

# INTRODUCTION TO IEP FACILITATION

Effective collaboration and shared problem solving through facilitation

Arizona Department of Education  
Legal/Dispute Resolution

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## PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- Arizona Department of Education Dispute Resolution unit
- National Facilitated IEP (FIEP) trends
- Arizona FIEP commitments and benefits
- FIEP training- Standardizing your meeting practices
- Parent perspective
- Raising Special Kids

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<http://www.azed.gov/disputeresolution/>

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NATIONAL TRENDS IN DISPUTE RESOLUTION UNDER THE IDEA

- The IDEA requires states to offer formal processes to resolve conflicts arising between parents and schools.
- Use of these formal processes has declined since the full implementation of IDEA 2004.
- Much of that decline results from the use of early, more collaborative approaches to resolve IDEA-related disputes between families and schools.

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NATIONAL TRENDS IN DISPUTE RESOLUTION UNDER THE IDEA

- States are making significant investments in early collaborative alternative dispute resolution activities:
  - 43 states and jurisdictions are providing, developing, or exploring the use of IEP facilitation;
  - 29 of these currently offer IEP facilitation statewide (compared to 9 in 2005); and
  - At least 25 states support other activities, including local capacity building, ombudspersons, stakeholder training, advisory opinions, and other innovative approaches.
- Some states indicate that the use of collaborative approaches is linked to less use of formal processes, leading to fiscal savings, increased system efficiencies, and improved school-family relationships.

Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE), October 2009

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States Offering IEP Facilitation in 2015

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INTRODUCING A FACILITATED IEP CULTURE TO YOUR PEA:

Arizona step 1: IEP facilitation trainings

- o Beginning in 2014, Dispute Resolution committed to provide state-wide capacity building FIEP trainings.
- o Through July 2016, 826 people have participated in these training from 120 districts/charters.

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LET'S TALK ABOUT WORST CASE IEP MEETINGS...



1. What rules- explicit or implicit- did group members violate during the worst meeting?
2. I would be ecstatic if this training could help me to figure out to do when...
3. My worst fear as a facilitator of an IEP meeting is...
4. What behavior did various people exhibit as the group became ineffective and/or dysfunctional?

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WHAT IS A PEA-LED FACILITATED IEP MEETING?

- o A PEA-led facilitated IEP meeting is one in which:
  - A PEA employee, designated as the facilitator, assists the IEP team in developing an IEP that provides a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to the student.
  - An IEP is developed by a collaborative team whose members share responsibility for the meeting process and results.
  - Decision-making and any conflicts that arise are managed through the use of facilitation skills.
  - Keeps the meeting focused on the student.

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HOW DOES A FIEP CULTURE BENEFIT YOUR PEA?

- o Builds and improves relationships among IEP team members and between parents and schools
- o Keeps the meeting focused on the student
- o Models effective communication and listening
- o Provides opportunities for team members to resolve conflicts if they arise
- o Supports the full participation of all IEP team members
- o No cost to the parties and typically less stressful than formal dispute resolution options
- o Is the IEP meeting and thus does not require a separate meeting




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FIEP TRAINING AGENDA

- DAY 1- THE NUTS AND BOLTS  
 Welcome and Introductions  
 Worst Case IEP Meetings  
 Dispute Resolution  
 National Trends  
 Creating a Facilitated IEP Culture in Arizona  
 Break  
 The FAPE Mandate  
 The IEP Team  
 Lunch  
 Prior to the IEP Meeting Preparation  
 The IEP Meeting  
 Break  
 The IEP Meeting  
 Wrap up




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FIEP TRAINING AGENDA

- DAY 2- THE PEOPLE  
 Welcome Back  
 Parent Participation  
 Communication Skills  
 Conflict  
 Role-Play and Reflection  
 Break  
 Interest vs Position  
 Role-Play and Reflection  
 Lunch  
 Meeting Tools  
 Role-Play and Reflection  
 Break  
 Facilitation Techniques  
 Handling Difficult People  
 Role-Play and Reflection  
 Dealing with Impasse  
 How do you bring this back to your district or charter?




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CREATING A STATE-WIDE FACILITATED IEP CULTURE

Arizona step 2: State-wide facilitated IEP system

- During the 2016-2017 school year, a state-wide facilitated IEP system will be established.
- Similar to the current mediation system:
  - The parent(s) or the public education agency must contact ADE/DR to request a facilitation
  - ADE/DR obtains assurances that both parties are willing to participate and a facilitator is assigned
  - At no cost to either party
- The facilitators:
  - Maintain impartiality and do not represent the parent, student, school district/charter school, or state education agency
  - Does not make decisions. The members of the IEP team are the decision-makers




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VISION

The Arizona FIEP Program's vision is to build capacity among educators and families to ensure that collaborative, student-focused IEP teams are equipped to make sound decisions in the development of IEPs that offer children with disabilities a free appropriate public education.




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*"Success depends upon previous preparation, and without such preparation there is sure to be failure."*

*~ Confucius*




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## IEP TEAM

The IEP team must include:

- The child's parents
  - The adult student, if legal rights have transferred
- Not less than one of the child's regular education teachers
- Not less than one of the child's special education teachers
- Individual to explain evaluation results
- A representative of the public school
- The student when secondary transition is being discussed

The IEP team may include other team members as needed.

