

CADRE Working Together Series: Course 2 Lessons 1-4

Lesson 1

Slide 1

Narrator

Welcome to the first lesson of Course 2, *IEP Meetings and Beyond: Behaviors that Create Better Family-School Relationships*.

Slide 2

Trust



<u>PERSONAL REGARD</u>	<u>RESPECT</u>	<u>INTEGRITY</u>	<u>TRANSPARENCY</u>
 <p>People know that others care about them and what they are experiencing</p>	 <p>People feel heard and valued</p>	 <p>People believe they can depend on each other to meet the needs of children</p>	 <p>Everyone has the information needed to make good decisions</p>

Narrator

At the heart of positive working relationships is trust. When trust exists in family-school relationships, people know that others care about them and what they are experiencing. They feel heard and valued and know that they can depend on each other to meet the needs of children. When there is trust, people share information needed to make good decisions. Trust doesn't happen immediately. It's built over time through our day to day conversations and connections with each other. So, what kinds of connections lead to greater trust? Showing personal regard is a good place to begin.

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Narrator

Showing personal regard begins by valuing others and honoring what they bring to the conversation. Sometimes IEP team members may not know everyone at the table, so

showing personal regard begins with curiosity and spending time getting to know each other. This is often a big challenge for administrators and teachers from large districts, but the time spent is worth the effort to build trusting relationships. In small districts, it may be that people know each other from the community, but haven't worked together before as IEP team members. Even when we already know each other, it's important to check for assumptions or biases we may have. In the IEP team meeting, we can start by acknowledging the value of each person and pointing out why team decisions will be better because everyone's important views will be shared. Despite the size of the district, it's important for families and other IEP team members to feel valued and welcome.

Often times families' backgrounds, cultures, and languages are different from those of educators. So, how do you build trusting relationships with people who have different cultural background from your own? A very important first step is being open to understanding the differences between yourself and others from different backgrounds. Become aware of how your values affect your attitudes and reactions. A good place to start learning about others is to ask questions and show interest.

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Narrator

Cultural groups differ on how they: view the roles of males and females; view the roles of grandparents, parents, and children; respond to someone in a position of authority; view a disability; respond to a disagreement or conflict; communicate and process information; and access the IEP process. Just because a cultural group tends to have a set of beliefs, it doesn't mean that all members share them.

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Narrator

When showing personal regard for each other, it is important to keep in mind that a family is often sharing very personal information. It may be difficult for them to share information about their child, about their hopes and dreams, about their family and about their struggles. Remember, the other IEP Team members are not necessarily sharing such personal information. One way for educators to show personal regard for families is to appreciate how personal the information is and create a safe space of caring and empathy for whatever a particular family may be experiencing.

Slide 6

Narrator

Another way in which trust is built is through respect. People feel respected when they believe they've been heard and feel valued. How do people know they've been heard and that their opinion is valued even if people don't agree with them?

Slides 7-9

Narrator

Let's go back to the previous IEP meeting scenario and listen to how Mr. Barnes, the Special Education teacher, responds to one of Mrs. García's concerns about her son, Mateo.

Mrs. García

He's really learned so much from the other children in Ms. Howard's class. He learns how to act from being with the other students and his social skills have really improved. He's making friends and getting invited to parties. He comes home excited about school and tells me about his day or something he learned about in class. I'm seeing improvements all the time. Having friends and being part of a community are going to help him survive in the world.

Mr. Barnes

I'm glad you think he's happy and making some progress socially, but we have to teach him to read. He needs intensive intervention—the kind I can provide in my classroom! Mrs. Carter, can you explain to Mrs. García again where he is compared to his peers?

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Narrator

Although Mr. Barnes heard Mrs. García and was able to highlight some key points, Mrs. García may not have felt heard or valued as a result of Mr. Barnes' response. Can you think of why she may not have felt heard or valued?

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Narrator

When we focus on what we want to say instead of really listening to the other person, we don't fully hear the other person. It appears that Mr. Barnes may have missed that Mrs. García values community and wants to create this support for her son, Mateo. Also, when we are frustrated and trying to support our argument, we can display negative behaviors that communicate to the other person that he or she is not valued. How could Mr. Barnes have responded instead?

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Narrator

Mr. Barnes could have improved his response before he shared his thoughts about meeting Mateo's academic needs. He could have begun by responding positively about the improvements Mrs. García had noticed in Mateo's social skills and asking her some questions to learn more about what she shared. A small change by one IEP team member could have made Mrs. García feel respected and heard. Everyone must do their part to have respectful interactions. When everyone feels heard and valued, school-family relationships improve and IEP teams function better.

Slide 13

Narrator

A third way to build trust is by showing integrity. Integrity is about believing that others are dependable. It's also about trusting that everyone is working together to make sure the child has an educational program that will meet his or her needs. What are ways that families and schools can show they are dependable?

