Facilitated IEP’s

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Reports from states which now offer this option indicate that it is effective in helping IEP teams reach consensus.

The objective of facilitation is to help a group improve its process for solving problems and making decisions so that it can achieve its goals and increase its overall effectiveness.
Is there a requirement that IEP Facilitation be offered?

- At this time, IEP Facilitation is not required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or any state regulation.
Who is a facilitator?

- A facilitator is a person who is:
  - Acceptable to both parties
  - Substantively neutral/impartial
  - An advocate for the IEP process, not for either party
  - A person who models effective communication and listening techniques
A facilitator is not:

- A decision maker
- A member of the IEP team
- A consultant or trainer
- A clerical assistant to the IEP team
- Responsible for evaluating any IEP component
- A judge of what the IEP team does
What are the benefits of a facilitated IEP meeting?

- Concerns may be resolved at a local level.
- The trained facilitator can assist keeping the IEP meeting on track with regard to content and process.
- The challenges of communication during an IEP meeting where parties are encountering continued difficulty may best be handled by an impartial facilitator.
When might you use a facilitator?

- You sense that discussions or interactions at IEP meetings are creating an acrimonious climate.
- You want some assistance before the relationships start to fray
- Multiple IEP meetings are not reaching resolution or completing a quality plan.
What can you expect a facilitator to do?

- Assist the team in establishing an agenda
- Guide the discussion and focus on the student
- Make sure everyone has a chance to speak and be heard
- Help to keep the team on task and within time allotted
How is facilitation different from mediation?

- It occurs at a regular IEP team meeting.
- There is no written agreement other than an IEP and the prior written notice.
- Mediation addresses a broader range of issues and is typically used when there is a significant disagreement which the parties have been unable to resolve.
How are the results different in each format?

- States report between 75-85% at mediation conferences, written agreements result.
- States report to CADRE that 75-95% of facilitations result in IEP’s.
Participant evaluations are the key to quality control. *Pat McGinnis, Minnesota*

The intake process of talking with parents and school representative is crucial to assisting them. *Fran Fletcher, Delaware*

We limit IEP facilitations for any one student’s IEP meetings. This is to encourage IEP teams to begin implementing the facilitation skills demonstrated to them on their own. *Stephen Berwick, New Hampshire*
We piloted an IEP Improvement Academy. This is provided to LEA IEP teams to meet throughout the year and focus on improving their IEP process. *Greg Abell, Washington*

A program is only as good as the people providing the service, so great care in choosing the facilitators is very important. *Melanie Reese, Idaho*

Facilitators felt they needed more training in conflict resolution. *Mary Eaddy, South Carolina*
Further resources

- Consortium of Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Education
directionservice.org