

Presenting Issues:

A participating PCP emailed a consultation request to WI CPCP about a 7-year-old male patient they had been treating for ADHD. Although the ADHD symptoms had decreased since the patient started on stimulant medication, the patient has continued to struggle academically. He becomes frustrated and aggressive at school, with the school often calling the parents to come pick him up early. There are no reported aggressive outbursts at home. The patient is in the regular education program. Per the child's parent, school staff do not feel that there is a need for an Individual Education Plan (IEP), but that "he might need his medication adjusted."

WI CPCP Clinician Recommendations:

- It is important to try to clarify exactly what is causing the current school struggles, as the approach for each reason is different.
- Is something **new** going on, such as anxiety and depression?
 - [Rating scales](#) can be beneficial.
 - If rating scales are positive for either condition, treat the anxiety and/or depression specifically.
- If ADHD symptoms are under good control but the patient just does not seem to be making **academic progress** in one or more subjects:
 - Testing for a learning disability would be recommended
 - No change in ADHD medications would appear warranted
- The parent should contact the school district to request, in writing, to develop an **Individual Education Plan (IEP)**, so that any proper accommodations be put in place to maximize the student's academic success.
 - Note: if the child *already has* an IEP, but is still struggling, it is likely time to review the IEP and adjust.
 - Parents can request an updated review at any time. They **do not** have to wait for the once-per-year formal review.
 - Having a good and thoughtful IEP can minimize the amount of medication needed, as well as protections from repeated suspensions and/or expulsion, for kids with significant behavioral outbursts.
 - Repeatedly calling a parent to come pick up a disruptive child is typically not 'legal' in the sense that it violates the child's right to a Free, Appropriate, Public Education (FAPE).
 - [What to Do When your School Keeps Calling You to Come Get Your Child](#)
 - If school staff are out of ideas on how to help, they should contact the **Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction** to request input from specialists there. Every school district has access to these behavioral specialists.

Resources:

- Examples of accommodations that can be incorporated into IEPs, which families can discuss with the IEP team:
 - [Instructional Strategies to Promote Appropriate Student Behaviors](#)
- Here are links for parent support:
 - [Agencies and Organizations for Parents](#)
 - [Special Education Strategies and Referrals](#)

Teaching Points:

- A working knowledge of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process is particularly important, so that clinicians can effectively help parents advocate for their child's needs in the school setting.
 - [Nuts and bolts regarding the IEP process and special education](#)
 - [IEP Mini-Modules](#)
- Legal timeline for IEP process:
 - [Evaluation Timeline](#)
- More information about specific learning disabilities:
 - [Specific Learning Disabilities](#)