



CADRE

the center for appropriate dispute
resolution in special education

Coaching Families through Difficult Conflicts

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PEATC Advocacy Symposium
Webinar
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**“When elephants fight the grass
beneath them dies.”** Swahili proverb

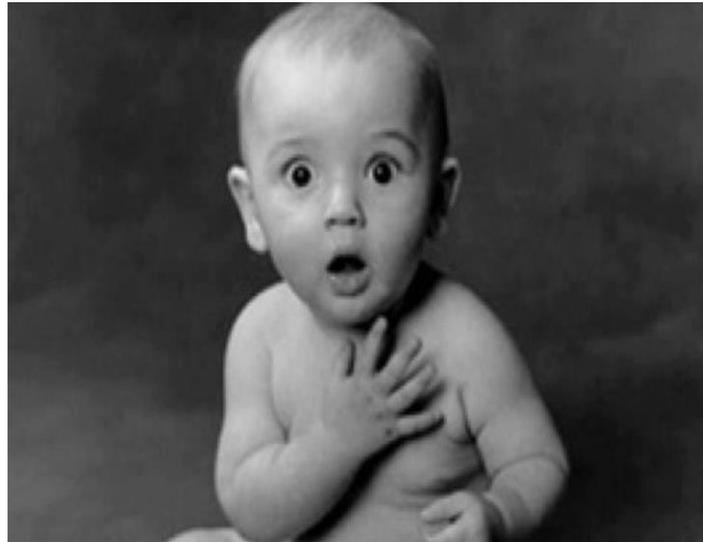


Agenda

- Welcome
- Nature of Conflict
- Taking a Coaching Approach
- Skills Needed to Coach Families to Conflict Well
 - Separate the person from the problem
 - Determine level of message
 - Validation tools
 - Identifying interests
 - Determining next steps
 - Working with High-frequency Clients
- CADRE Resources



Conflict happens



**Don't be surprised by it.
Conflict is normal, natural,
and to be expected.**

Conflict

**When thinking about a conflict,
what comes to mind for you?**

How did you feel?

What did it look like?

What was the impact?



Conflict

危機

Danger

Opportunity

Conflict is dangerous, but holds opportunities



- Clarification
- Healing
- Understanding
- Movement
- Creativity
- Problem Solving
- Growth
- Relationship improvement

Dealing with emotions is hard.



High emotions increase when an outcome holds critical importance to us.

When conflict escalates, resolution is more difficult because:

- Tactics go from light to heavy
- Positions become more polarized and people more risk averse
- Issues expand
- Specific issues move to general issues
- Motivations change:

Doing well



Winning



Teaching a Lesson

How Coaching Someone Differs from Advocating

Coaching is using a set of skills and strategies to support another's ability to engage in, manage, or productively resolve conflict.

In this process, a coach works one-on-one with someone experiencing conflict with another person. ([Amadei, 2011](#))



See also: Brinkert (2006)

A Coaching Mindset: What it isn't . . . What it is.

NOT...

- Counseling
- Advocating
- Mentoring
- Judging
- Mediating
- Resolving

IS...

- Exploring
- Identifying
- Expanding resources
- Prepping
- Educating
- Building competency

*Adapted from [Nobel, 2006](#)

Coach families to help them...

- decide whether to engage
- prepare logistically and psychologically for an event.
- view the issue from multiple perspectives.
- explore options for resolution of the conflict situation.
- formulate the words that will be used to convey the message.





- Underscore self-determination ([Spence & Oades, 2011](#))
- Improve conflict communication skills
- Increase understanding of one's triggers and tendencies ([Gottman, 2013](#))
- Encourage open-mindedness
- Shift destructive reactions to constructive responses
- Learn how to check assumptions

Preparing Others

- Set Expectations
 - Establish Trust
 - Explain Roles and Boundaries
 - Determine Goals
- Get Current
 - Validate
 - Identify Interests
 - Clarify Issues
 - Skill Building
- Move to Future Focus
 - Identify next steps
 - Make a plan



*Adapted from Sounding Board
Community Mediation Manual.*

Suggestions for Setting Boundaries



"Is **THIS** the line you're telling me not to cross?"

