

INDEPENDENT FACILITATION

Facilitated Individualized Education Program (FIEP) Meetings INDEPENDENT FACILITATOR

What is IEP facilitation?

Facilitation is a term used for a set of principles, skills, and practices aimed at helping groups work collaboratively and make quality decisions.

A facilitated IEP meeting is a voluntary, student-focused method of dispute resolution in which the team is guided by a trained, impartial person (facilitator).

The school and parent may agree to use a facilitator when the team is struggling to stay on track or when issues are complex or consensus cannot be reached.

In a facilitated IEP meeting, the facilitator focuses on process, not content.

A facilitator helps the team:

1. Establish an agenda and meeting guidelines.
2. Set a positive tone.
3. Focus discussion on the student's needs.
4. Engage in effective communication and problem solving.
5. Ensure each team member has an opportunity to participate.
6. Accomplish the meeting's purpose and goals.
7. Build consensus.



Independent Facilitator

Typically, a member of the team leads the IEP meeting. Sometimes a school person with expertise in facilitation is called in to help the team complete the process.

However, when IEP teams reach an impasse or a disagreement is anticipated, it may be helpful to have an independent, trained facilitator guide the meeting.

An independent facilitator is impartial and is an independent contractor or other qualified individual who has received training in facilitating IEP meetings.

Process Advocate

“The HOW”

- ◆ Provides Meeting Structures
- ◆ Supports Interactions
- ◆ Fosters Communication
- ◆ May Use a Problem Solving Process
- ◆ Promotes Consensus Building

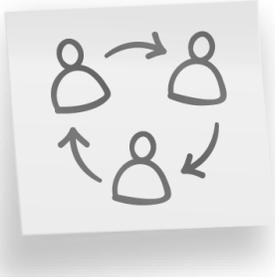
Not a Content Advocate

“The WHAT”

- ◆ Not a Member of the Team
- ◆ Not Involved in the Situation
- ◆ Not a Contributor to the IEP
- ◆ Not a Legal or Policy Resource
- ◆ Not a Decision-Maker

INDEPENDENT FACILITATION

Independent Facilitator's Role



- ◆ Provides structure and meeting management.
- ◆ Encourages open communication.
- ◆ Supports the team as a whole by facilitating collaborative discussions and solutions.
- ◆ Assists the team in resolving conflicts and disagreements related to the IEP.
- ◆ Does not take sides or place blame.
- ◆ Does not support a particular view, idea, person, or solution.
- ◆ Does not determine if a decision is right or wrong.

Benefits of IEP Facilitation

“A facilitator contributes structure and process to interactions so teams function effectively and make quality decisions.”

Ingrid Bens

May build and improve relationships between school and parents.

Models effective communication and listening.

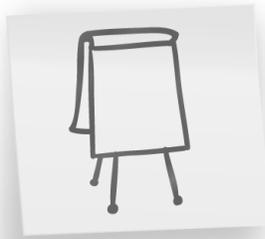
Provides opportunity for team members to resolve conflicts if they arise.

Encourages parents and professionals to identify new options to address unresolved problems.

May use discussion tools and problem-solving techniques.

Supports follow through on recommendations.

Facilitator Interventions



Structure / Process	Interactions
Agenda / Meeting Purpose / Goal	Listening to Understand
Discussion Guidelines	Questioning with Purpose
Futures Conversation Chart	Paraphrasing / Summarizing
Collection and Recording of Ideas	Synthesizing Ideas
Problem Solving Process	Modeling Consensus Language
Decision Points / Criteria	Intervening Intentionally