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Narrator

Educators can show families they are dependable by making sure that they implement the services and supports outlined in the IEP. Clearly explaining to families how the child is showing progress under the IEP is key to building trust over time. Families can show educators they are dependable in many different ways, such as responding to requests for additional information, supporting behavioral goals at home, or being on time for meetings. Also, by responding to any calls or emails sent by their children's teachers or other school staff as soon as they can, shows they are dependable. This is true for all IEP Team members. Being on time, showing up to scheduled meetings and responding to requests in a timely manner are ways every member can show dependability.

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Narrator

With all of the time demands on educators and families, this can often be tough to do.

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Narrator

Learning what types of time pressures both schools and individual families are experiencing can help IEP teams create ways to schedule meetings, communicate and set deadlines. Some families are dealing with very challenging medical or behavioral needs of their children. Some families can't take time off work to meet. And others have a difficult time understanding all of the complicated written notices and meeting procedures. Some schools are understaffed, or have a number of experienced staff leaving and inexperienced staff needing additional training. Schools are working hard to meet federal and state requirements, in addition to meeting the needs of the children in their school community.

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Narrator

What are some ways that families and schools can deal with time pressures?

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Narrator

There are strategies schools can put in place to address time pressures. As we mentioned in Course One, unresolved conflict has a number of costs, including lost time and the financial burden that results from it. Schools that invest in positive home-school relationships and early conflict resolution activities could save a lot of time down the road. To reduce the pressures from dealing with understaffing issues, the difficulty of training new staff and the stress that puts on the entire system, schools can pair less experienced staff with more experienced staff and provide various incentives to the staff to foster a collaborative learning environment.

Families can reduce time pressures by reaching out to others and forming a personal support network. Having other people there for you when you are trying to figure out the special education system and how to meet the needs of your child is really important. There are resources that can help you prepare for the IEP meeting. Every state has a federally funded Parent Training and Information Center that provides information and training opportunities to families of children with disabilities. Many schools also offer trainings to families to help them prepare for IEP meetings. In addition to these resources, it's important to have other people you can turn to when you're having a problem or just need someone to listen to you.

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Narrator

Finally, another way to build trust is to be transparent with information. Families and educators need information from each other in order to make the best decisions for each individual child. What are some ways that families and educators can be transparent with each other?



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Narrator

Schools can be transparent with all of the information they gather about the student that will be shared at the IEP meeting. One option is to share reports or opinions with families ahead of the meeting so families know what is coming and will have time to

think about the information. Families can give copies of any reports completed outside of the school and share their thoughts about the IEP before the meeting, so the school will know what may take additional meeting time to review. If a draft IEP is prepared and brought to a meeting to help guide the conversation, it should be clear that it is just a draft and can be changed during the meeting. To be transparent, the case manager can share a copy of any draft IEP with the family so they can be prepared. Springing information on people for the first time in IEP meetings can create negative reactions. Consider that some may need time to think about information for a while, especially when it involves their child.

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Narrator

Think about a time when you found it difficult to trust. Who was involved? What were the circumstances? What was missing from the relationship (respect, personal regard, integrity, transparency)? What behaviors would have made it easier for you to trust? Did you say anything or keep it to yourself?

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Narrator

We have seen how building trust creates better family-school partnerships. How we treat each other and behave with each other also can either build better partnerships or break down relationships.

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Narrator

Think about a conflict you had with someone, a relationship that perhaps was broken or damaged in some way. Were there certain behaviors that hurt the relationship? What are behaviors that you think should be avoided?

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Narrator

Some types of behaviors that should be avoided and get in the way of building better relationships include: blaming the other person for the problem; bringing up the past repeatedly; minimizing the other person's opinions or feelings; leaving too little time to talk through issues; and threatening in an attempt to intimidate others and control the outcome.

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Narrator

Sometimes it's easy to blame others, especially when the student is not making the progress everyone expects. But blaming others does not fix the issue and can damage the relationship. Instead, stay focused on possible solutions. For instance, if a family is frustrated by their child's lack of progress, a good way to talk about this would be to point to a goal on the IEP and list specific ways that their child isn't meeting that goal. If a school thinks the lack of a child's progress is because a family is not supporting the child at home, they can find out whether or not the family has time to help with homework, or if the family needs the teacher's help understanding the assignments so they can help their child at home.

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Narrator

When people have had bad experiences in the past, they can worry that the past is going to repeat itself. Bringing up the past over and over again, or expecting that bad experience will happen again, can get in the way of moving forward. Instead, keep the focus on where the student is today and ways to improve things going forward. For instance, if someone has lost their temper in the past, or if someone has broken a promise, it's easy to keep expecting the same thing to happen. Teams work best when they can let the past stay in the past. However, if there has been a problem in the past that continues to be a problem today, that is important to discuss. Someone bringing up the past again and again is a good clue that it may be an ongoing concern. Sometimes it is helpful to have a mediator or other third party help resolve ongoing serious problems.

