



COLORADO
Department of Education

**IEP Facilitation:
Thinking Outside of the Box and Lessons Learned
During the Pandemic**

CADRE Symposium, 2021

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Google Link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1h6uUKInQw-CvUMAH3F3dTbO8Llr8oE-x?usp=sharing>



A facilitated IEP meeting includes an impartial facilitator who:

- Promotes effective communication
- Assists an IEP team in developing an IEP based on the student's needs.
- Keeps the team focused while working through conflicts
- Ensures the participation of each IEP team member
- The facilitated IEP meeting includes all of the required team members.

**Renamed:
IEP Facilitation →
Special Education Facilitation**

- Facilitators support meetings other than IEP meetings
- Districts and families were not requesting for “other” meetings
- Supporting “other” meetings prevents conflict from escalating



Facilitation vs. Mediation

**The successful use of
facilitation results in**

- **improved outcomes**
- **better IEP team meetings**
- **fewer disputes**

**It is considered a
promising practice.**

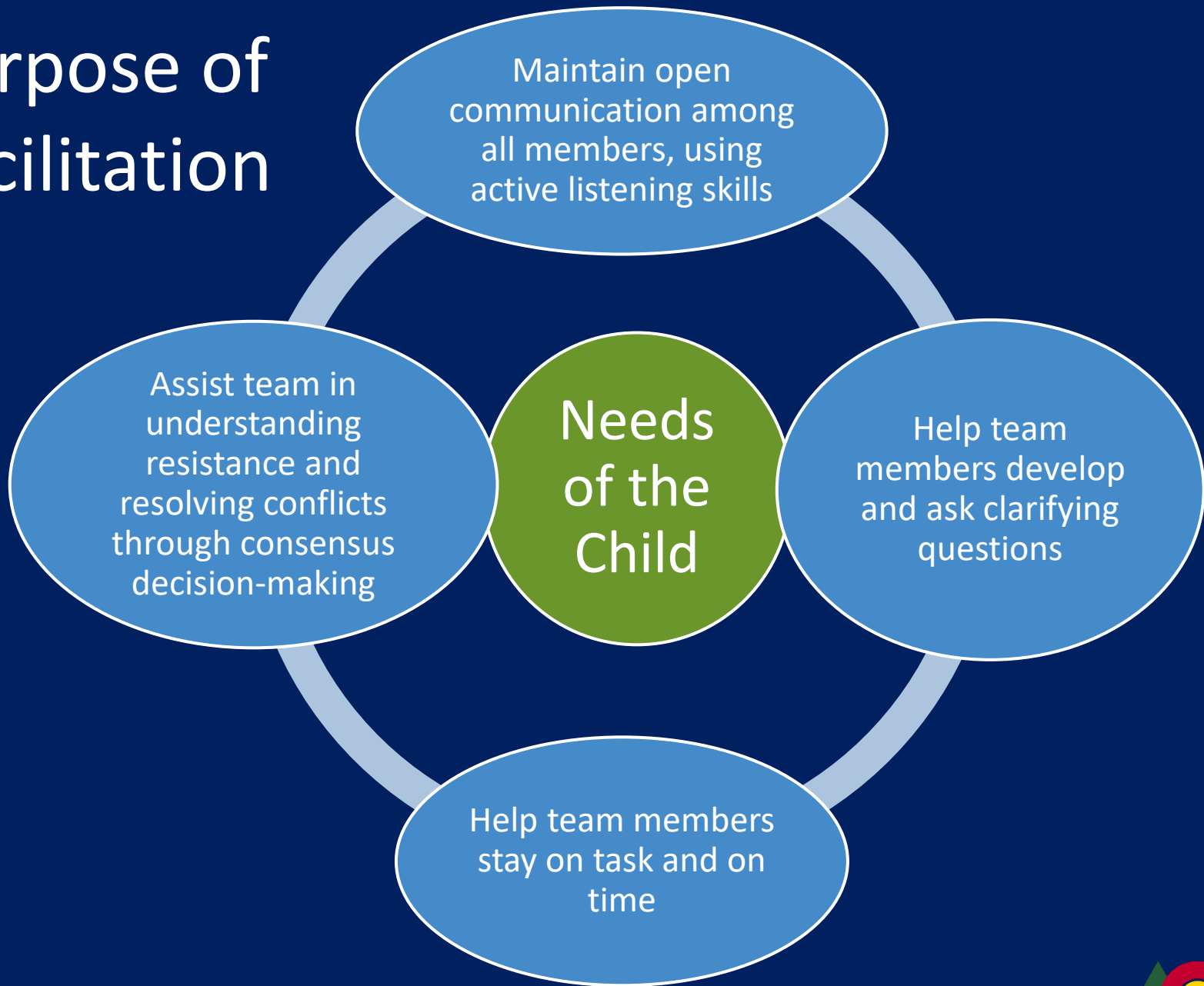
Facilitation	Mediation
Not addressed in IDEA	IDEA mandates availability
No IDEA funding	IDEA provides funding
Conducted within an IEP meeting	Separate meeting, outside of the IEP meeting
Bringing consensus into the IEP process	Enforceable agreement
No certification required (but recommended)	Requires initial and ongoing training
Forward facing	Looks back and forward

