



OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

IEP FACILITATION SYSTEM- COMING SOON TO NEW JERSEY

Promoting productive child-centered IEP meetings that are conducted in a respectful and collaborative manner.

OVERVIEW

IEP Facilitation is a process that fosters effective communication between parents and school districts as they develop a mutually agreed upon IEP. This process may be used as a preventative measure in which a trained facilitator promotes whole team participation, acknowledging and addressing differing opinions in a respectful and neutral manner. IEP Facilitation can improve the relationships between school districts and parents in order to effectively plan services to meet student needs.

WHY IEP FACILITATION?

States and school districts are increasingly turning toward this less costly measure and are reporting improved relationships between school districts and parents, a greater number of mutually agreed upon IEPs, and a reduction in the number of districts and parents utilizing formal dispute resolution options. As a result of the interest in IEP Facilitation

among districts and parents in New Jersey, the NJDOE, OSEP is piloting an IEP Facilitation Process.

STATE-SPONSORED IEP FACILITATION

State-sponsored IEP Facilitation is a voluntary service offered at no cost to districts and parents of students with disabilities. A parent or school district representative may make the request for the state sponsored facilitator. However, these services will initially be available to those districts who agreed to participate in the pilot project and parents from those identified districts. The pilot program will begin during the 2016-2017 school year.

STATE-SPONSORED FACILITATOR'S ROLE

An IEP Facilitator focuses on the process of the meeting and supporting all parties' full participation. The facilitator is not a member of the IEP team or an

advocate for any person on the team. The IEP Facilitator is not an employee of the school district or OSEP. The facilitator does not make decisions for the group. The facilitator keeps team members on task, clarifies points of agreement and disagreement, and provides team members opportunities to consider alternative options.



Rights and

Responsibilities:

- IEP Facilitation does not relieve the school district of the responsibility to meet regulatory obligations, including timelines.
- If an agreement is reached on the IEP, the school district is required to complete the IEP document and provide a copy to the parent with written notice.
- The only record kept of the Facilitated IEP session is the date, time and location of the session, surveys, and the result. Neither OSEP nor the facilitator will keep a copy of the IEP document.

Is a Facilitated IEP Confidential?

The parameters of confidentiality apply to all IEP meetings, including Facilitated IEP meetings.

ENFORCEMENT:

The IEP document is enforceable through the state complaint process, mediation or a due process hearing.

HOW DOES FACILITATION COMPARE TO MEDIATION?

Question	Facilitation	Mediation
• Who guides the process?	• Facilitator	• Mediator
• Meeting type?	• IEP meeting	• Informal meeting
• Participants?	• IEP team	• Small group of decision makers
• Goals?	• Promoting effective communication; Developing a mutually acceptable IEP	• Resolving special education disagreement; Developing legally binding mediation agreements.

Updates on the IEP Facilitation System, including when it may be available to all school districts and parents, will be provided on the NJDOE website and through the weekly NJDOE Broadcasts and through other means.