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Narrator

Leaving too little time to talk through issues, either in an IEP meeting or outside of a meeting, can cause people to be frustrated or not feel valued. Instead, schedule enough

time for important discussions. Determining how much time to set aside can be tricky. While some may feel that keeping their words short and to the point is the best use of time, others may feel it is rude. Some may think that respect is shown by starting conversations with small talk, like “How are you?” or “How’s your day going?” and then starting the meeting. Others see this as unnecessary. Some people need more time to think about what others are saying, reflect, and then respond. They may have their own concerns and solutions that they want to share as well.

When scheduling time for important discussions, let other people know what you would like to discuss at the meeting, how long you think the discussion will take, and then ask if anyone has any additions or concerns. This helps figure out how much time to set aside. Some people find that scheduling more than one meeting is necessary to discuss an issue and everyone’s concerns. If any issues or concerns have been set aside, it’s important to make sure that more time is given to address them.

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Narrator

No one responds well to threats. When people feel threatened, they react in ways that do not support problem-solving. Threatening behavior can derail the conversation and can result in shutting down collaboration. For example, if Mrs. García is feeling unheard, she may threaten the team by saying, “Fine. If you won’t listen to me, maybe you’ll listen to my attorney.” The rest of the team is likely to shut down. People often use threatening behaviors when they feel no one is listening to them or that they don’t have any power over a situation. If someone is threatening, it may be necessary to make sure there is time for that person to share his or her concerns. However, some people threaten because they lack the skill to communicate differently. Continued threatening despite good faith attempts to communicate should not be tolerated and may be a cause for ending a meeting. Instead, listen for understanding and share thoughts and ideas in a respectful way. Mrs. García could instead explain how important it is to her that the team knows how much Mateo enjoys being with his non-disabled peers. If she is feeling unheard, finding another positive way to get her message across is worth the effort.

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Narrator

People have different ideas about the supports and services a student needs, but if others will not listen to them, important information can get lost. Minimizing other people’s opinions, or making them seem less important than your own, whether you intended to or not, can quickly put an end to a collaborative conversation. Instead be open to other people’s ideas. As we saw previously in the case of Mateo, Mrs. García may have felt that Mr. Barnes was minimizing her opinion about Mateo’s social skill

development and happiness. It is doubtful that Mr. Barnes meant to minimize her opinion. He was probably trying to show her through test data that the kinds of reading interventions he could provide were really needed. Minimizing can also happen if we don't know much about each other's background and the other person's reaction doesn't make sense to us. When IEP Team members have different backgrounds, cultures or languages, it is especially important to listen carefully to each other so that everyone feels their opinion is valued.

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Narrator

We've shared a number of behaviors that can get in the way of trusting home-school partnerships. Can you think of other behaviors that get in the way of creating better school-family partnerships? What are some other choices that lead to better and more positive conversations?



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Narrator

You've completed Lesson 1 in the *IEP Meetings and Beyond* course. This course continues in Lesson 2: *Before IEP Meetings*.

Lesson 2

Slide 1

Narrator

Welcome to the second lesson of the *IEP Meetings and Beyond* course, *Before IEP Meetings*. Productive and well managed IEP meetings are an encouraging and motivating experience for everyone. This second lesson focuses on key strategies that can be used before an IEP meeting that can help ensure that participants are well prepared and feel comfortable actively participating in the meeting. These strategies include:

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Narrator

Be informed... know the purpose of the IEP and meeting; schedule with lots of advance notice and use pre-meetings; prepare and share all relevant information; and think about possible disagreements.

Slide 3

Narrator

Whether you are a teacher, psychologist, or family member, it is very important to understand the purpose of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and what to expect at an IEP Meeting. An IEP is a written document that describes a student's services and supports. The IEP is developed by a team that includes the student's family member(s), teachers, service providers, and the student, if appropriate. Families may also invite anyone with knowledge or special expertise about the student, perhaps a family friend who knows the student.

For additional information and the legal requirements for IEPs and IEP meetings, ask your school district or visit your state's department of special education or your state's parent center's websites. Each IEP must be reviewed at least once a year. This meeting gives everyone, including families, a chance to discuss how the student is doing and what changes to his or her goals or program should be made for the next year.

Teachers often attend many meetings for different students. Using key strategies before an IEP meeting will help prevent common missteps and help everyone focus on what the student needs to succeed. To learn more about the required IEP team members, click below.

Narrator for IEP Team Members Pop-up Box

IEP Team members must include:

Parent(s) - Parents are equal participants.

General Education Teacher - The IEP team must include a general education teacher of the child who has knowledge of the curriculum and may be responsible for implementing the IEP if the child is, or may be, participating in the general education environment.