- Explain the scope and limits of your role.
- Convey commitment to do what you can to address their concerns.
- Allow time and space to reflect, regroup, reconsider.
- Use summary strategies when faced with repetition. (“Let me look at my notes, you’ve told me about _____. Is there any more I need to know?”)

Coach others to adopting an “Inquiry Mind”

- Before reacting,
listen
- Before critiquing,
clarify
- Before demanding,
understand



Filling Your Toolbox



- Recognizing bias
- Separate the person from the problem
- Determine Level of Message
- Validate
- Identify interests
- Determine next steps
- Working with the High-frequency Client

Bias

Noun:

a particular tendency, trend, inclination, feeling, or opinion, especially one that is preconceived or unreasoned.

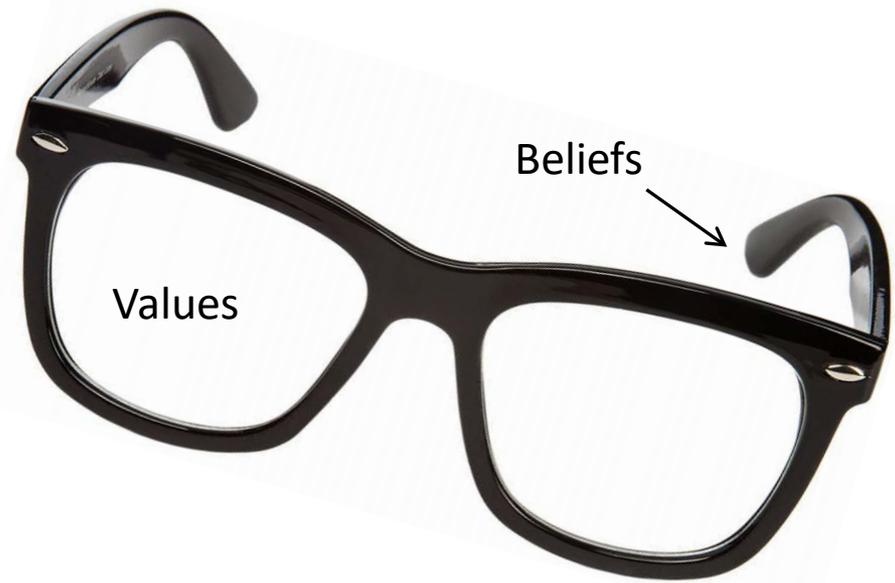


The Glasses That Shape Our View

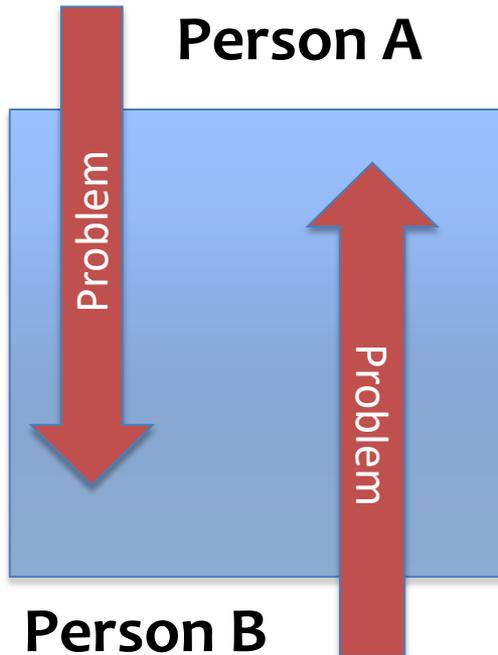
Our perspectives come from:

- *Beliefs* – specific ideas about the world we hold true, largely unproven
- *Values* – represent what we believe as important about the life and individual behavior

