



## What Parents Discussed at the Milestones Legal Clinic

### Description

By Rosa K. Hirji

The parent clinic at [Milestones Preschool](#) was a resounding success! My own son, Samir, attended Milestones and I cannot recommend it enough for a supportive, mainstream environment for children with special needs and their parents. It is an awesome place for any child! A heartfelt thanks to Milena Bice for organizing the event, providing food and snacks, and creating a warm environment for parents to share their stories.

We started the clinic by asking parents what concerns they had with their children's education, and this led to a two hour dialogue about special education, advocacy tips, and personal experiences.

Parents asked questions such as: How to determine whether the offer of services by the school district is adequate? For example, how do you know if 30 minutes of OT is enough? What does the one to one aide do, and how does this help the child? When should a parent decide whether or when it is time to request for an initial evaluation? Can the school refuse to evaluate, or require parents to jump through other hoops before an evaluation? Or, conversely, what if parents are not ready for an evaluation – is there something else that can be requested? Should parents think about private evaluations or request that the school district fund an independent evaluation? What are parent's rights in the IEP process?

What is the different between a diagnosis and eligibility for special education? What supports can a school provide to gifted children?

We also talked about charter schools and obligations that charter schools have to children with disabilities. Can they screen out children with disabilities? How do parents enforce their rights in a charter school? Parents shared their frustration with private schools that denied enrollment because of the child's needs.

There were some questions where the answer was a clear explanation of what the law provides. Beyond that, parents simply wanted guidance on how to make the best decisions for their children and whether to trust the school district's recommendation. Parents of special needs children will face these questions every year of schooling. We talked about viewing this as an ongoing process that involves

understanding what supports you can ask from the school, obtaining independent evaluations of the child's needs, and securing an attorney to provide you with counsel and to have your back when things get rough.

In the end, it was more than a legal clinic and a rewarding experience for me. We hope to schedule community based legal clinics in the future. It's a great way to get to know the staff at RKH Law Office, meet other parents, and learn about how to be a strong advocate for your child. To schedule a clinic in your community, call us!

"Thank you so much again for the fantastic presentation at Milestones—you are very impressive and your clients are lucky to have you on their team." M.C.

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