Special Education Teacher - There must be a special education teacher on the IEP team who is responsible for implementing the IEP.

School Official - This person must know about the general education curriculum and be able to ensure that the IEP is implemented and has the authority to commit resources.

Evaluation Personnel - This person must be someone who can explain evaluation and/or test results.

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Narrator

The work involved in preparing for a positive and productive IEP meeting starts well before the meeting. To begin with, schedule meetings with plenty of advanced notice. This gives everybody time to prepare for their participation. It also allows family members to arrange their work schedule, get child care, or request a different date and time if necessary. It also gives them time to invite anyone else who may be able to assist in the educational planning for the child. Scheduling meetings well in advance allows the school to bring in an interpreter for any family members who may need the support in order to participate in the meeting. Even family members who lip-read, or speak English as a second language, may feel more comfortable with an interpreter because discussing IEPs can be quite complicated. An interpreter could help them participate more fully in the discussion.

Slide 5

Narrator

When preparing for an IEP meeting, it is important to keep in mind the number of reports that will need to be reviewed and the complexity of the information. Families will have very important observations and possibly reports to share as well. If there is a significant amount of information and reports to go over, you may want to consider having an informal meeting prior to the IEP meeting. It is especially helpful for parents to meet with one or two team members to talk about new information, ask clarifying questions, think through the information in a smaller setting, and share any concerns. By sharing the information in advance, team members have time to think about recommended changes based on the new information. Remember, the pre-meeting is not a decision-making meeting. A more efficient IEP meeting can result from holding an informal pre-meeting.

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Narrator

Have you had a pre-meeting? Was it helpful? What are several issues that could be discussed ahead of time that would help the IEP team have a better meeting?

Slide 7

Narrator

Positive and productive IEP meetings can occur when educators and families spend time preparing for them and share information with each other in advance. It is important to plan what needs to be addressed at the child's IEP meeting, and share any concerns with team members as soon as possible. Thinking about the child's progress before the meeting starts is a great way to prepare for the important discussion that takes place during the IEP meeting. Before you go to the meeting, consider making a list of the student's strengths, accomplishments, achievements as well as the areas that still pose a challenge.

If you are a family member, you may ask to review progress reports, assessment and evaluation results that have been completed since the last IEP. Reviewing these documents before the meeting can help you think about your child's strengths and challenges. Write down goals you think the child should focus on in the upcoming year, and what issues are of most concern to you so that the team can discuss it. Having this information written down and available at the meeting will help you communicate clearly and not forget anything during the IEP meeting.

Educators might find it helpful to have something in writing for the team members to use to organize their thoughts. Teams that use a draft IEP should share it *before* the meeting with all team members, including families, and make it clear that the document can be changed based on discussion by the team in the meeting. Even with advanced planning and preparation, IEP meetings can result in disagreements.

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Narrator

Whether you are a family or school member, think about how you will respond if there is a disagreement. When you have been in a disagreement before, what did you say or do that made the disagreement worse? What did you say or do that helped move everyone closer to agreement?

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Narrator

Anticipating possible conflict and thinking through some responses will help you develop a plan to use if needed. If you think a meeting may be very emotional, or if there is a history of conflict within the IEP team, it might also be a good idea to bring in a neutral facilitator. A third party not directly involved with the student may be able to assist the group in moving through the IEP process. Another good option is to have a pre-meeting to discuss difficult issues. Using these strategies may improve problem-solving and result in more productive conversations.

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Narrator

Think back on the scenario involving Mateo's IEP team. Can you identify the issues that caused the meeting to go off track? The team should have used some basic strategies to help the meeting go in a positive direction. For this exercise, let's focus on Mrs. García, Mateo's mom, and Ms. Howard, the general education teacher.

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Narrator

During Mateo's IEP meeting, his teachers were concerned about his lack of academic progress. Mateo's parents, however, were more concerned about him having opportunities to socialize and learn from his peers. If Ms. Howard and Mrs. García were to use a pre-meeting to discuss some of these concerns, how would you advise Mrs. García? How would you advise Ms. Howard? Select a participant to help her decide how best to handle this difficult conversation.

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Scenario

Select a participant to advise



Mrs. García

Ms. Howard

Advise [Mrs. García](#).

Advise [Ms. Howard](#).

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Narrator

Mrs. García is nervous about the upcoming IEP meeting. She does not want her son, Mateo, to be moved into a separate class even though he is making little academic progress. She turns to you for advice. How do you advise her? Select an option below to continue.