(Evans & Vaandering 2016)



Separate the Person from the Problem

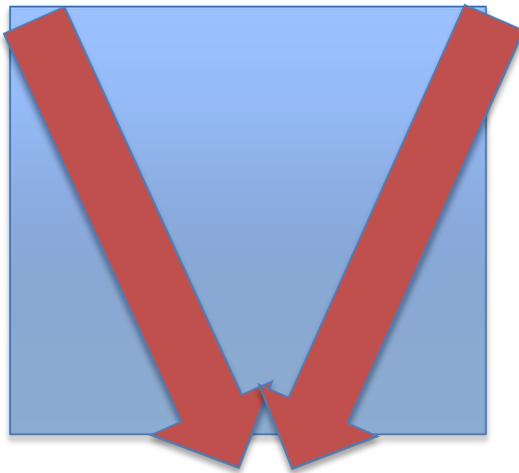


When people disagree, they often see the other person as the “problem.”

Separate the Person from the Problem

Person A

Person B



Problem

The goal is to put the “problem” on the other side of the table and work together to resolve it.

Getting Current through Effective Listening

Basic skill clusters for effective listening:



Attending Skills

- Contact (distance, eyes, touch)
- Gestures
- Body language
- Interested silence and encouragers

Responding Skills

- Reflect content, emotions, meaning
- Ask open-ended questions
- Summarize and clarify

Unpacking Messages



Distinguish Levels of a Message



Whew! The cat
box stinks!

Content Level

*I noticed the
litter box is
smelly.*

Emotional (Relational) Level

*She seems irritated. I said I would
clean it. We have company coming
over soon.*

Content Paraphrasing

Paraphrase the issue or the position that the speaker presents without agreeing or disagreeing. This is a good tool to reassure and record information.



“You want the team to review his progress in math and consider a new approach.”

Content Paraphrasing



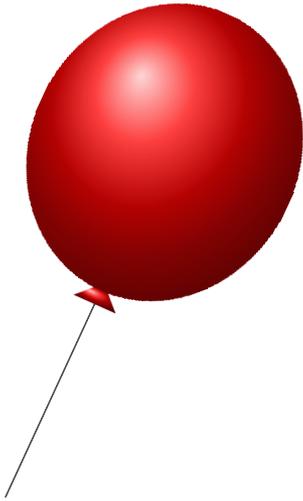
Sometimes a well-placed content validation can help move a conflict along by providing a summary of key points.

Content Paraphrasing

- “We need to address _____, _____ and _____ . Did that capture it?”
- “You want there to be increased communication with Jack’s teacher.”
- “You have brought up _____ several times. Whatever we decide needs to address this.”

**IMPORTANT: Make sure there is
no judgment or opinion
in the paraphrase.**

Emotional Paraphrasing



Paraphrase the emotion or relational level of the message.

“You’re (emotion) by/when (situation/behavior).”

“You’re worried she’s falling behind her peers.”

Emotional Paraphrasing

You're (emotion) by/when (situation/behavior).