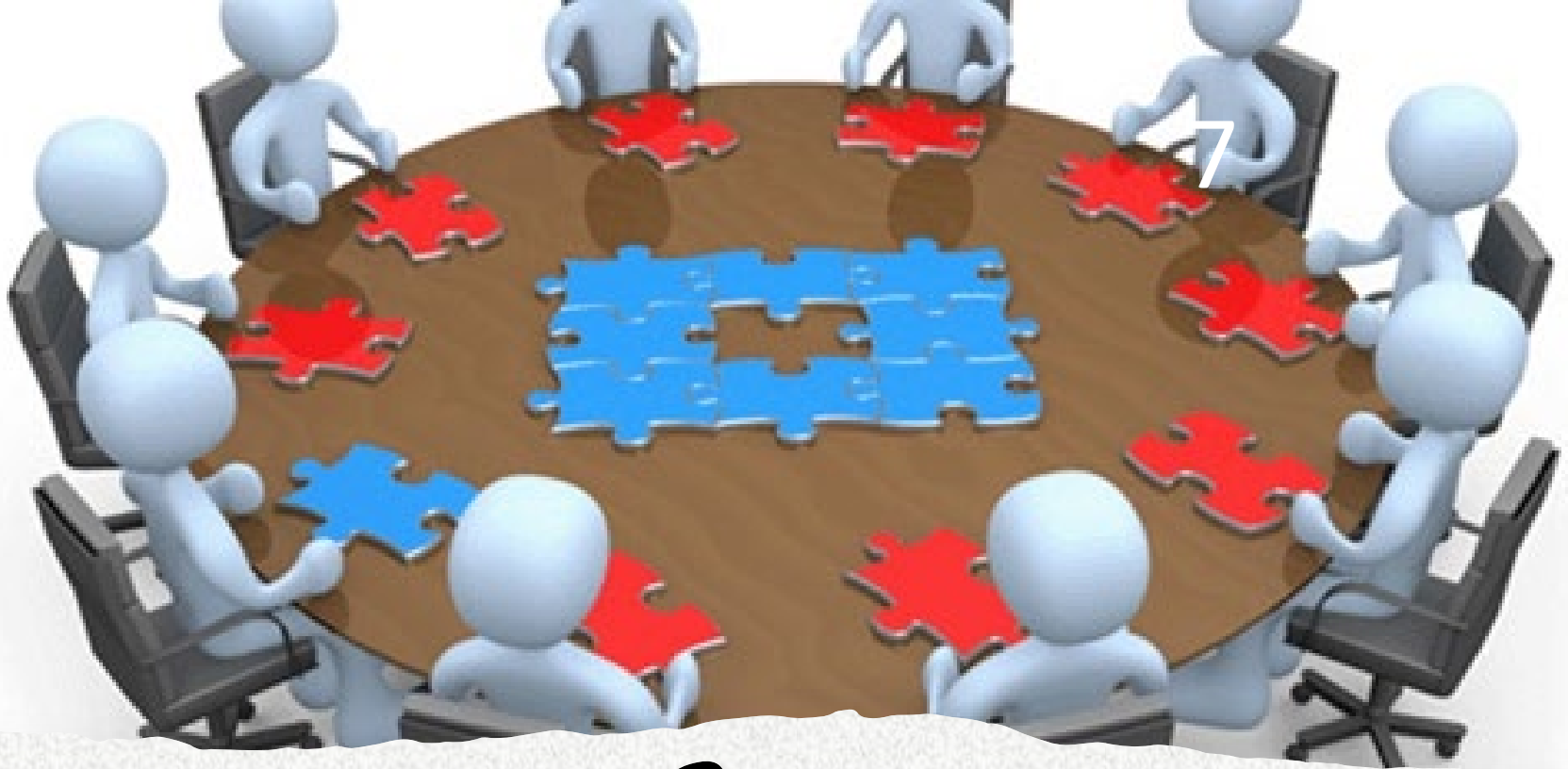


Facilitation is **NOT**

- A legal process
- An advocate representing one side or the other
- A mediator or confidential mediated agreements
- Due process
- A third party saying someone wins or loses

Purpose of Facilitation





Facilitative Skills for all IEP Stakeholders

When are facilitative skills helpful?

- EVERY day.
- At EVERY IEP team meeting.
- BEFORE disagreements become disputes.

Benefits of Using Facilitative Skills



According to the American Bar Association, benefits include:

Parties get to decide: All parties, who know the student, control the outcome.

Fosters continuing relationships: Facilitation does not dismantle relationships, it bolsters them.

Facilitation deals with feelings: It respects that a child is at the heart of every disagreement.

