



Exceptional Children Division

Facilitated Individualized Education Program (FIEP) Expectations, Roles, and Responsibilities

What is IEP Facilitation?

IEP Facilitation is an optional, informal process of dispute resolution, not required by the IDEA. The state educational agency (SEA) or school district/local education agency (LEA) may provide this option to parents and schools. A Facilitated IEP meeting is the same as any other IEP meeting, except that a facilitator organizes a mutually agreeable meeting agenda and facilitator helps with communication among team members. The facilitator does not make decisions about the student's IEP. The goal of a Facilitated IEP (FIEP) meeting is to develop an IEP that is supported by team members and benefits the student.

- Families and schools must agree to have a facilitator join an IEP meeting.
- Facilitators maintain open communication and ensure that everyone at the IEP meeting can participate fully.
- If disagreements arise during the meeting, a facilitator can help the team clarify and resolve them.
- Facilitators assist with keeping the focus of the meeting on the mutually agreeable meeting agenda based on the unique needs of the student.

The Benefits of Facilitation:

The facilitator models effective communication and listening, and works with the participants in the IEP meeting to identify points on which they agree and disagree. In addition, IEP facilitation can:

- Build and improve relationships among IEP team members, especially when they are having difficulty working well together;
- Encourage parents and professionals to consider new options to address unresolved problems;
- Help resolve disagreements more quickly than with other dispute resolution options; and
- Maintain decision-making process with team members who know the student.

GOALS:

The overall goals of the FIEP process are:

1. Assist the parent and LEA in navigating the IEP process;
2. Facilitate constructive conversation and collaboration during IEP meetings to reach meeting goals/outcomes;
3. Developing an agreed action plan or resolution of issues of both parties to move forward without intervention.



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EXPECTATIONS:

When engaged in the Facilitated IEP process, all participants agree to the following expectations before and during the FIEP process:

1. Willingness to engage in a courteous, respectful manner;
2. Willingness to be an active listener and participant;
3. Willingness to engage in constructive problem-solving based on the student's unique needs;
and
4. Willingness to follow-through on agreed upon action steps that may be developed from the FIEP process.



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ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

| Participant: | Typical roles during FIEP process (examples): |
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| Parent: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating for student • Providing information from the home/community • Providing information (data) from outside service providers and medical providers about student (if available) • Reporting observed strengths and weaknesses for social and academic functioning in the community and at home |
| LEA/Administrator/ Special Education Teacher/Regular Education Teacher: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating for student • Providing information (data) from school about student's progress academically and socially in the school environment • Report observed strengths and weaknesses for social and academic functioning in the school environment • Providing guidance around services and policies regarding EC services for student in their school district • Providing options for problem-solving of concerns raised |
| Facilitator: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating an intake process prior to the meeting to hear the concerns for both parents and LEA • Creating an agenda based upon parties' concerns and/or IEP meeting purposes • Developing ground rules for meeting • Assist IEP team to focus/refocus on mutually agreeable agenda • Providing opportunities for participants to share ideas and concerns during the meeting • Guiding discussion by asking student-focused questions • Keeping team members on task and prioritize an efficient use of time • Asking questions to clarify points of disagreement and help identify workable solutions • <u>Not</u> taking sides, impose decisions on the team, place blame, or determine whether decisions are right or wrong • Building an action plan for implementation for IEP team for accountability upon exiting FIEP process (if needed) • <u>Not</u> providing policy or regulatory guidance to either party |