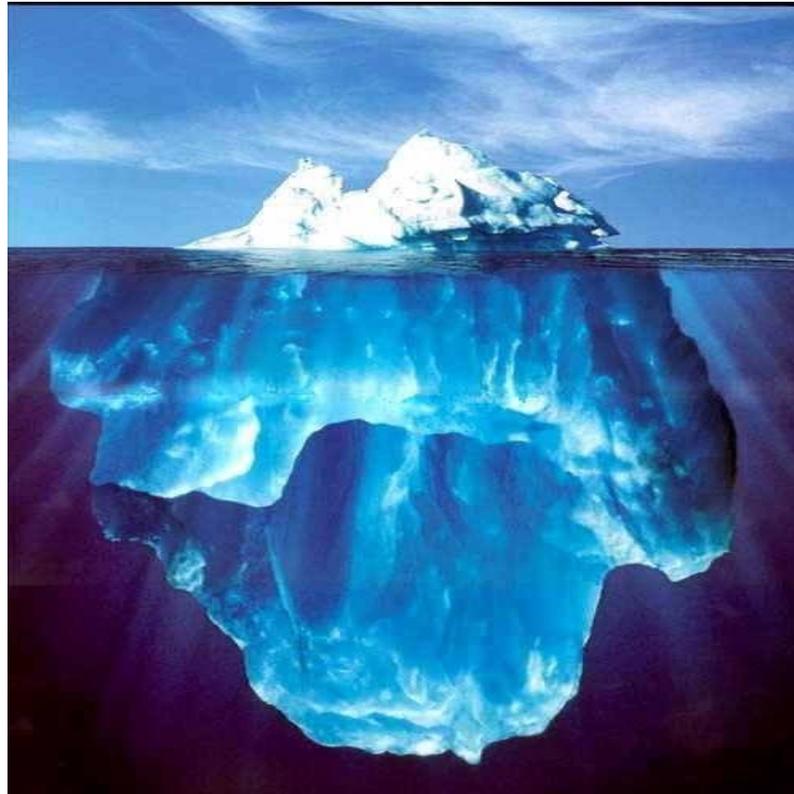
- “You’re bothered by Maggie not turning in her math homework.”
- “You’re worried about Jack’s progress in reading.”
- “You’re concerned the suggested placement will separate Jenny from her peers.”



Don't be afraid to guess.