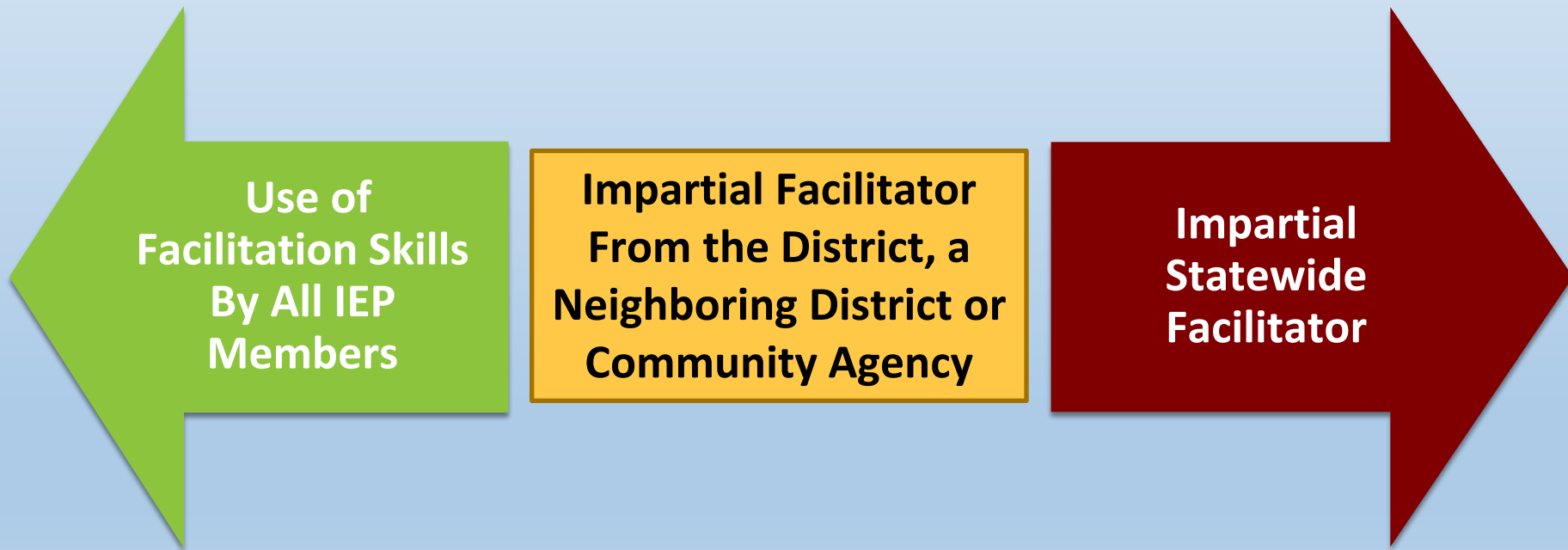
Outcomes are durable: There is a higher level of satisfaction, resulting in more durable agreements.

Lower cost: Informal issue resolution is ALWAYS less costly than more formal options. Cost is measured on the human and financial dimensions.



Facilitation Continuum

No matter your role, facilitation skills are invaluable and there are many options for engagement!



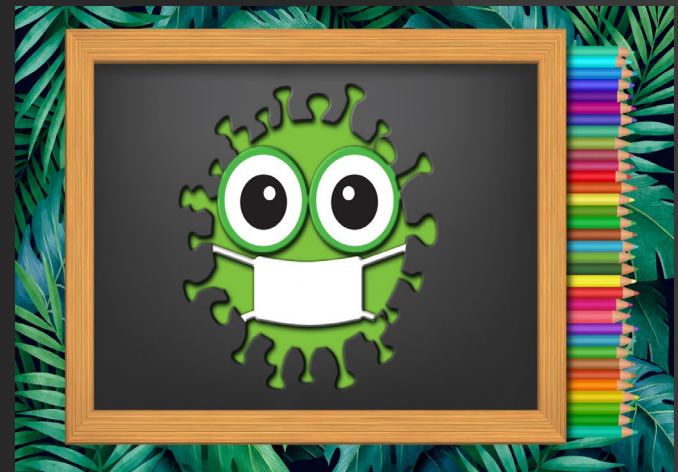
Rural Support in Colorado pre-COVID-19

- 4 Statewide facilitators
- Trainings on facilitative skills
- Challenges
 - Traveled to all parts of the state and dealt with weather/road conditions
 - IEP Team members traveling from one school to another often missed meetings due to distance and weather issues



Support During COVID-19

- Tele-facilitation began in April, 2020
- Districts moved to virtual IEP meetings
- Facilitators could support multiple meetings in one day
- IEP team members could attend because they did not have to travel
- Parents' attendance increased
- Tele-facilitation guidelines kept meetings forward-facing



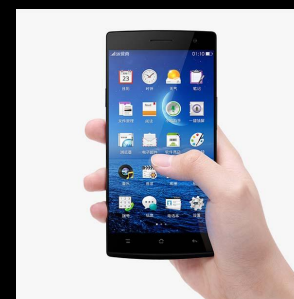
Lessons Learned During COVID-19

- Participation in an IEP meeting does not always have to be in-person
- Many different ways to participate in an IEP meeting
- Visuals are just as critical in virtual meetings
- Important to emphasize who can make decisions in IEP meetings



Lessons Learned, Cont'd.

- Important to create checkpoints to summarize and discuss notes on charts
- Send copies of charts to all parties
- Hybrid facilitation works well, better than expected
- Have your phone ready to connect if internet loses connection
- Virtual IEP meetings are often better for the rural districts



Moving Forward

- Virtual facilitations will continue to provide support for meetings as needed
- In-person facilitations will be available as needed
- Many districts have expressed the need to continue virtual IEP meetings
- Hybrid is also an option and has worked well



Critical Component!



- Training
- Ongoing Support
 - Customized trainings
 - Office Hours
- Collaboration with Parent Training Info Center

Tools Used in Facilitation- Absolutely Necessary!