[Option A: Tell Mrs. García to ask for an informal conference before the meeting. It's better to let Ms. Howard, Mateo's general education teacher, know her concerns so that Ms. Howard can ensure the right people are present at the meeting to address them.](#)

[Option B: Tell Mrs. García to write down her concerns in a prioritized list. This will help her focus on the important issues and not forget anything during the meeting.](#)

[Option C: Tell Mrs. García to hang in there. The IEP meeting is only a month away. There is no sense in stirring things up before the meeting and if she can keep it friendly between now and then, she'll have a better chance of having a productive meeting.](#)

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Narrator

Ms. Howard agrees to meet after school the next day. Mrs. García tells her why Mateo should stay in his current placement. Ms. Howard thanks Mrs. García for bringing her concerns forward. Ms. Howard lists the concerns she has about his academic progress

and why she believes the separate class should be considered. Mrs. García does not agree. What should Mrs. García do? Select an option below to continue.

[Option A: She should tell Ms. Howard how it makes her feel. When Ms. Howard sees how upset Mrs. García is, she'll understand how important this is to her.](#)

[Option B: Mrs. García should ask more questions. She should ask if there are any other options other than changing Mateo's placement that would help with his academics while still giving him opportunities to be with his peers.](#)

[Option C: It's obvious that there is nothing Mrs. García can do to change the team members' points of view. Mrs. García should let the team know that she will not agree to this placement and that she will be calling the district.](#)

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Narrator

The meeting day arrives. Mrs. García feels prepared and listens carefully as the team describes why Mateo may need a separate class. Mrs. García still does not agree. The team has reached an impasse. What should Mrs. García do? Select an option below to continue.

[Option A: Mrs. García should ask more questions.](#)

[Option B: She should share her concerns about Mateo's socialization and peer interaction.](#)

[Option C: Mrs. García should request that a neutral third party facilitator or mediator help the team move forward.](#)

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Narrator

The meeting day arrives. Mrs. García is extremely nervous and listens as the team describes why Mateo may need a separate class. Mrs. García lets the team know that she does not agree with this placement. The team continues to discuss Mateo's need for academic intervention. Mrs. García feels herself getting upset. What should she do? Select an option below to continue.

[Option A: Mrs. García should ask more questions.](#)

[Option B: It's obvious that there is nothing Mrs. García can do to change the team members' points of view. Mrs. García should let the team know that she will not agree to this placement and that she will be calling the state.](#)

[Option C: Mrs. García should ask for a break so she can calm down and organize her thoughts. When they resume the meeting, she can share her concerns about Mateo's socialization and peer interaction.](#)

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Narrator

Ms. Howard tries to console Mrs. García and tells her that she can continue to think about it until the meeting. Ms. Howard ends the conference.

[Continue.](#)

Slide 18

Narrator

Together you brainstorm ideas and come up with a few options for Mrs. García to discuss with the IEP team.

[Continue.](#)

Slide 19

Narrator

The team brainstorms ideas and comes up with a few options to discuss. This is a positive outcome. Way to go!

[Continue.](#)

Slide 20

Narrator

Mrs. García walks out of the meeting feeling angry and defensive. There is no way this meeting helped the situation at all. This is not a positive outcome. Do you want to try again?

[Yes.](#)

[No.](#)

Slide 21

Narrator

Ms. Howard suggests a compromise by having Mateo join the class for lunch, but does not feel his academic time is best spent in her classroom. How should Mrs. García respond? Select an option below to continue.

[Option A: It is obvious there is nothing Mrs. García can do to change Ms. Howard's mind. Mrs. García should let Ms. Howard know that she will not agree to this placement.](#)

[Option B: Mrs. García should ask more questions.](#)

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Narrator

The team agrees that bringing in a third party to assist with resolving this issue would be helpful. A state-sponsored mediator works with them and everyone agrees to a solution that will address Mateo's social, emotional, and academic needs. This is a positive outcome. Way to go!

[Continue.](#)

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Narrator

An IEP meeting is scheduled for Mateo next month to discuss the possibility of providing him services in a separate class. Ms. Howard, Mateo's general education teacher, knows his mother is going to be very upset by this suggestion and turns to you for advice. How do you advise her? Select an option below to continue.

[Option A: Ms. Howard should send home a reminder about the IEP meeting a week before along with a draft agenda.](#)

[Option B: Ms. Howard should contact Mrs. García \(Mateo's mom\) and offer to schedule a time to talk before the meeting. Ms. Howard has a lot of data that she can share and discuss with Mrs. García. With more time to talk about the information, Mrs. García may be more willing to consider a change of placement.](#)

[Option C: Ms. Howard should prepare for the IEP meeting by gathering the data, work samples, and records that demonstrate Mateo's need for a separate class.](#)

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Narrator

The day of the meeting arrives and Ms. Howard is extremely nervous. When the placement discussion begins, Mrs. García is visibly upset and states that she will not agree to placement in the separate class. Mrs. García believes Ms. Howard doesn't want to do the work required to help Mateo and thinks she just wants him out of her classroom. How should Ms. Howard respond? Select an option below to continue.