Problem Solving

Separate positions from interests

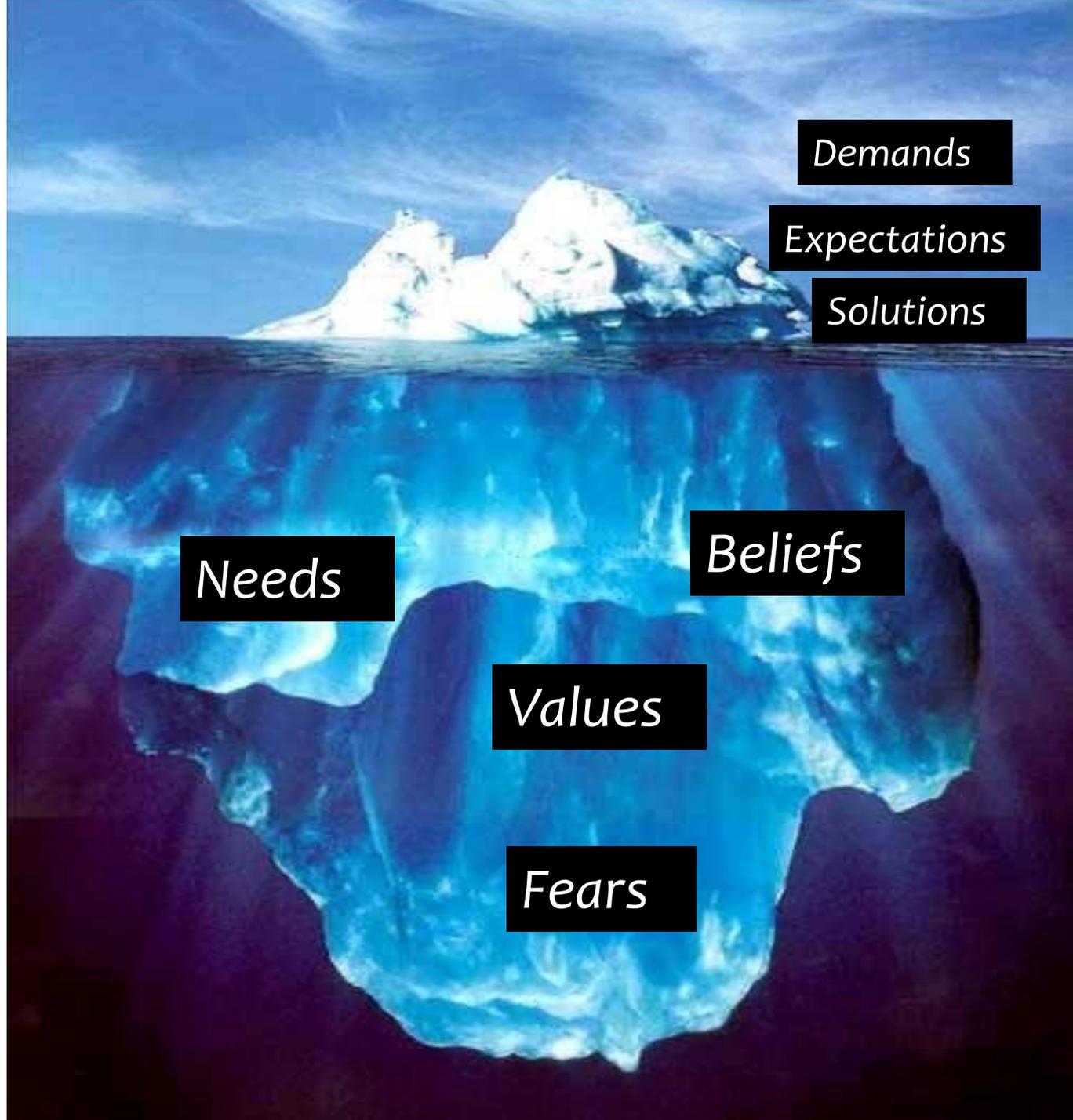


20%

Positions

80%

Interests



Recognize the Positions and Uncover the Interests

- **Positions** are the solutions offered.

“I expect ...”

“I want ...”

“You should ...”

“This is what must happen ...”

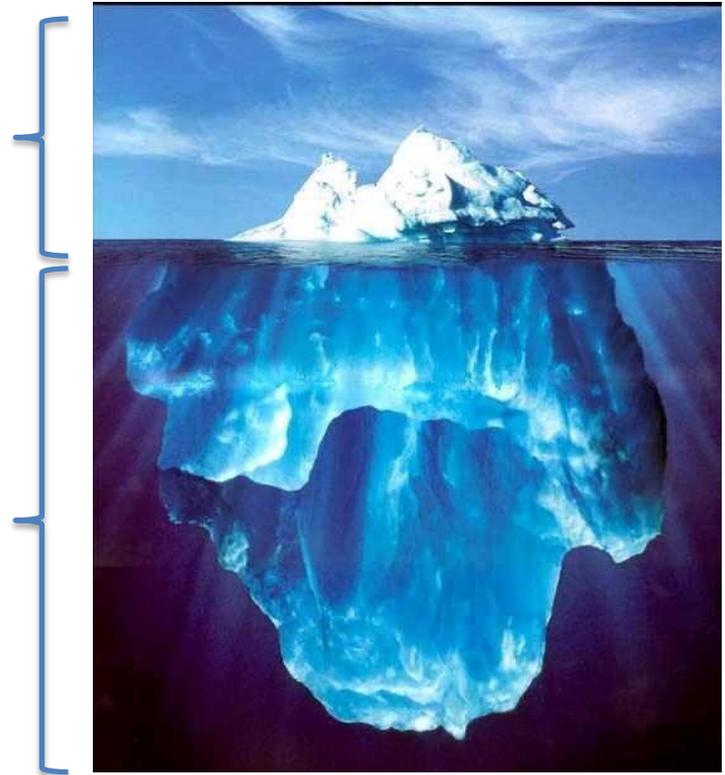
- **Interests** are the motivations.

“I need ...”

“I value ...”

“I fear ...”

“I hope ...”



Go under positions to find the interests



- What need is this position attempting to satisfy?
- What is motivating the person?
- What is the person emphasizing so it will be heard and understood?
- What is the person afraid will happen if a demand is not fulfilled?