Evaluation Wheel
© Pieters Consulting, LLC



The FAPE Continuum



1	2	3	4	5
I'm totally opposed and have major philosophical differences with the solution.	I have several serious reservations about the proposed solution.	I have one or two reservations about the proposed solution.	I can live with the proposed solution.	I am in total agreement with the proposed solution.

FACILITATED TEAM MEETING AGENDA DEVELOPMENT FORM

Name and Role of Team Member: _____

Use of this form is to seek input from meeting participants to assist in building an agenda for the facilitated meeting. As an important member of the team, your input into this process is vital to a successful meeting. Turn this form to the Facilitator as soon as possible.

AGENDA DISCUSSION ITEMS

Discussion Item	Other items you want to add to the agenda
Discussion of the Meeting: * are we meeting? * do you think the end result of the meeting should	
Status: * does the student's disability affect his/her education ability to access the general curriculum? * is the current IEP working? * are any new evaluative data that should be used? * any new evaluations needed? Staff Needs: * is it working well? * are there any gaps between the student's skills and the general curriculum? * are there any most important educational needs to address at this meeting? * describe the specially designed instruction in order to meet educational needs. * are related services necessary in order for the student to benefit from specially designed instruction? * accommodations & modifications needed? * do staff need to be supported? * do parent(s) need to be supported?	
Restrictive Environment Considerations: * are supplementary aids & services needed to allow the student in the LRE? * describe the amount of time and types of activities the student will participate with nondisabled peers. 1 School Year Considerations: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> * do educational needs require uninterrupted supports? * can those needs be met? 2 in Considerations: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> * are the student's goals after high school? * if help does the student need to make progress?	
Discussion Items:	



Parent Reports

- Purpose is to gain meaningful input from the parent, as well as provide meaningful input, and an opportunity for parents to report at the meeting.
Report can include:
 - Student strengths
 - Behavioral performance
 - Social interaction
 - Parent concerns

Parent Input to IEP

Take a few minutes to complete this form for your student's upcoming Special Education meeting. The information you provide will assist the special education team in developing an appropriate educational plan for your student. Return this form to: _____

Parent Name _____ Case Load Teacher _____

Student Strengths: (describe your student's social and educational strengths)

Behavioral Performance: (describe behavior at home or school and list specific examples of behavior that interferes with academic performance)

Social Interaction: (describe the student's interaction with parents, siblings, teachers and other students including specific incidents where ever possible)

Please describe your concerns for your student (including future goals)

Please describe areas that you feel your student needs assistance with

Describe any concerns that your student may have about school

Additional Comments: _____

FACILITATED TEAM MEETING AGENDA DEVELOPMENT FORM

Name and Role of Team Member: _____

Purpose of this form is to seek input from meeting participants to assist in building an agenda for the facilitated meeting. As an important member of the team, your input into this process is vital to a successful meeting. Turn this form to the Facilitator as soon as possible.

AGENDA DISCUSSION ITEMS

Primary discussion:	Other items you want to add to the agenda
of the Meeting: 'are we meeting? 'do you think the end result of the meeting should	
Status: 'does the student's disability affect his/her education ability to access the general curriculum? 'is the current IEP working?	
Changes: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> 'were any new evaluative data that should be discussed? 'are any new evaluations needed?	
Instructional Needs: 'is it working well? 'where are the gaps between the student's skills and the general curriculum? 'what are the most important educational needs to discuss at this meeting?	
Support: 'describe the specially designed instruction in order to meet educational needs. 'what related services are necessary in order for the student to benefit from specially designed instruction? 'what accommodations & modifications needed? 'do staff need to be supported?	
Parental Considerations: 'do parent(s) need to be supported?	
Restrictive Environment Considerations: 'do supplementary aids & services are needed to support the student in the LRE? 'describe the amount of time and types of activities the student will participate with nondisabled peers.	
1 School Year Considerations: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> 'do educational needs require uninterrupted supports? 'can those needs be met?	
2 Year Considerations: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> 'at the end of 9 th grade, whichever comes first or earlier if appropriate by the IEP team: ECEA Rule 4.03(6)(d). 'what are the student's goals after high school? 'what help does the student need to make progress?	
Discussion Items:	

