

IEP FACILITATION

CEDR (DoDEA's CENTER FOR EARLY DISPUTE RESOLUTION)

What Is It?

IEP facilitation is a process in which an impartial person assists members of a special education IEP team to communicate effectively and interact respectfully, with the goal of creating an IEP that will meet the student's needs.

IEP teams can usually reach agreement, but sometimes they need the help. Facilitators can be particularly valuable when parents and school staff are not getting along and are finding it difficult to focus on and communicate about the student's needs. The facilitator can help maintain open communication where all members of the IEP team can be heard and encourage collaboration and creative problem solving. The facilitator can clarify points of agreement, difference, and potential misunderstanding. This clarification can allow the discussion to move forward more productively so that the IEP team can effectively resolve disagreements and successfully develop an appropriate IEP. The process can also help build and improve relationships among IEP team members and between parents and schools.

Either parents/sponsors or school personnel can request a facilitated IEP, but both must agree to have a facilitator present at the IEP meeting. The services of an IEP facilitator are provided by DoDEA at no cost to parents or sponsors.

The *IEP facilitator* is an impartial, trained individual and is not a member of the IEP team. The IEP facilitator does not take sides, determine who is right or wrong, or make substantive decisions about the IEP. Instead, the facilitator supports the group as a whole, helping its members to keep their focus on the student's needs and to develop an appropriate IEP.

IEP Facilitation Can Be a Good Idea When:

- » Previous IEP meetings for this student have resulted in little agreement or have failed to produce a complete, high quality plan
- » Much of the time in previous meetings has been devoted to emotional disagreements and recrimination, rather than to the work of creating an IEP
- » Relationships between the school and parents/sponsors are becoming strained

IEP Facilitation Is Not Appropriate When:

- » The people involved want or need someone to take a side or decide who will win
- » The situation presents issues that are unrelated to the IEP (other forms of mediation or facilitation may be appropriate, however – contact CEDR)



How Do I Get More Information?

For further information about mediation at DoDEA, contact CEDR (DoDEA's Center for Early Dispute Resolution) at cedr@hq.dodea.edu; 703 588-3060 or see www.dodea.edu/offices/cedr

For mediation of EEO claims, contact DMEQ: <http://dodea.edu/offices/eoo>