Positions and Interests

**Dad's
Position:**

**Be home by
10:00 p.m.**

Possible Interests:

Safety

Worry about bad choices

Want to be a responsible parent

Values boundaries

Don't want son to turn out like his brother

Positions and Interests

**Son's
Position:**

**Be home by
2:00 a.m.**

Possible Interests:

- Having fun
- Not being controlled
- Freedom/independence
- Peer approval
- Social interaction
- Time away from home
- Concert doesn't end until late

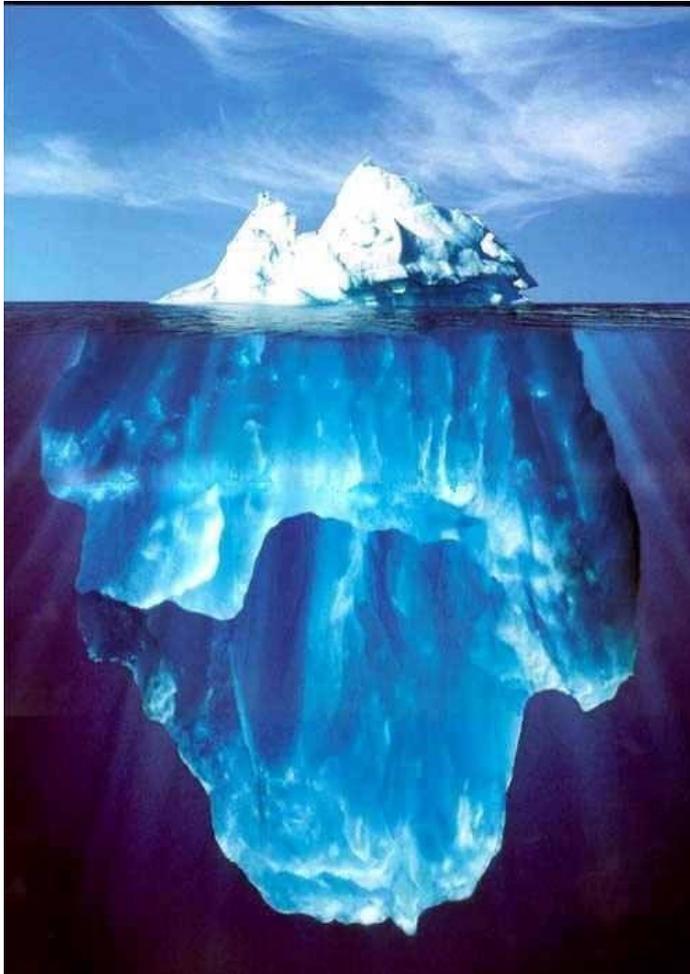


Finding the Interests

- How has this affected you?
- What do you think will happen if we do ___?
- Can you explain how this is important to you?
- How does this solve the issue?
- What is blocking you from _____?
- What do you need to move forward?

Positions vs. Interests

Position
“1:1 aide”



Interests:

- safety
- social growth
- academic success
- physical assistance
- individual attention