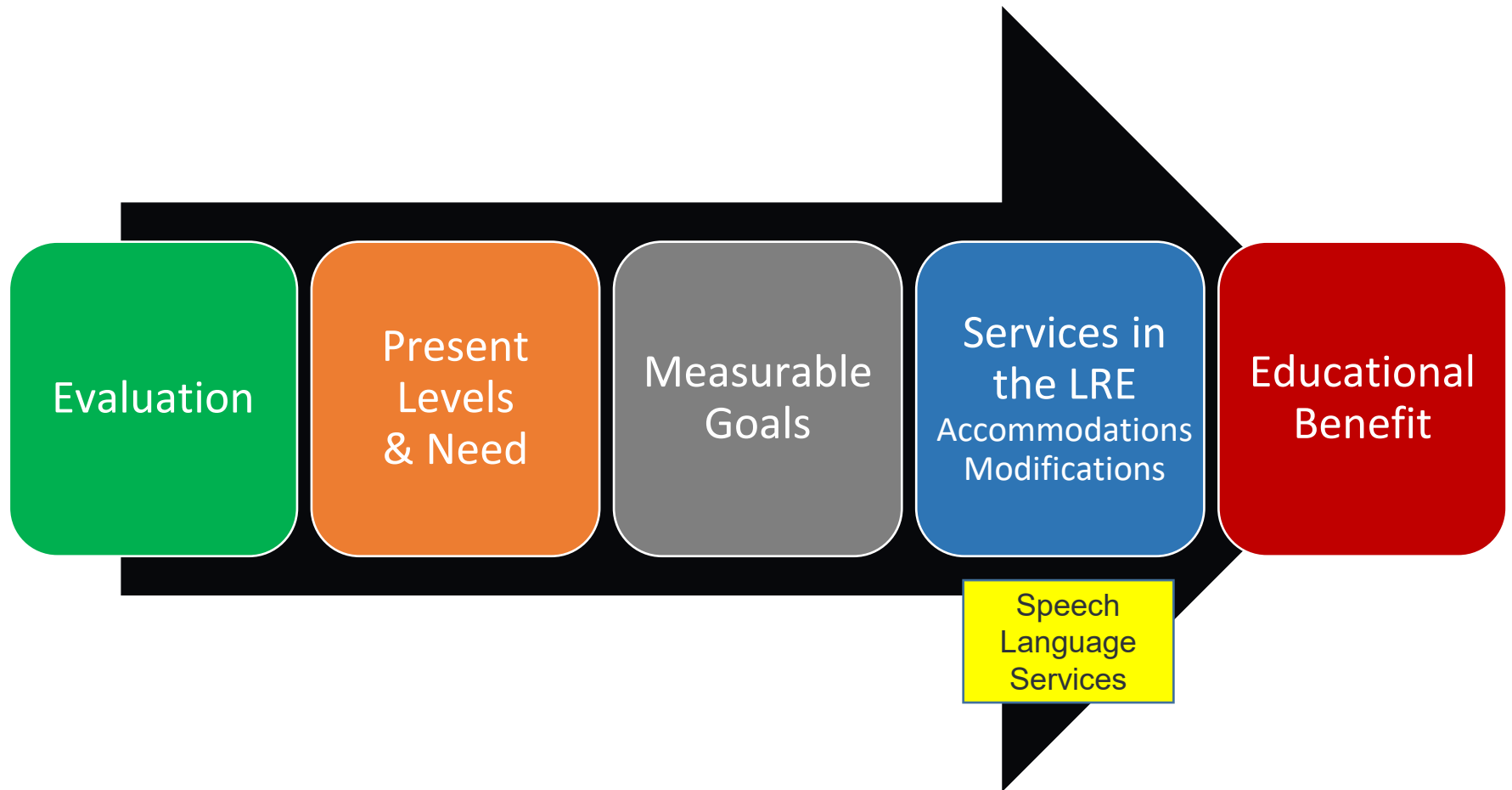


IEP Agenda Handout

Google Folder
Handout



The FAPE Continuum



Comprehensive Evaluation Visual

- Without a clear understanding of the student's educational needs, it is impossible to determine FAPE.
- *Educational needs* mean academic, functional, social, or behavioral.
- It is a probing question model.

Evaluation Wheel
© Pingora Consulting, LLC



Consensus Scale



1	2	3	4	5
I'm totally opposed and have major philosophical differences with the solution.	I have several serious reservations about the proposed solution.	I have one or two reservations about the proposed solution.	I can live with the proposed solution.	I am in total agreement with the proposed solution.

