

My Child and the IEP

Working out the details of an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) can be challenging for parents and school personnel alike. Sometimes it is difficult to agree whether or not a child even needs an IEP. When such conflicts arise it is quite natural for those involved to lose sight of the real goal—working in the best interest of the student.

That's where mediation can really make a difference.

Ideally, families and schools can solve problems on their own, but that is not always the case. Sometimes the problems seem too complex, or those involved become too emotional to handle the conflict constructively, or the meeting has so many participants involved that it's difficult to have an effective conversation. You are not alone, and there are resources that can help. Special Education Mediation is a resource that assists parent(s) and school districts to work out their diverse viewpoints through a confidential and non-adversarial process.

Special Education Mediation services are available to you *free of charge* through SPARC. Contact information is provided on the back of this brochure.

What is Mediation?

Mediation is a voluntary process designed to help people solve their problems together in a safe, productive, neutral environment. It seeks to create win-win results by giving everyone involved a chance to shape the solution. Mediation works because it is tough on the problem without being tough on the people involved. This is important for parents and school personnel who want to work together to support the student.

Contact us today for more information.

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Special Education Mediation

for Families and Schools

This program is part of the
**Special Education Partnership for the Amicable
Resolution of Conflict (SPARC)**

which is sponsored by the
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in cooperation with the
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Dare to be first.



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See www.udel.edu/aboutus/legalnotices.html for detailed policy information.



Institute for Public Administration
School of Public Policy & Administration
College of Arts & Sciences
University of Delaware

How Does It Work?

1. If you have tried, but just can't agree about the needs of a child, you have the right to request assistance through mediation. Simply call the SPARC office to make contact with someone who will assist you.
2. If all parties agree to mediation, a neutral location convenient to the parent and the school district and a qualified mediator will be identified.



3. At the mediation session, parent(s) and school personnel sit down and try to work out problems through a neutral third person (mediator) who is trained to help people settle their differences.
4. If the mediation results in an agreement, the details of the agreement are documented in writing and signed by the parent(s) and school district. Both parties leave the mediation with a copy of the signed document. This becomes a legally binding agreement that sets forth the resolution steps and time frame for follow through.
5. Regardless of whether you participate in mediation or not, you maintain all your rights to pursue all of the existing state and court options remain open to you.

What is a Mediator?

A mediator is someone trained to assist people in solving problems. A mediator is not a judge or a hearing officer. The mediator does not suggest or impose solutions but helps people talk through their problems, identify their most important concerns, find common ground, and come to an agreement that meets everyone's most important needs.

It's Time to Check Out Mediation When...

- You've reached an impasse regarding a child's special education evaluation, identification, individualized education program (IEP), or placement.
- You've done your best to resolve disagreements between home and school, but can not reach a resolution.
- You feel like your only options are to just give up or heat things up.
- You care enough about the child to try a creative approach to solving the problem with the help of a skilled, neutral mediator.

If, in your particular situation, you could check any of the above, please call 302-831-8158 as soon as possible.

What You Gain

- Collaborative problem-solving
- Mutual decision-making
- Clarification of issues
- Positive working relationship
- Focus on common ground
- Friendly, neutral atmosphere
- Quick action
- No legal costs
- High rate of compliance
- Agreements that hold up
- Focus on win/win solutions
- Problem-solving experience

What You Lose

Nothing.

All traditional options are still open to you.

