

CADRE and JAMS Foundation Present:
Voices from the Field
Interview Clip #3 Transcript – Diana Autin

Marshall: Diana, you're one of the founding partners in the Creating Agreement training and in the design and delivery of that training. Are there, as you think about that training, are there aspects of it that you believe are particularly important or powerful?

Diana: All of the things that we say are nuggets now for parents as they're preparing for IFSP and IEP meetings are some of the most valuable components of the Creating Agreement initiative or approach or collection; issues around listening and listening with the heart. I have two pictures on my desk, and two pictures that find their way into many of our workshops, and one of them is the Chinese character for 'to listen' which really resonates both with parents and professionals and one of the things that's most amazing to us is to go to do a professional development with teachers or IEP team members, administrators who may be sitting back a little bit and wondering what kind of professional development they're going to be getting from a Parent Training Information Center and watching the shoulders relax and the people start moving forward and the eyes kind of widening and people really having this idea that getting back to why they really came into education in the first place - the relationship, the caring, the wanting to do good, the wanting to make a positive difference. So the issue of bringing the heart into the conversation, the listening, the cultural reciprocity components, very, very important in New Jersey and everywhere, you know, around the country, increasingly so with the increasing diversity of cultural backgrounds that we're seeing in our country. But also I think another valuable component is making sure that everybody knows that there are times when formal dispute resolution systems are needed and that there's nothing wrong or bad about using those systems that exist in the law to be used when the times demand it. I also like the fact that when we do professional development and parent development we can say that these materials were collaboratively developed by stakeholders that included representatives of parent organizations, diverse parent voices, principals, teachers, related service providers, state administrators, experts in dispute resolution. That really imbues it with a legitimacy and it also makes it invaluable when we do parent-professional training

ourselves because the parents and the professionals who are there understand that this training was developed by their peers.