[Option A: Ms. Howard should let Mrs. García know that it is nothing personal and that she is unable to meet Mateo's needs.](#)

[Option B: Ms. Howard should share the data again and emphasize Mateo's percentile rank, standard scores, rate of progress, and probability of success.](#)

[Option C: Ms. Howard should give Mrs. García a minute to process. Continuing to talk while Mrs. García is upset is not going to accomplish anything.](#)

Slide 25

Narrator

Mrs. García agrees to meet for a conference. Ms. Howard shows her the academic data and progress monitoring graphs for Mateo. Ms. Howard explains why she thinks Mateo may benefit from more intensive interventions. Mrs. García becomes upset and says she does not agree. How should Ms. Howard respond? Select an option below to continue.

[Option A: Ms. Howard should give Mrs. García a minute to process. Continuing to talk while Mrs. García is upset is not going to accomplish anything. After a minute or two, Ms. Howard should ask Mrs. García some questions to try to understand her perspective.](#)

[Option B: Ms. Howard should share the data again and emphasize Mateo's percentile rank, standard scores, rate of progress, and probability of success.](#)

[Option C: Ms. Howard should politely end the meeting. Mrs. García is upset and Ms. Howard should wait for the IEP meeting to continue this discussion with the IEP team.](#)

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Narrator

The IEP meeting day arrives. The discussion about placement begins with Ms. Howard giving her best argument as to why Mateo's placement needs to change. Mrs. García is upset and states that she believes Mateo needs to stay in his current placement.

Ms. Howard and Mrs. García are at an impasse. How should Ms. Howard respond?
Select an option below to continue.

[Option A: Ms. Howard should stay firm in her position. Mateo needs the separate class even if his mom does not agree.](#)

[Option B: Ms. Howard should try asking more questions and find out what is preventing Mrs. García from agreeing to more reading support for her son.](#)

[Option C: Drop the topic and let Mrs. García have what she wants. It's not worth upsetting her and pushing any harder will end badly. It's only a few more months until the end of the year. She should address the topic in May.](#)

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Narrator

Mrs. García shares that she would like to find a way to improve Mateo's academics while still giving him an opportunity to interact with his friends. Together, Ms. Howard and Mrs. García brainstorm ideas that will meet both Mateo's academic and social needs. This is a positive outcome! Way to go!

[Continue.](#)

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Narrator

Mrs. García stays firm in her position. Ms. Howard and Mrs. García begin arguing back and forth until everyone is frustrated. The meeting is ended. This is not a positive outcome. Do you want to try again?

[Yes.](#)

[No.](#)

Slide 29

Narrator

Mrs. García is now looking confused and intimidated. She begins to cry and asks to end the meeting. She states that she will be calling an attorney. This is not a positive outcome. Do you want to try again?

[Yes.](#)

[No.](#)

Slide 30

Narrator

Mateo continues to struggle academically and, due to frustration, starts having behavioral issues. Mateo keeps getting sent to the principal's office and Mrs. García is repeatedly called to address Mateo's behavior. Mrs. García gets so frustrated that she begins calling other parents to complain. This is not a positive outcome. Do you want to try again?

[Yes.](#)


[No.](#)

Slide 31

Scenario

If you would like to advise the other participant,
[Click here.](#)

Otherwise, select Continue to complete this lesson.



[Continue](#)

If you would like to advise Mrs. García, [click here](#). If you would like to advise Ms. Howard, [click here](#). Otherwise, select [continue](#) to complete this lesson.

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Narrator

You've completed Lesson 2 in the *IEP Meetings and Beyond* course. This course continues in Lesson 3: *During IEP Meetings*.

Lesson 3

Slide 1

Narrator

Welcome to the third lesson of the *IEP Meetings and Beyond* course, *During IEP Meetings*. Using key strategies during an IEP meeting can help all IEP team members have a better meeting and make better decisions.

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Narrator

Create a welcoming environment. Be flexible and remain open to other ideas. Keep the focus on the student. And use problem-solving communication.

Slide 3

Narrator

Schools usually organize and host IEP meetings and they can take steps to help team members feel comfortable during the meeting.

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Narrator

To learn more about some specific steps educators can take to create welcoming environments select the [click here](#) button.

To continue without learning more about specific steps educators can take, [click here](#).

Slide 5

Narrator

The school leader can put members at ease by creating a welcoming environment. Consider the following ideas for setting up the meeting.

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Narrator

To begin, think about the set-up of the room. It can be intimidating for families if school members are all sitting on one side of a table. Consider a U-shape, or a round table if you have one. Another way to make family members feel more comfortable is to have someone assigned to meet and walk in with the parent so the parent doesn't enter the room alone. Walking in with the parent communicates that the parent is part of the team. Additionally, instead of introducing everyone at the table, invite each member to

introduce themselves. Introductions can also help make participants comfortable. Make sure all members introduce themselves, explain how they know the child, and why they are there.

