



Being Proactive to Resolve Conflict: Next Steps in Facilitation

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What is IEP Facilitation (FIEP)?

- A FIEP is an option for early conflict prevention available to parents of children with disabilities and to LEAs
- A trained impartial professional helps the IEP teams with the IEP process. The facilitator helps:
 - Keep the meeting focused on the student
 - Ensures everyone at the table has a voice
 - Encourages active listening by all participants
 - Keep the group from getting stuck on just one issue



Setting up your facilitation program: procedures

- This is a voluntary process but to ensure consistency in implementation an LEA should set up program procedures.

TEAMWORK



Establishing a FIEP Program

Questions to consider:

- What do we hope to achieve?
- Who are the LEA decision-makers to establish this process?
- Are there costs associated with this process?
 - How much?
 - For what purposes?
 - From what sources?



Who are the facilitators?

- How many facilitators are needed?
- What options for facilitators are available?
- What training and experience should facilitators have?
- What model should be practiced?
- How much time should they provide?
- How much do they need to know about special education laws, policies, language and practices?



Who are the facilitators

- How will they assure confidentiality?
- Who will decide if facilitator is qualified– how?
- How will facilitators be evaluated?
- What additional training will be required?

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When to Request a FIEP

Items to consider:

- How early in the process?
 - Concerns?
 - Lack of trust?
 - Potential for dispute?
 - Position on certain issues?

- Preventative rather than reactive?



How to Request a Facilitated IEP

Items to consider:

- Who can request?
 - Parent?
 - LEA Representative?

How is the request approved/denied?

- Do you have a facilitation program coordinator?
- Is there a formal process and forms?
- How will this meeting be scheduled?
- Are there any conflict of interest issues?



What is the role of the facilitator

Items to consider:

- Will the assigned facilitator contact the ARD chair and the parent prior to the meeting?
 - Explain the process
 - Verifies the time and place of meeting
 - Answer any additional procedural questions from either party
 - Get required agreement forms and signatures



- During the meeting what are the responsibilities of the facilitator?
 - Assist the committee to work effectively for the benefit of the student
 - Does not act as a decision-maker or provide advice
 - Remains unbiased
 - Cannot be asked to testify or subpoenaed to testify about ARDC decisions
 - Maintains FERPA
 - Is not responsible for the IEP implementation



- What happens after the meeting?
 - Provide time and effort details for billing purposes
 - Provide self-evaluation, if required by the LEA's procedures
 - Fulfill any additional training or procedural requirements the LEA may determine

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Differences between FIEP and Mediation

FIEP

1. Facilitator helps with meeting process and helps prevent the escalation of conflict.
2. Facilitator works with parties before they have reached impasse when the discussion is difficult and complex.
3. The outcome is the IEP is revised, completed or not.
4. The entire team stays together for the meeting

Mediation

1. Mediator helps parties work towards resolving specific disputes.
2. Mediator works with parties after impasse has been reached
3. Outcome is a written agreement that resolves the dispute and is a legally binding contract or no written agreement.
4. The team can work together but the mediator may work separately with specific parties during the process.



Do you have the complete picture?

- Facilitated IEPs are just one of the puzzle pieces in the conflict resolution process.
- Do you have all your pieces together for a comprehensive picture?

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Questions?



"Lucky thing you took that negotiation course!"



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