

Facilitated IEP Meeting Quick Reference Guide

This product compiles frequently referenced educational information related to Facilitated IEPs in a simple, quick, portable format. This information is not intended to be a substitute for applicable federal, state or local laws, policies, and processes.

FACILITATED IEP MEETINGS (FIEP)

Facilitation is a voluntary process that is designed to make communication and problem solving easier. An FIEP meeting is when a facilitator assists the IEP team in crafting consensus agreements that lead to individualized educational programs with beneficial outcomes for students with disabilities. A facilitator helps keep members of the IEP team focused on the development of the IEP while addressing conflicts and disagreements that may arise during the meeting. Communication skills are used to create an environment in which the IEP team members can listen to each member's point of view and work together to complete the development of a high quality IEP.

WHO CAN BE THE FACILITATOR?

- Typically a member of the team facilitates the meeting.
- Sometimes a trained LEA representative with facilitation skills may be called in to assist the team reach consensus.
- A trained, external, neutral facilitator may be asked to assist.
- As appropriate, students may be trained to facilitate their own IEP meetings.

MEDIATION

A Facilitated IEP is not the same as mediation. Mediation is used to deal with a broader range of issues in special education than in an IEP meeting. Mediation occurs outside of an IEP meeting and is used where there is significant disagreement that parents and the LEA are unable to resolve. For more information visit:

- TEA *Special Education Dispute Resolution Systems Handbook* available at: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2147497560> or
- CADRE *Special Education Mediation: A Guide for Parents* available at www.directionservices.org/cadre.

ACRONYMS

ARD-Admission, Review, Dismissal meeting
CFR-Code of Federal Regulations
CADRE National Center on Dispute Resolution in Special Education
FAPE-Free and Appropriate Public Education
FERPA-Family Education Rights and Privacy Act
FIEP-Facilitated Individualized Education Program
FIE-Full Individual Evaluation
IDEA-Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act
IEP-Individualized Education Program
LEA-Local Education Agency (District or Charter School)
LRE-Least Restrictive Environment
OSEP-Office of Special Education Programs
PLAAFP-Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance
TEA-Texas Education Agency
TEC-Texas Education Code
USDE-United States Department of Education

PREPARING FOR FIEP

- Be familiar with facilitation techniques and strategies
- Facilitate collaboration and communication
- Identify issues and needs
- Address logistic elements (date, time and place)
- Prepare/receive notice and respond as appropriate
- Gather data on present levels
- Participate in planning meeting if appropriate
- Be willing to discuss options
- Share questions with school staff at least three days prior to the meeting

PARTICIPATING IN FIEP

- Come to the meeting with expectations for balance, open discussion, and respectful interaction
- Make introductions
- Review agenda, ground norms, and purpose of meeting
- Listen attentively, remain objective
- Participate actively
- Speak in clear, plain language
- Maintain confidentiality
- Focus on student needs based on data
- Utilize interest-based problem-solving strategies
- Follow legal mandates for IEP meetings
- Involve the student as appropriate

POST-ACTIVITIES-AFTER THE FIEP

- Distribute/receive IEP documents as appropriate
- Review consensus decisions
- Monitor implementation of IEP
- Gather data on progress towards IEP goals
- Reflect on what worked well and areas of need
- Make notes for future FIEP meetings
- Continue to facilitate collaboration and communication

WHAT DOES A FACILITATOR DO?

A facilitator:

- Focuses the IEP team on consensus decision-making to develop an appropriate IEP
- Guides the discussion by keeping the team's energy centered on the student
- Assists the team to resolve conflicts and disagreements that arise during the IEP meeting at the local level
- Promotes open communication among all members of the IEP team
- Helps the IEP team develop and ask clarifying questions about issues
- Keeps IEP team members on task with the time allotted for the meeting
- Does not impose a decision on the IEP team
- Maintains impartiality and does not take sides (external facilitator)

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF FIEP?

- Builds and improves relationships between the IEP team members (parents and schools)
- Ensures the IEP meeting is student focused
- Models effective communication and listening skills
- Clarifies points of agreement and disagreement
- Provides opportunities to resolve conflicts if they arise
- Encourages IEP team members to identify new options to address unresolved problems
- Costs less than more formal proceedings (due processes with attorney fees)
- Less stressful than formal proceedings
- Supports better follow through and follow-up. Roles and responsibilities can be discussed and planned

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- **CADRE** <http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/index.cfm>
 - Portions of this reference guide adapted from *Facilitated IEP Meetings: An Emerging Practice*, developed by The ALLIANCE and CADRE under OSEP, USDE.
- **ALLIANCE** – National Parent Technical Assistance Center <http://www.parentcenternetwork.org/national/aboutus.html>
- **LEA (Districts & Charters) Policies and Procedures**
- **Partners Resource Network** Empowering Parents through Education <http://www.partnerstx.org/>
- **TEA** <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/>
- **TEA Legal Framework, Texas Procedural Safeguards, and A Guide to the Admission, Dismissal, and Review Process** <http://framework.esc18.net>
- **USDOE Building the Legacy: A training curriculum on IDEA 2004** <http://nichcy.org/laws/idea/legacy>

Module 1 Top 10 Basics of Special Education	Module 14 Meetings of the IEP Team
Module 12 The IEP Team: Who is a Member?	Module 17 Introduction to Procedural Safeguards
Module 13 Content of the IEP	Module 18 Options for Dispute Resolution



Region 4 Education Service Center
Houston, Texas 713-744-6365
<http://www.esc4.net>



Region 4 ESC Facilitated IEP Google Site
Houston, Texas 713-744-6365
<https://sites.google.com/site/region4escfiep/>