Additional care should be given when the student is present to create a welcoming and supportive environment for him or her. Reminding everyone to use plain language and not special education terms can also help create a welcoming environment. Remind everyone to speak clearly for the interpreter, if one is present. Describe specialized terms and use parent-friendly language. Also, use the parent's name when addressing him or her. Use the student's name instead of a generic, "the child," or "the student."

Using visuals can also help put participants at ease. If your district uses a computer program to track notes and draft the IEP, consider using a projector so everyone can see what you are writing. Many people need to see things to understand them best. Have flipcharts available to make lists, or set aside issues that need attention but are not part of the IEP meeting. Remember to have a plan to address all items that won't be addressed at the meeting. These strategies can help team members feel confident in the IEP meeting and encourage their participation. Think about how your school creates a welcoming environment. What steps have you taken to make sure all members are comfortable? What additional steps can you take?



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Narrator

Being flexible and open to other people's ideas are key strategies to positive and productive IEP meetings. Although you've likely already spent time preparing your thoughts and ideas, remember that most team members will have their own ideas to offer. Be willing to listen and carefully consider other team members' thinking. An IEP that considers the views and ideas of all team members will lead to the most complete plan for the student. Keep in mind that even when we are well prepared, meetings can sometimes go off course. Flexibility can be helpful. Sometimes an agenda should be adjusted at the start of a meeting and sometimes it will need to be adjusted during a meeting depending upon the concerns raised by team members.

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Narrator

All IEP team members attend IEP meetings for one purpose: to plan for the success of a student with a disability. Keeping the student and his or her needs at the center of all discussions is key to encouraging productive participation in IEP meetings. One way to keep the focus on the student is for all team members to show they are familiar with the student. Focusing on the student can also mean talking about how teachers or family members can get the resources they need to support the student's education. Remember to use behaviors that build trust as learned in Lesson 1.

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Another key strategy for positive and productive IEP meetings is to use collaborative problem-solving skills. Solving a problem requires understanding it and looking at it from different views. If all team members focus on solving problems by asking each other questions, listening, letting members know they should share concerns freely and openly, the team will be more likely to reach agreement.

Remember Mrs. García and her concern about her son, Mateo, getting placed in a separate classroom away from his non-disabled peers and friends. The problem, as Mrs. García sees it, is that Mateo is socially benefitting from spending time in Ms. Howard's classroom, and if Mateo is removed from the class, he will lose his community of friends and chances to regularly practice social skills with them. Once the team understands the problem from Mrs. García's perspective, they can discuss how they can problem-solve meeting Mateo's social needs in other ways.

Many people see problems as having only one solution. However, most of the time, if we unpack the problem, we can come up with creative ways to meet goals. To learn more about strategies that can be used for building agreement, visit Course 5, *Focusing on Interests to Reach Agreement*.

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Think about the IEP meetings you have attended. What strategies have you used to help the team have productive conversations and reach agreement on the IEP? How have these strategies worked for you? What other strategies might you try at the next IEP meeting you attend?

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Narrator

You've completed Lesson 3 in the *IEP Meetings and Beyond* course. This course continues in Lesson 4: *After IEP Meetings*.

Lesson 4

Slide 1

Narrator

Welcome to the final lesson of the *IEP Meetings and Beyond* course. The days and weeks following the completion of the IEP meeting are a critical time for the IEP team members. This lesson focuses on several key strategies to encourage positive outcomes and avoid unnecessary disputes after an IEP meeting.

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Narrator

These strategies include: debriefing after the IEP meeting; giving each team member a copy of the final IEP; following through on commitments; taking care of non-IEP issues; and continuing to communicate.

Slide 3

Narrator

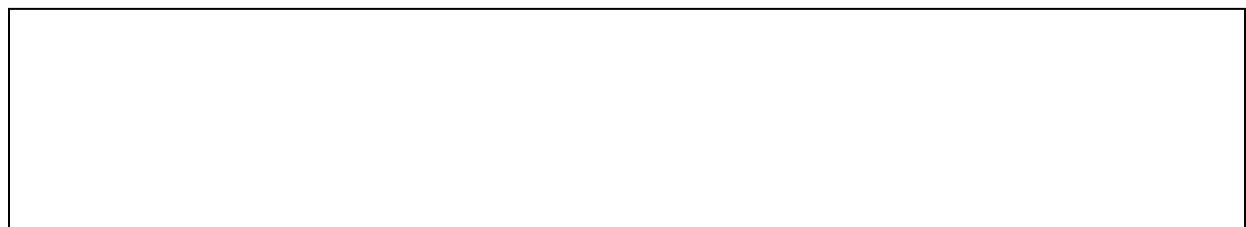
Once the IEP is completed, quickly going over how the meeting went and what could make the next meeting better can continue a collaborative relationship and encourage improvement. The team leader should ask family and school members to first discuss

