....	Its my way because I say so, and my viewpoint is the only one that counts. (This may be the most condescending statement of all)	Don't assume that everyone must see things your way. You are one tiny fragment of a child's life, the parents are in it for the long run. They are responsible for doing what is best for their child. Provide tools and accurate information for parents to make educated choices.
We love your child...	Now that we say that we have this great love for your child, you should let us make the decisions for him. (You don't love a child unless your willing stay up all night holding his head up if he is vomiting and donate a kidney if needed without a second thought.)	No one should like, dislike or love a child because they happen to have a disability. You can enjoy things about him, appreciate and respect him, and even care for him, but as long as you are being paid to be with him, there is no love that compares to that of the parents.
This is only a draft, we can change things as we go....	We met without you and decided what your child's goals should be. Because the law says so, we have to give you a chance to make changes, and say that you're a member of the team. We don't want to spend a lot of time on this.	If there is to be a rough draft have team members meet with the parents ahead of time to collaborate goals, and give parents a copy of it before the meeting. Never bring a fully typed report that the parents were not a part of creating to a meeting.

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