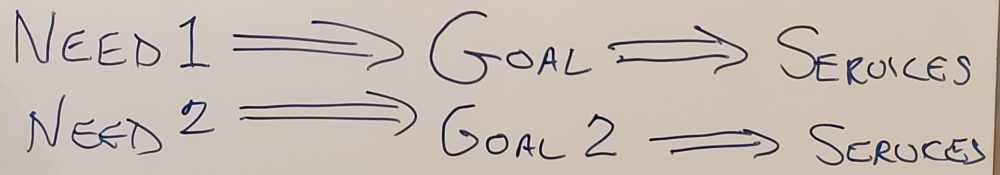
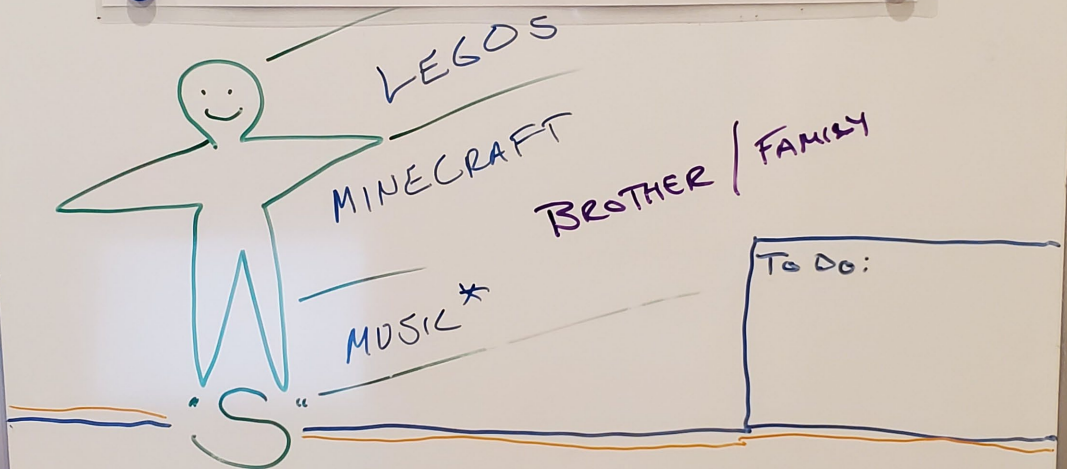
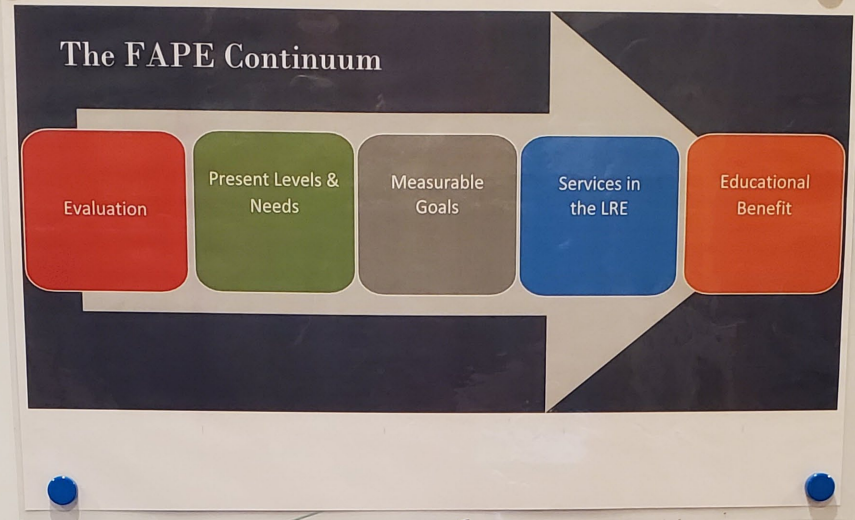
Using the Consensus Scale

- When the team is not able to move forward with a proposed solution, check the pulse of the room
- Ask team members where they are at on the scale
- If they respond with a:
 - 4 or 5, you are good to move forward
 - 3, you need to ask what the one or two reservations are and use strategic questions to get to the heart of the matter
 - 1 or 2, you need to back up and ensure understanding of data and terms, identify where the opposition is stemming from, and use strategic questions rather than telling statements
- Listening is crucial if a person responds with a 1 or 2

1	2	3	4	5
I'm totally opposed and have major philosophical differences with the solution.	I have several serious reservations about the proposed solution.	I have one or two reservations about the proposed solution.	I can live with the proposed solution.	I am in total agreement with the proposed solution.



