



How to Advocate for Your Child In School After Epilepsy Surgery

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What we'll cover today

- How to handle IEP and 504 meetings with confidence.
- Advocating for the right classroom accommodations.
- Protecting your child's rights regarding seizures, medical absences, and emergency plans.
- How to organize your medical team, manage behavior concerns, and speak up so the school listens.





Unique Challenges

- **Invisible Burden:** Recurrent seizures, memory gaps, processing fatigue, learning and mental health challenges.
- **Medical Impact:** Absences, in-school health needs, exclusion from activities or curriculum.
- **Duration:** Conditions can be temporary or lifelong, complicating planning.
- **Confusion:** Uncertainty often stalls needed support.

| Legal Protections: Your Safety Net



Section 504 / ADA

Ensures **Equal Access**.

Prevents discrimination.

Changes **how** a child learns, like rest breaks, extra time, virtual instruction, or a modified schedule.



IDEA (IEP)

Ensures **Specialized Instruction** (Special Education). For kids whose medical journey impacts **what** they learn. Focuses on unique academic, functional, and behavioral needs.



Health Plans (IHP)

Specific medical care at school.

Outlines diagnoses, daily needs, emergency procedures. Best when merged into the IEP for legal accountability.

(American Academy of Pediatrics. (2025, July 14). [Supporting children and youth with epilepsy at school.](#))

The Comprehensive IEP

- ★ **The Whole Child:** Covers academic achievement, functional performance, social emotional (including behavior and self-regulation), and medical safety in one document
- ★ **Academic Core:** Add specific catch-up goals for reading, math, and writing if significant instruction was missed .
- ★ **Real-Life Accommodations:** Ask for practical tools like elevator passes, a second set of textbooks for home, scheduled brain breaks, or assistive tech.

PRO TIP: THE IEP IS A LEGAL CONTRACT

It must cover **EVERYTHING**: learning, attention, processing speed, behavior, and social-emotional needs. If it affects their school day, it belongs in the IEP.



Meaningful Assessments

- ✓ Comprehensive evaluation in **all areas of suspected disability**
- ✓ Evaluator **expertise** (brain surgery + invisible impacts)
- ✓ **Collaborative** approach (parents and child are part of the process)
- ✓ **Re-evaluate** *at least* every three years (don't accept records review)



Medical Information and Emergency Planning



Detailed Medical Information in IEPs

Individualized Education Plans should include comprehensive medical information (diagnoses, medications, accommodations) to ensure the school is prepared to support the student's needs. (see [Managing Epilepsy in Schools | Managing Health Conditions in School](#), Centers for Disease Control)



Seizure Action Plans

Create a comprehensive seizure action plan outlining the steps to take in the event of a seizure. Incorporate this plan into the student's IEP or 504 plan. (See [Seizure Action Plan Coalition & Seizure Safe Schools Courses](#), Epilepsy Foundation)



Individualized Health Plans (IHPs)

Develop detailed Individualized Health Plans (IHPs) that outline the student's medical needs, emergency protocols, and responsibilities of school staff. Include mental health diagnosis and support needs.



Emergency & Evacuation Plans

Create clear, actionable emergency plans that detail steps to take during a medical emergency, including communication tools, sensory needs, access to medication, evacuation procedures, and staff training.

Social emotional impacts



Attendance & Truancy Issues



Addressing Frequent
Absences



Letters to
the school



Flexibility with
Scheduling

PRO TIP:

The school cannot punish the child for medically related absences.

Building Your Team



Open communication
between parents, school,
medical professionals



Importance of
parental
involvement



Preparing detailed
input for IEP
meetings

**Students with complex medical needs require
comprehensive supports and personalized education.**

Training and Accessibility



Training for all staff who interact with the student



Supports in every setting (lunch, recess, field trips) with needed accommodations



Including extracurricular activities

Schools must create a safe and supportive environment for all students, including those with complex medical needs or disabilities.



Inclusion & Supports

- Mainstream is the starting point.
- Explore general education accommodations.
- Keep the child connected to peers and curriculum.
- Some students may need 1:1 support to access the school day.

The Placement Continuum



Mainstream

Full inclusion with supports is the legal starting point and the goal.



Homebound (Gen Ed)

For temporary medical recovery. Provides minimal instruction during short-term recovery periods.



Homebound (IDEA)

A specialized IEP placement for long-term needs. Requires full FAPE, including regular assessments and services.