- Representative of an outside agency that may provide/pay for supports or services **after** obtaining parent consent
- Someone invited by the school or parent

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## PRIOR TO THE MEETING

Know the IEP team members and their roles and responsibilities

- If you are a required team member, you are at the meeting for a reason and have a job to do.
- No one likes to participate if they do not fully understand their role.
- Begins the creation of a true team.
- It is the facilitator's responsibility to educate team members about their roles.

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## DURING THE IEP MEETING

Roles and responsibilities

- As a part of the introduction, each of the team members should state their names and their roles.

For example:

"Hi, I'm Randy. I am Sally's second grade general education teacher. Sally spends most of her day in my classroom. I monitor how she is progressing in the general education curriculum, and what accommodations work for her in my classroom. I am here today as an expert on the second grade curriculum, and can answer questions about the second grade. I will also be the time-keeper at today's meeting."

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PRIOR TO THE MEETING

Pre-Meeting Interviews with:

- Parent
- School-based IEP team members (which may include non-required team members)
- Student
- Outside Agency Representatives\*

Purpose of pre-meeting interviews:

- “De-mystifies” the process
- Works to build trust
- Helps to prevent surprises at the IEP meeting
- Helps gather information to create the meeting agenda

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PRIOR TO THE MEETING

<b>Agenda</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Welcome, Introduction and Roles</li> <li>▪ Review ground rules, parking lot, action plan</li> <li>▪ The IEP:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PLAAFP</li> <li>▪ Measurable annual goals</li> <li>▪ Services/supports</li> <li>▪ Educational placement</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Conclusion</li> <li>▪ Procedural Safeguards</li> <li>▪ Parking lot, Action plan</li> </ul>

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PRIOR TO THE MEETING

Establish Ground Rules




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DURING THE IEP MEETING

Arrival of the IEP team members

- Use your first in-person contact with the parties to begin establishing rapport and setting the climate for a productive Facilitated IEP meeting.
- If possible, escort the parties into the room and to their seats.
- Before the formal introduction of roles and responsibilities, introduce yourself, learn their names, clarify again whether you will be using first or last name.




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DURING THE IEP MEETING

The opening statement

- The purpose of a good, succinct opening statement is to:
  - Create a safe and positive environment
  - Clarify the facilitator's role, the purpose and expectations of the process
  - Allow parties to develop trust in the facilitator and the process
  - Answer any additional questions the parties may have about the process
- Refer to "Facilitator Opening Statement Checklist"




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DURING THE IEP MEETING

The Parking Lot

- A place to add topics that are mentioned during the IEP meeting that are outside of the IEP
- Reassures the parties that these will be addressed, either at a later date or at the end of the meeting
- Include in project plan sheet
- Examples of parking lot items:
  - Cafeteria/lunch items
  - Playground
  - Kids being "mean"
  - Specific teacher concerns
  - Bus
  - Nursing and care plan issues




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THE IEP MEETING CONCLUSION

- o Briefly summarize decisions
- o Action Plan Sheet – Including items from the Parking Lot
- o Procedural Safeguards Notice




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Parent Training and Information Center

- Raising Special Kids is Arizona’s Parent Training and Information Center (PTI)
- Providing special education training and assistance to families of children with disabilities from birth to 26 years of age
- Every state has at least one center funded through the U.S. Department of Education under Part D of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)



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What Can Families Expect From Us?

- Confidentiality
- Connection to community resources
- Opportunities for training on a variety of topics
- Spanish or English support and trainings
- We work hard to make sure all services are available free of charge for families
- Connection to other parents who are informed, experienced, and ready to assist in problem-solving

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### Education Services

Workshops and individual assistance on:

- Special education eligibility
- Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
- 504 plans
- Transition processes (3 – 22)
- Dispute resolution
- Parent and Professional Collaboration




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### Non-Education Services

Workshops and individual assistance on:

- Parent to Parent Connection\*
- Legal options at the age of majority
- Transitioning to adult services
- Community resource connection
- Navigating health care systems
- Accessing Home and Community Based Services

\* 98% of parents have reported that Parent to Parent support is helpful to them

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### What Does it Look Like?



When a parent calls in with a concern, our Family Support Specialist:

- Listens and offers assistance
- Recommends training
- Connects to community resources
- May offer a 1:1 consultation
- Can review documentation
- Assist family with 'next steps'
- Encourages collaboration
- Assists with dispute resolution

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### Training Requests

- In requesting training for your school or organization please email, or call, to access our online training request form
  - [info@raisingspecialkids.org](mailto:info@raisingspecialkids.org) or 602-242-4366
- We ask:
  - for 45 days notice, and
  - a minimum of 12 registrants
- Please note:
  - Beginning July 1, 2016, some training requests will incur a fee

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### How to Refer a Family to Raising Special Kids

Families can always contact us directly  
**602-242-4366** or **800-237-3007**  
[info@raisingspecialkids.org](mailto:info@raisingspecialkids.org)

Or complete our referral form so we can contact the family. Forms are available at  
[www.raisingspecialkids.org](http://www.raisingspecialkids.org)

We will follow up with you after making contact with the family you referred!

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#### FACILITATED IEP CONTACT INFORMATION

Amy Dill  
[Amy.dill@azed.gov](mailto:Amy.dill@azed.gov)  
 602-542-7579  
<http://www.azed.gov/disputeresolution/>




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