what went well before talking about what they would like to change. For example, a member might say, “I loved the set-up of the room because it helped me stay focused.” It is important that members get a chance to say what didn’t work for them at the meeting, as well. When asked, a parent could share, “I felt like people didn’t give me enough time to discuss some issues that are affecting my son’s ability to make progress on his goals.” Learning that the parent needs more time to express herself and discussing together how to improve next time builds trust. If the IEP meeting was difficult, tense, and/or long, the team leader may consider asking family and school members to share their thoughts one-on-one outside of the meeting. A quick conversation can help build a positive family-school relationship and uncover the needs of team members. Be sure to debrief with students who participate in team meetings.

Slide 4

Narrator

After working together to create a plan for the student, everything can fall apart if the plan isn’t followed. As a team member, it is very important that you do what you say you are going to do during the IEP meeting. An action plan is a helpful tool to ensure follow through. An action plan can be created by the group at the conclusion of the IEP meeting, or one member can take on the responsibility to share it with the group after it is completed. What action plans look like can vary, but should include: what needs to be done; who is responsible for doing it; and when it should be completed. Action planning also encourages shared responsibility within the team. No one person should be left trying to complete everything alone. In order for the team to follow through on its commitments, everyone needs to have a final copy of the IEP. Also, if issues are brought up during the IEP meeting that are not IEP related, be sure there is a plan in place to address them. This can be done through a parent-teacher conference or by setting up a meeting with another school staff member. Think about a recent IEP meeting that you attended. What strategies did your team use to help members keep their commitments? Can you think of other strategies that may help with follow through?



Slide 5

Narrator

Remember, building positive relationships happen over time. Open and frequent communication is key to the success of the partnership and the student. Even after the meeting, continue to share information with the team. You do not have to wait until the next IEP meeting to bring up questions or concerns. If necessary, an IEP team can meet to address concerns more than once a year, or informal meetings can happen any time. Remember, communicating early on will help limit frustration and keep energy focused on the student. Think about your communication with the IEP team members after the meeting. What is it like? How often does it occur? Does communication happen only when there is a problem or concern? Is the communication helpful and meeting your needs? What are some ways communication can be improved? How and when could you share these suggestions?



Slide 6

Narrator

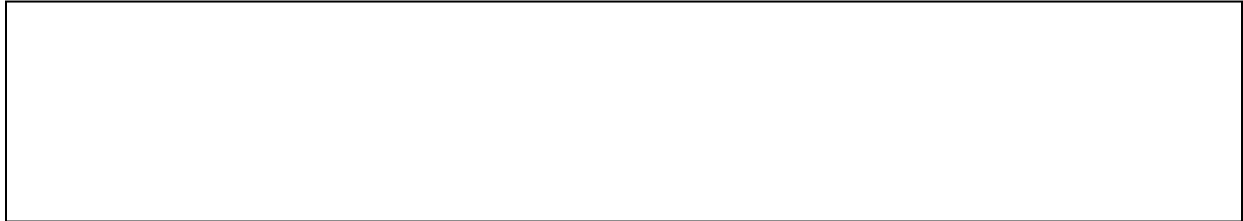
Much of the work families and educators do together to meet the needs of children with IEPs happens within the IEP meeting. This course provided a number of strategies to help families and educators build trusting relationships; plan for and participate in a collaborative meeting, and use strategies that encourage positive outcomes after the meeting. In earlier lessons we learned one strategy for building trusting relationships is to show personal regard for each other by getting to know one another and showing empathy. Can you remember another strategy that can help build trusting relationships?



Slide 7

Narrator

In lesson 2, *Before IEP Meetings*, several key strategies were given to help participants prepare for and feel comfortable participating in the meeting. Some strategies offered were to schedule meetings with advanced notice and consider using pre-meetings. Can you remember another strategy to help participants prepare for and feel comfortable participating in the IEP meeting?



Slide 8

Narrator

Using key strategies during an IEP meeting can help all IEP team members have a collaborative meeting and make informed decisions. One key strategy to use during an IEP meeting is to keep the focus on the child. Can you remember another strategy that can help participants have a collaborative IEP meeting?



Slide 9

Narrator

In the last lesson, several strategies were provided to help families and educators experience positive outcomes after the meeting. One of those strategies was to follow through on commitments made during the IEP meeting, such as making a plan to address any non-IEP related issues that were set aside during the IEP meeting. Can you remember another strategy to help families and educators experience positive outcomes after the meeting?

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Narrator

Of the strategies provided in this course, which ones will you try?

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Narrator

You've completed Lesson 4, the final lesson in the *IEP Meetings and Beyond* course.