

## **What an IEP/IFSP Facilitator Is and Is Not**

(based on "The Skilled Facilitator" by Roger Schwarz)

*"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."*

### **A Facilitator IS:**

- Acceptable to both IEP parties (family and school district)
- Substantively Neutral/Impartial
- An advocate for the IEP process, not either party
- A model of effective communication and listening techniques
- Responsible for:
  - Conducting intake interviews with the designated school contact and family contact
  - Supporting consensus decision-making
  - Creating an acceptable comfort level for participation by all IEP Team Members
  - Gaining agreement on guidelines for the group to follow during the IEP
  - Inviting discussion between the IEP Team Members
  - Maintaining focus on the student's needs
  - Reinforcing the common goal of developing an educational program for the student
  - Guiding attention toward the future
  - Checking for understanding by all IEP Team Members throughout discussions
  - Clarifying concerns expressed by IEP Team Members
  - Encouraging investigation of options
  - Promoting a review of agreed-upon items to establish on-going consensus
  - Adhering to confidentiality
  - Monitoring established time frames
  - Helping the IEP Team consider *how* its process may lead to more effective decisions

### **A Facilitator IS NOT:**

- A judge or arbitrator, thus given no authority to make decisions
- An advocate for either the school district or the family
- A consultant or trainer
- A content expert or information resource
- A clerical person for the IEP Team
- Responsible for the IEP Team's ineffective behavior or its consequences
- Formally a member of the IEP Team
- Responsible for:
  - Evaluating the any IEP component, the IEP document or a team member's input
  - Providing technical assistance before or during the IEP Meeting
  - Enforcing the mediated settlement agreement or Due Process Decision, if one exists
  - Writing a report of findings before or after the IEP Meeting
  - Investigating the student's records before or during the IEP Meeting
  - Interviewing various IEP Team Members prior to the IEP, except the designated school district contact and family contact
  - Observing the student before the IEP Meeting
  - Designating any IEP Team Member's role or participation level
  - Judging *what* the IEP Team decides