Tele-Facilitation

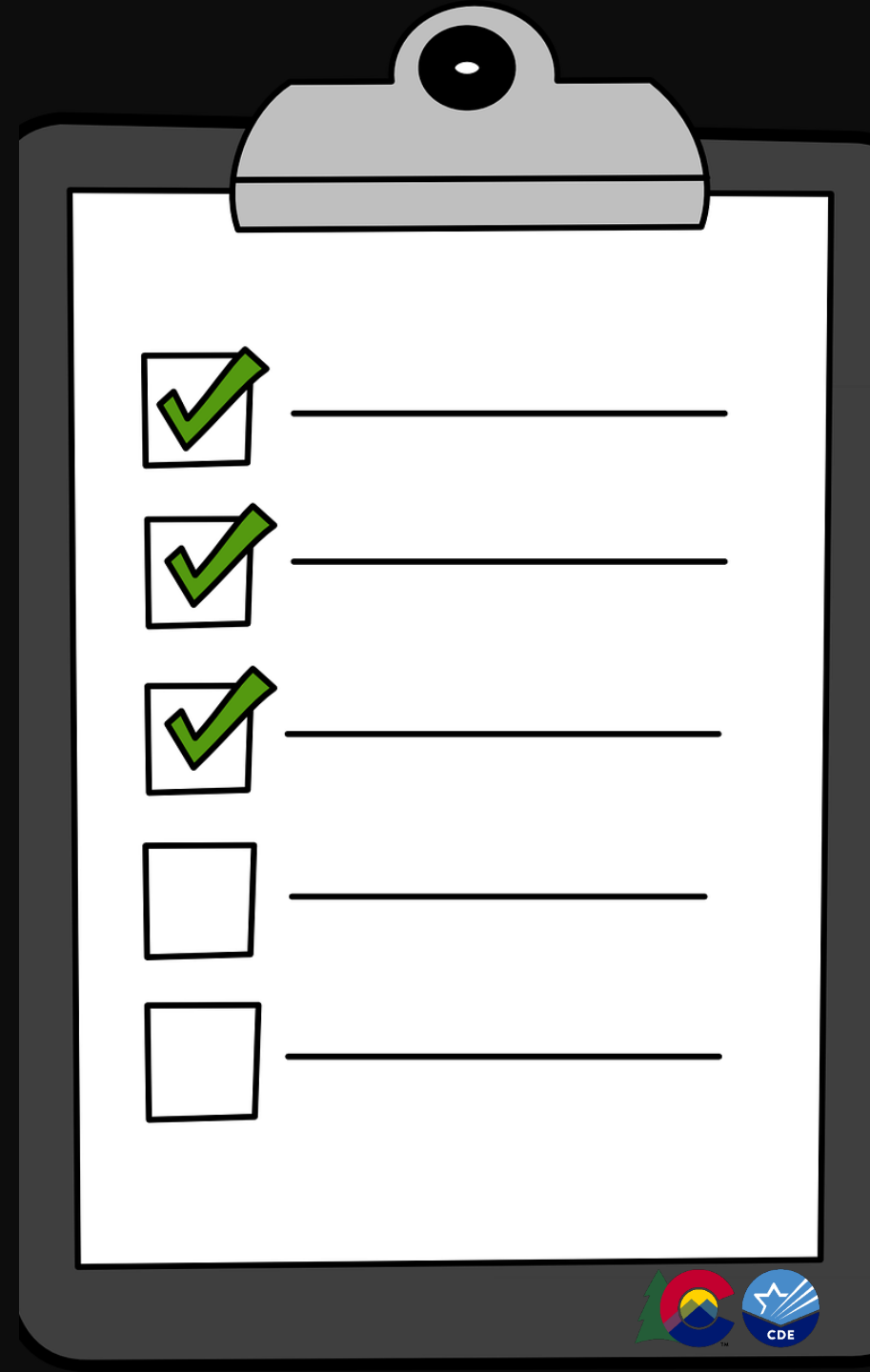


ALL: FLEX SEATING
CHECK-INS

Setting the Stage for Collaboration within a Virtual IEP Meeting

A successful virtual meeting starts with preparation.

- Gather input from all IEP Team members, including parents.
- Develop a meeting agenda
- Email agenda along with tele-facilitation meeting guidelines to all participants in advance.
- Make sure all reports and drafts are sent to participants with time to review prior to the meeting.



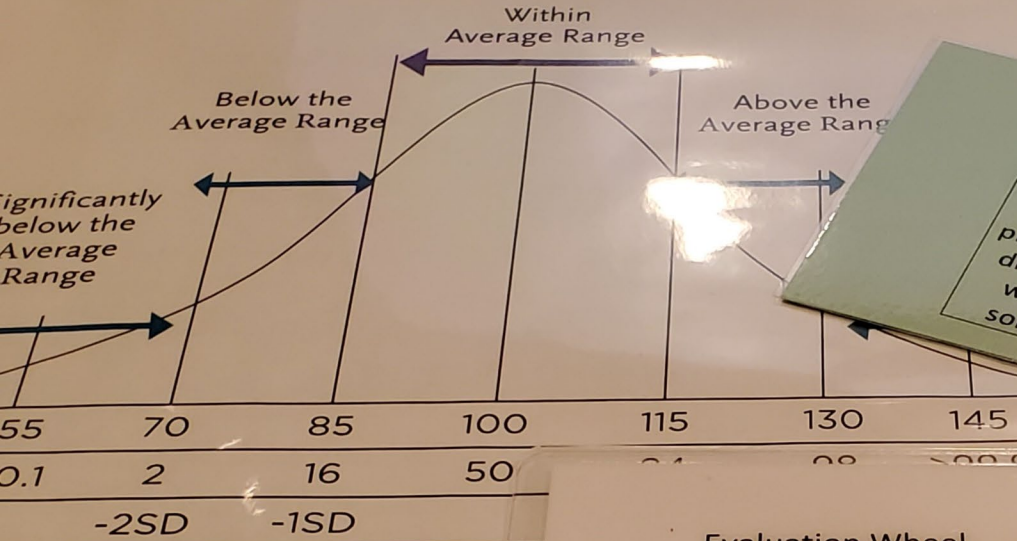
The FAPE Continuum



Tele-facilitation Guidelines

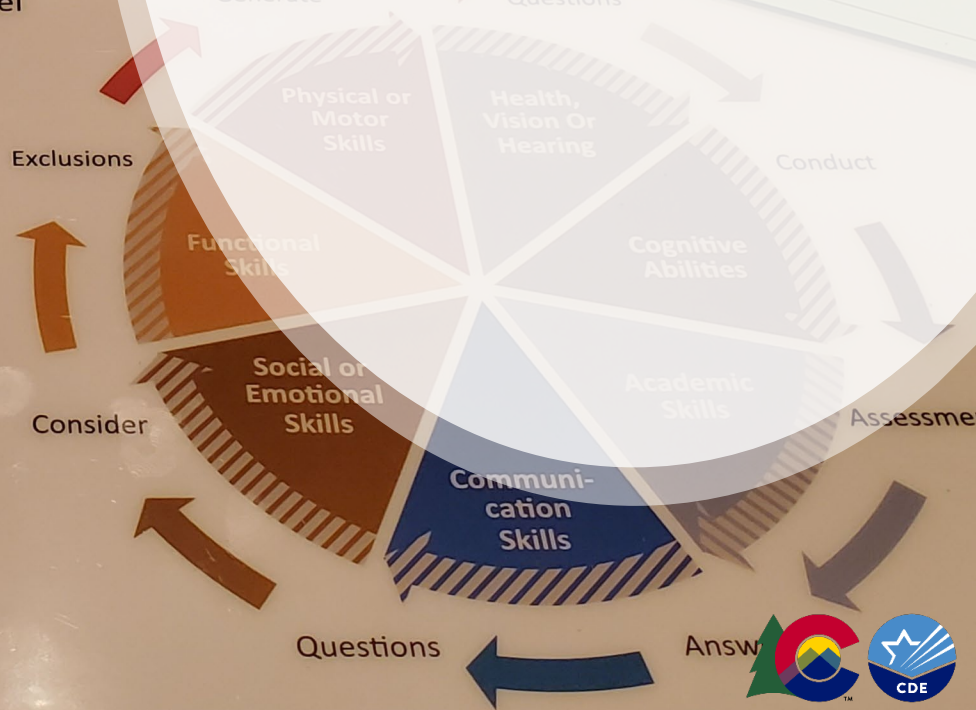
- Cameras on.
- Microphones muted when not talking.
- Microphones muted and cameras off during breaks.
- Any recording should be announced and limited to the actual meeting time.
- Start the meetings with introductions of everyone in attendance.
- If technology allows, display the meeting agenda.
- Explain all documents during the meeting, using visuals as much as possible.