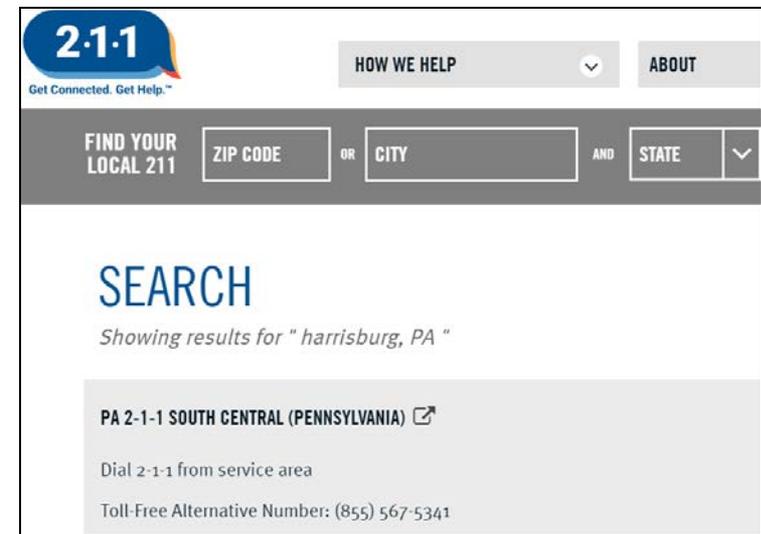
Future Focus: Making an Action Plan



- Help to determine priorities
- Identify appropriate audience
- Consider roleplaying to help with framing of concerns
- Explore contingencies
- Present options
- Follow up

Educate and Expand Resources

- Check for understanding often.
- Offer and follow through with providing resources.
- Offer to walk through resources together.
- Consider sharing additional community resources. (e.g., 2-1-1 Services)



The screenshot shows the 2-1-1 website interface. At the top left is the 2-1-1 logo with the tagline "Get Connected. Get Help.™". To the right are navigation links for "HOW WE HELP" and "ABOUT". Below this is a search bar with the text "FIND YOUR LOCAL 211" and input fields for "ZIP CODE", "OR CITY", and "AND STATE". The search results section is titled "SEARCH" and shows "Showing results for 'harrisburg, PA'". A single result is displayed: "PA 2-1-1 SOUTH CENTRAL (PENNSYLVANIA)" with an external link icon. Below the result, it says "Dial 2-1-1 from service area" and "Toll-Free Alternative Number: (855) 567-5341".



Coming right up, Oliver!

CADRE | The Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education

Recursos en Español →

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Supporting the prevention and resolution of disputes through partnership and collaboration

About Us ▾ CADRE Continuum ▾ Improving Your System ▾ Resources ▾ **For Families** Search

Updated CADRE Resource

Considering Mediation for Special Education Disputes: A School Administrator's Perspective

This pamphlet describes, from an administrators perspective, the benefits of participating in mediation as a means to solve special education disputes between parents and educators.

[View this resource! →](#)

5 Quick Guides for Parents of Children & Youth

Five parent guides and a comparison chart for IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution in English, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese (Simplified), Hmong, Korean, Russian, Vietnamese, Burmese, Japanese, Portuguese, and

Past Webinars

Aug, 27, 2019 | 11:30am - 12:45pm PDT
Presented by: CADRE
→ [Managing Truth Decay in the Intersection of Logic and Emotion](#)

May, 14, 2019 | 11:30am - 12:45pm PDT
Presented by: CADRE
→ [Let's Work Together! Building Local Capacity with CADRE's Online Learning](#)

Guide to Facilitation Programs

Whether you are just getting started or want to improve your FIEP system, CADRE has done the legwork of finding best practices and examples. You'll find example forms, guiding documents, suggestions for system design and improvement, voices from the field, and much more!

For Families Page

For Families

View Edit Revisions

State Agency & Parent Center Information



A map portal providing contact information for state education agencies, early intervention lead agencies, and federally funded parent centers.

[Learn More →](#)

Steps to Success



Offers specific communication skills that may be helpful to parents as they develop and maintain partnerships with their child's school

[Learn More →](#)

Educational Advocates: A Guide for Parents



This resource provides families interested in hiring an advocate with questions to consider and highlights additional resources available to families.

[Learn More →](#)

Working Together



Five interactive self-directed courses that provide families and educators with a number of strategies for working together and through conflict.

[Learn More →](#)

Dispute Resolution Parent Guides



Five parent guides for IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution, available in English and Spanish

[Learn More →](#)

Dispute Resolution Family Guides



Four guides on Part C dispute resolution processes, a comparison chart, commonly used terms, and more!