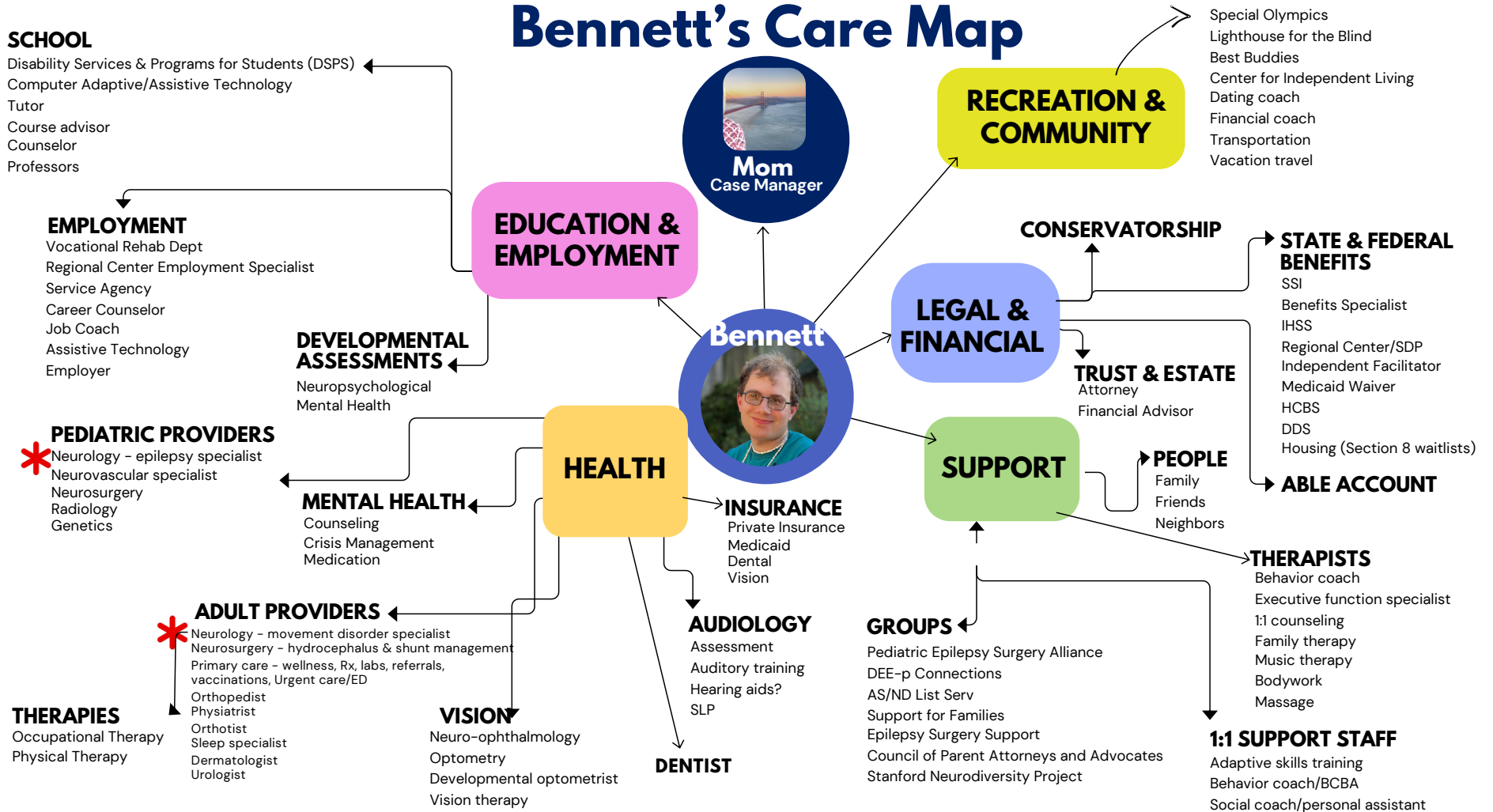


Preparing for the Future

Postsecondary Planning:

- Transition goals in the IEP
- Foster self-advocacy skills
- Prepare for college or the workplace
- Healthcare management is key

Bennett's Care Map



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School Advocacy Toolkit



[Goal Bank](#)

Our IEP GoalBank includes sample goals in Literacy, Math, Assistive Technology, Hearing & Listening, AAC, Behavior, Speech & Language, Executive Function, Life Skills, Health, OT, PT & APE, Vision, O&M, and Transition.



[Special Education Resource Guide](#)

A comprehensive spreadsheet designed for parents, caregivers, and educators; includes accommodations, related services, staff training, and more.



[The Almost Everything List](#)

Our resource list includes information about school, adult life, financial assistance, decision-making, family resources, and more. Be sure to check back regularly for new resources.



[Transition Roadmap for Youth with Neurological Conditions](#)

This course covers the transition to adulthood, healthcare transition, future planning, decision-making, and more.



[Educational Transition For Youth With Neurological Conditions](#)

100+ page guide to help use the IEP to support the transition process; includes info on health transition, college resources, template letters, and checklists.



[Our website](#) and [YouTube channel](#)

Our website and YouTube channel offer comprehensive, valuable resources, including guides and webinars on learning, therapies, and more.

Thank you

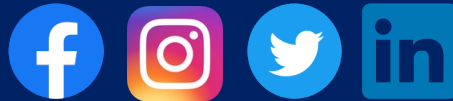
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research
information + resources
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