Bell Curve Graph



Standard Scores
 Scores tell us how close to
 score is
 (or Mean) score for most
 in 85 and 115 are
 in the average range
 Deviation is 15 Points

Evaluation Wheel



Using charting and tools in a virtual environment.

- Be prepared
- Stick with the basics
- Take the time to explain documents to ensure understanding for all participants.

Collaboration in the Meeting



Be student-focused



Assume positive intent of all team members



Respect and listen to all perspectives.



Be solution-oriented and contribute to problem solving.

Evaluations: Aspects of Tele-facilitation Most Effective

The facilitator kept her camera on and mic unmuted. She was engaged and visible.

Having a way to control who speaks when.

I found it very helpful that they were able to track information, summarize, and have the team come back to points or topics of conversation that got lost as many members of the team discussed.

The facilitator is amazing! She is able to keep the meeting moving forward and ensures that all voices are heard and that one person does not take over the meeting.

Controlling the time and organization of when people can speak, trying to bring people back to the original question/IEP section and keeping track of time.

Having a neutral party was excellent way to run a virtual meeting. The facilitator was able to keep us more focused.

Kept us on a timeline and made the meeting very structured. She allowed everyone a voice so one person wasn't dominating the conversation and challenging everything said.

Evaluations: Aspects of tele-facilitation least effective



- Introductions always take a long time, but I know they are necessary.
- It is difficult in a tele-meeting to see all participants and engage to the level that would occur in an in-person meeting.



Moving Forward in Your State

- Engage stakeholders in discussion
- Identify what is working, what is not
- Always provide visual tools that support meetings
- Adjust services according to the need expressed by stakeholders
 - Families
 - Districts

Alternative Dispute Resolution



The Alternative Dispute Resolution Project at CDE

In 2013, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) recognized, from parent and educator feedback, the need for more options to prevent IEP's from moving into contentious and costly dispute processes AND result in better outcomes for students. The Alternative Dispute Resolution Advisory Board was formed to look at best practices across the United States in alternative dispute resolution and decide where Colorado should start. As a result of the Advisory Board work, it was decided that Special Education Facilitation was a highly promising practice that could work well in Colorado's local control model. **Use the buttons below to learn more about the project.**

- [Facilitated IEP Meetings \(webpage\)](#).
- [Facilitated IEP Meetings Brochure \(PDF\)](#).
- [Reuniones IEP con facilitación \(PDF\)](#).

Request a Facilitator (SmartSheet Form)

Tele-Facilitation

ADR Advisory Board

Information & FAQ on Facilitation

Trainings in Facilitation Skills

Decisions
Legal Conference

Graduation

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Results Driven Accountability

Additional Educator Resources

Calendar

Contact Us

Location

Colorado Dept. of Education
Office of Special Education
1560 Broadway, Suite 1100
Denver, CO 80202

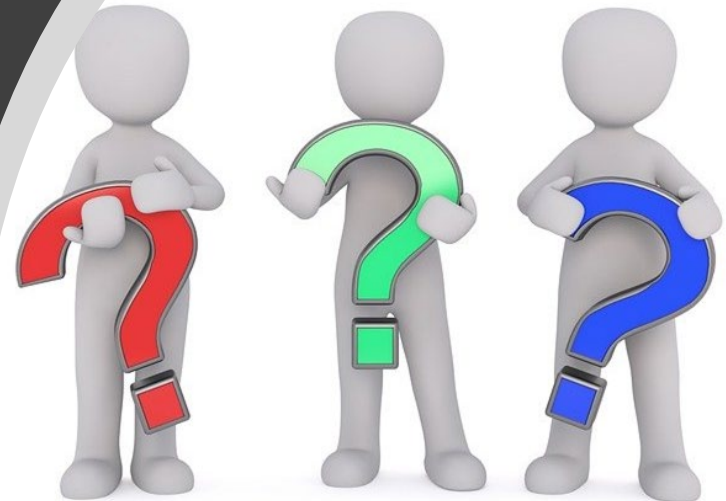
Questions:

- Email ESSU@cde.state.co.us
- Or view our [Staff Contact List](#)



**What questions
or thoughts do
you have?**

*Any
Questions*



Questions?

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