



**Key Facts
about AI and
Good Ways to
Use It**

A Family's Guide to Using AI for Advocacy

In Early Intervention



**Protection,
Privacy, and
Possible
Problems When
Using AI**

AI tools (like ChatGPT) can be powerful supports for families navigating early intervention. This guide is designed to help you use AI confidently and safely – in ways that strengthen your advocacy, protect your child's privacy, and support positive working relationships with your early intervention team.



**Positive and
Productive
Ways to Use AI
in Dispute
Resolution**



CADRE

the center for appropriate dispute
resolution in special education



Office of Special Education Programs
U.S. Department of Education



Did You Know?

- AI does not know your child, your family's priorities, your service coordinator, or your specific situation.
- AI makes mistakes – including about early intervention law, procedures, and services.
- AI holds on to personal data. Information you type may be stored and used to train future AI systems.
- AI has affirmation bias – it tends to agree with or reinforce what you say, even when you are wrong.
- AI-generated documents can sound formal and official but still contain serious errors.

Good Ways to Use AI

AI can be a helpful preparation tool. Consider using it to:

- Learn common early intervention terms (like IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan), natural environments, service coordinator, transition)
- Organize your family's concerns and priorities into a clear, focused list
- Generate questions to ask at an IFSP meeting or during a visit with a provider
- Think of collaborative, team-focused ways to raise a concern with your service coordinator
- Practice how you might explain your child's needs or your family's priorities before a meeting
- Translate phrases or short communications – AI translation is generally accurate, but it's best to confirm meaning with a trusted bilingual person

Example: You're preparing for an IFSP meeting and want to bring up a concern about your child's speech services. You can ask AI: "Help me make a list of questions to ask about speech services at an IFSP meeting." AI can give you a starting point – then you should review and adjust it based on what you know about your child and your family's priorities.

Possible Problems with AI

AI answers the question you ask. It does not fully understand your family, your early intervention team, or what your child needs right now. Additionally, AI does not understand how one action may impact another.

Before you act on AI advice, pause and ask:

- Will this help us solve the problem – or make it bigger?
- Is there a more collaborative step to try first?

If you are not careful, AI can:

- Suggest steps that escalate conflict with your early intervention team
- Provide legal information that is wrong, incomplete, or does not apply to your state's early intervention program (AI may rely on special education instead of early intervention law)
- Use language that sounds threatening or adversarial
- Put your child's private information at risk



Protect Your Child's Privacy

Information you type into an AI tool may be stored digitally and used to train future AI systems. Once shared, that information may not be possible to remove.

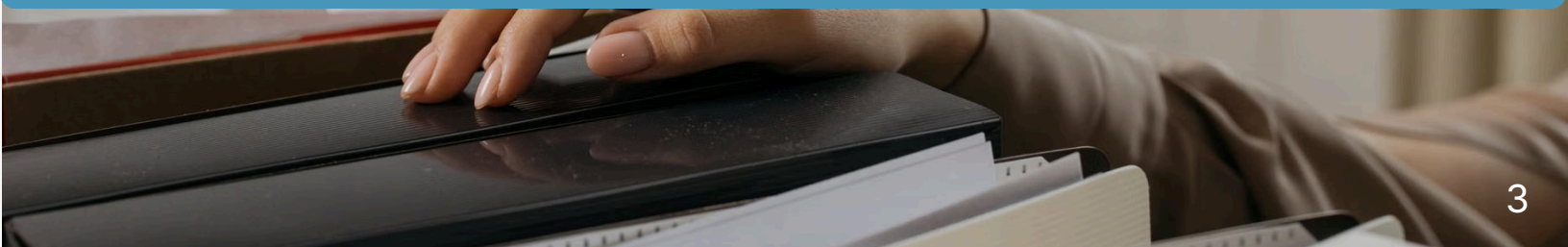
Most AI tools are not confidential. Avoid typing in:

- Your child's name, birthday, or other identifying information
- Service coordinator or provider names
- Your early intervention program, agency, or school district name
- Your child's IFSP
- Evaluations, reports, or detailed medical information

Privacy Tip

Use general language to protect your family's privacy. For example:

- Instead of your child's name → say "my child"
- Instead of your service coordinator's name → say "my service coordinator" or "the team"
- Instead of pasting from the IFSP → describe the concern in general terms



Use AI to Get Ready – Don't Let It Decide for You

AI works best as a preparation tool, not a decision-maker. You can use it to organize your thoughts, understand terminology, or draft a starting point for a message – but always review what it produces before using it.

AI is risky when you:

- Copy and send an AI-written email to your service coordinator or provider without carefully reviewing it
- Let AI tell you when to “escalate”
- Rely on AI to decide whether to file a State complaint or request a due process hearing

Getting Better Responses from AI

How you ask questions matters. Try prompts like:

- “Help me write a calm, collaborative email to my child’s service coordinator about my concern that...”
- “What questions should I consider asking at my child’s IFSP meeting about [topic]?”
- “What does IFSP mean in simple language?”

Always review AI responses critically – ask yourself whether the advice fits your specific situation before acting on it.



Be Extra Careful when Filing State Complaints and Due Process Hearing Requests

AI can help you understand the general process, but it often creates filings that are unclear, inaccurate, or missing required information. These errors can lead to delays, dismissals, or “no findings.” Early intervention dispute resolution procedures may also vary by state. Before filing something formal, consider:

- Reading your Procedural Safeguards Notice (your rights document)
- Talking with your state Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) or Community Parent Resource Center (CPRC)
- Contacting your service coordinator or early intervention program supervisor
- Reaching out to your state’s Lead Agency for early intervention to ask about your options

Working Together and Protecting Your Rights Can Happen at the Same Time

Trying to solve problems early does not mean giving up your rights. You always have the right to:

- Request or refuse evaluations and services
- Disagree with decisions about your child's eligibility, services, or IFSP
- Ask for meetings and written responses from your program or agency
- Request mediation, file a State complaint, or request a due process hearing – at any time
- Participate fully in all IFSP planning and decision-making as an equal member of the team



A Simple Guideline

Before you act on AI-generated advice, ask:

“Will this help solve the problem – or make it harder to solve?”

Some AI-generated responses may sound confident and official but can push toward formal complaints or legal action before more collaborative options have been tried. Escalating too quickly can put strain on your relationship with your early intervention team and sometimes make it harder to get the outcome that is best for your child and family. Always consider whether a phone call, a written question, or a meeting with your service coordinator might be a better first step.

Used well, AI can help you clarify the process, work collaboratively, and prepare you for conversations with your team. However, if your use of AI escalates conflict or increases risk, slow down and consider getting human support – from your service coordinator, a family advocate, or a Parent Training and Information Center.

