

## Other Options



Informal conversations are not the only way to resolve disputes. You can:

- Seek help with formal dispute resolution from Pathfinder.
- Ask the local special education unit for assistance.
- Ask DPI to clarify your rights with the school.
- Ask for a Facilitated IEP
- Ask for Mediation
- File a State Complaint
- Consider a Due Process Hearing.

## Early Dispute Resolution

- If you have read one thing about your rights but are told another
- If you told the teacher or principal and you believe nothing was done
- If you tried to resolve the problem and can't get a meeting or a solution.
- If you have questions or are unclear about what steps to take next.
- If you need a safe place to share concerns confidentially then contact:

### Pathfinder Parent Center

**1600 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave SW, Ste. 30**  
**Minot, ND 58701-3459**  
**Phone: 1.800.245.5840 or**  
**701.837.7500**

**E-mail: [info@pathfinder-nd.org](mailto:info@pathfinder-nd.org)**  
**<http://pathfinder-nd.org>**



## Dispute Resolution

### Using Early Dispute Resolution Strategies



***Helping children with  
special needs to reach  
their goals***

**Phone: 1.800.245.5840 or**  
**701.837.7500**

## Before You Meet

## When You Meet

## After You Meet

### Gather Information

Sometimes parents and schools don't agree on services or a plan is not fully implemented. If this happens, you can:

- Try to resolve the concern at the local level. Speak calmly.
- Think about what your child needs, not just what you want.
- Focus on what is happening now, not what happened a year ago.
- Find or ask for copies of reports that address your child's needs. Highlight recommendations or make a simple graph to show your point.
- Contact the Regional Special Ed. Director in writing with concerns.
- Never threaten people.
- Ask for a meeting to discuss concerns. Be open & willing to trust others. Give times you are available.
- Contact the Pathfinder Parent Center for help to understand your rights and present your case in a way that is not counter-productive.
- Get help to quantify your observations and write out your top five priorities in clear, measurable terms.

### Make Your Case

You are making a case that your child is not receiving needed services or supports.

- Write your concerns in a letter or note. Sign and date it. Be brief. Do not skip this step.
- If you met in the hallway or after school and you thought a point was made or an action would happen, follow up with a written note summarizing the agreement and date of the meeting.
- Clearly state if you believe that any part of the law (IDEA) isn't being followed.
- Tell what you want the school to do to address the problem.
- Give the facts or data on which your concern is based with dates and details.
- Sandwich a concern between two positive statements.
- Include only concerns that happened within one year and that are under the control of the current school.
- Be flexible in agreeing to meet.
- Don't just share concerns, work out solutions.

### Follow Through

- Set timelines for progress and as a team and monitor those.
- Set up a realistic home/school communication system to keep you in the loop without undue burden on the teacher.
- Don't burn bridges – instead work to form new alliances with teachers and related service professionals.
- Read between the lines. Schools have to maintain confidentiality. What looks like one person's fault may not be. Look for overall progress on priorities.
- Admit that while life would be easier if caring people instantly understood and took prompt action to help your child that sometimes perseverance is necessary.
- Be willing to take the time to work with the team because you and your child benefit from a strong team with positive relationships.
- Invite Pathfinder to attend a meeting with you.
- Contact Pathfinder to learn about formal dispute resolution processes if you believe progress is not substantial.