

Testimony by: Maria Engborg
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Buenas Noches. My name is Maria Engborg and I have a 19 year old son, Chris who was born with multiple disabilities. He has received special education services since he was born.

He is now in our community working 3 days per week with a job coach, and auditing 2 college courses. He plays on a hockey team in our community, he loves Ozzy Osborne music, and he is very savvy with his I-phone and his computer, probably more than me! He is now learning how to take the bus and the train in the process of becoming an independent adult.

Our dream for our child is simple, "we want him to find a partner that will love him, we want him to live independly, and we want him to have friends, to have a college education and to be a productive member of our society. Along our journey the school system try to take away any hope and dreams we had for Chris, by telling us over and over again that he had severe mental retardation, and would never be independent. In order to secure the appropriate services for our son, we entered into mediation with our school district.

This feat would have never happened without the ongoing support, education and training the Office of Protection and Advocacy has provided for my family. They thought our family our rights and responsibilities under IDEA, and tough us how to advocate for the appropriate services my child was entitled to. Most importantly they tough us how to be an effective advocate, and how to be an active member of our son's team. They also taught my son how to advocate for himself which is a life long skill.