[Learn More →](#)

Parents Resources



CADRE
The Center for Informal Dispute Resolution in Special Education

**Steps to Success:
Communicating with
Your Child's School**

CADRE is funded by
**IDEA
the Work**
Office of Special Education Programs
U.S. Department of Education

If you have a child who is receiving special education services, you're more than likely to be very involved with your child's school and teachers — including planning, reviewing, and assessing your child's educational program. Over time, you will learn a lot about the special education process and how to communicate and negotiate on your child's behalf. While you naturally increase, there are some specific communication skills in developing and maintaining a strong partnership with your child's school. "Success" will be particularly helpful to parents who are new to the process.



Helps to explain DR Procedural Safeguards to Parents
Coming soon in video format!

Collaborative Advocacy
Guiding Principles



Supporting the prevention and resolution of disputes through partnership and collaboration

Collaborative Advocacy is an approach to advocating for children with disabilities that utilizes collaborative problem-solving skills and relationship-strengthening strategies to resolve disagreements. This approach can be used by anyone serving as a third-party advocate to focus on improving educational and developmental outcomes for students with disabilities.

Individuals who practice **Collaborative Advocacy** voluntarily adhere to the following guiding principles:

- 1.) Dignity:** Recognize all people have inherent dignity and value as human beings. Promoting dignity includes:
 - a. Treating everyone with respect and civility at all times
 - b. Assuming best intentions
 - c. Recognizing the right of parents and guardians to make informed decisions about their children's educational needs
- 2.) Child-centered:** Understand that a child with a disability is at the heart of every special education decision. Child-centered decision-making includes:
 - a. Ensuring that interactions and communication with parents and educators are focused on the child's present needs
 - b. Redirecting the team to the child's needs when the conversation has lost focus
- 3.) Empowerment:** Encourage meaningful parent participation in developing the programs and plans. Empowerment can be facilitated by:
 - a. Educating parents about the special education process and procedural safeguards
 - b. Helping parents clarify, prioritize, and articulate their concerns, needs, and vision for their child's education and future to prepare parents to participate effectively in IEP/IFSP meetings
 - c. Helping ensure the parent gathers the information necessary to be fully informed and ready to participate in problem solving as an equal partner
 - d. Modeling collaborative problem-solving skills

www.cadreworks.org

**Educational Advocates:
A Guide for Parents**



An educational advocate, also known as a parent advocate, child advocate, student advocate, or independent advocate, assists parents of students with disabilities in navigating the complex world of special education. For a fee, professional advocates provide information, guidance and support throughout the IEP process to encourage decisions that meet the needs of the student.

Tale of Two Conversations

Take One: Demonstrating ineffective communication skills.



Take Two: Demonstrating effective communication skills.



The original videos were developed by the Office for Dispute Resolution in Pennsylvania and a very popular training tool.

Skill Builders: Online Learning Series

Working Together Series

Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in
Special Education



**Available
in
Spanish!**

5 Courses

- Introduction
- IEP Meetings and Beyond
- Listening and Responding
- Managing and Responding to Emotions
- Focusing on Interests to Reach Agreement

**YOUR JOURNEY TO
SELF-DETERMINATION**

Lesson 1: Introduction

These courses are funded in part by
the JAMS Foundation and
the US Department of Education,
Office of Special Education Programs.

IDEA JAMS IDEA@Work

Six Courses:

- Course 1: Your Journey to Self-determination
- Course 2: Finding Your Voice
- Course 3: Listening for Understanding
- Course 4: Managing Emotion and Conflict
- Course 5: Collaborative Problem Solving
- Course 6: Educational Planning Meetings

CADRE Webinars

CADRE offers a series of webinars that can assist in professional development.

- [Self-Care Strategies for Families with Children with Disabilities](#)
- [Productive Conversations Through Empathy](#)
- [Perfect Together: Aligning and Leveraging State Education Agencies and Parent Centers in Shared Work](#)

Need More Information?

Visit CADRE online

www.cadreworks.org

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cadre@directionservice.org

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