



# Why Use IEP Facilitation: Understanding the Usability, Credibility, and Versatility of the Process

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# Objectives:

Provide

Provide a detailed overview about Facilitated IEP meetings.



Understand

Understand the research about the usability and versatility of the FIEP process.



Describe

Describe the FIEP process through a conflict prevention and resolution lens.



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Students should always be considered the first and most important member of the IEP team

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Families/parents and teacher/educator/professional will be used interchangeably

# Trusting Family-Professional Partnerships



Trusting family-professional partnerships are characterized by an alliance in which families and professionals confidently build in each other's word, judgement, and wise actions to increase educational benefits for students and themselves.

-Turnbull et al., 2022, p. 9.

# Trust is often broken between families and educators during the IEP meetings process



**V.S**



**Content  
(WHAT)**

**Process  
(HOW)**

# Why Does Conflict Happen?

## Two Parties with Two Different Perspectives

### The Parent

I worry about my child's academic, behavioral, and social success



### The School

I worry about my district, school, staff, and all students' success



# One Common Interest

The Student



## Common Challenges During IEP Meetings

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Mistrust based on past experiences

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Inequity (power, process, expectations)

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Language/communication/cultural issues

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Difference in values/attitudes/beliefs

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Incompatible goals or expectations

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Systemic/procedural obstacles

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Environmental and economical barriers





ONE PROMISING SOLUTION: IEP FACILITATION

# What is IEP Facilitation?



- An IEP meeting scheduled with a neutral facilitator who is present for the entire meeting.
- IEP facilitation is for the family and school district to discuss issues and concerns about the child's IEP and educational services.
- The goal of the facilitated IEP meeting is to exchange information, to consider issues regarding educational services and to enhance the ability of the parties to engage in difficult conversations.
- Facilitated IEP meetings may be confidential upon the agreement by both parties.

# Who is an IEP Meeting Facilitator?

- A third-party neutral facilitator who attends the IEP meeting.
- The facilitator's role is to ensure that parties have an opportunity for equal participation in a structured setting while adequately addressing the facts and concerns raised by the school and family.
- The facilitator will assist the parties with discussing concerns in an attempt to reach a mutually acceptable resolution.
- The facilitator does not provide legal advice and does not render a decision for the parties.
- The facilitator assists the parties with discussing their concerns in a structured setting.

# Philosophy of Facilitated IEP Meetings

- Collaboration
- Shared Understanding
- Shared Responsibility
- Student- focused
- Meaningful conversations among IEP team members

# Research About IEP Facilitation



FIEP is effective for **Conflict Prevention and Resolution**



## **Two Essential Facilitator Skills Needed**

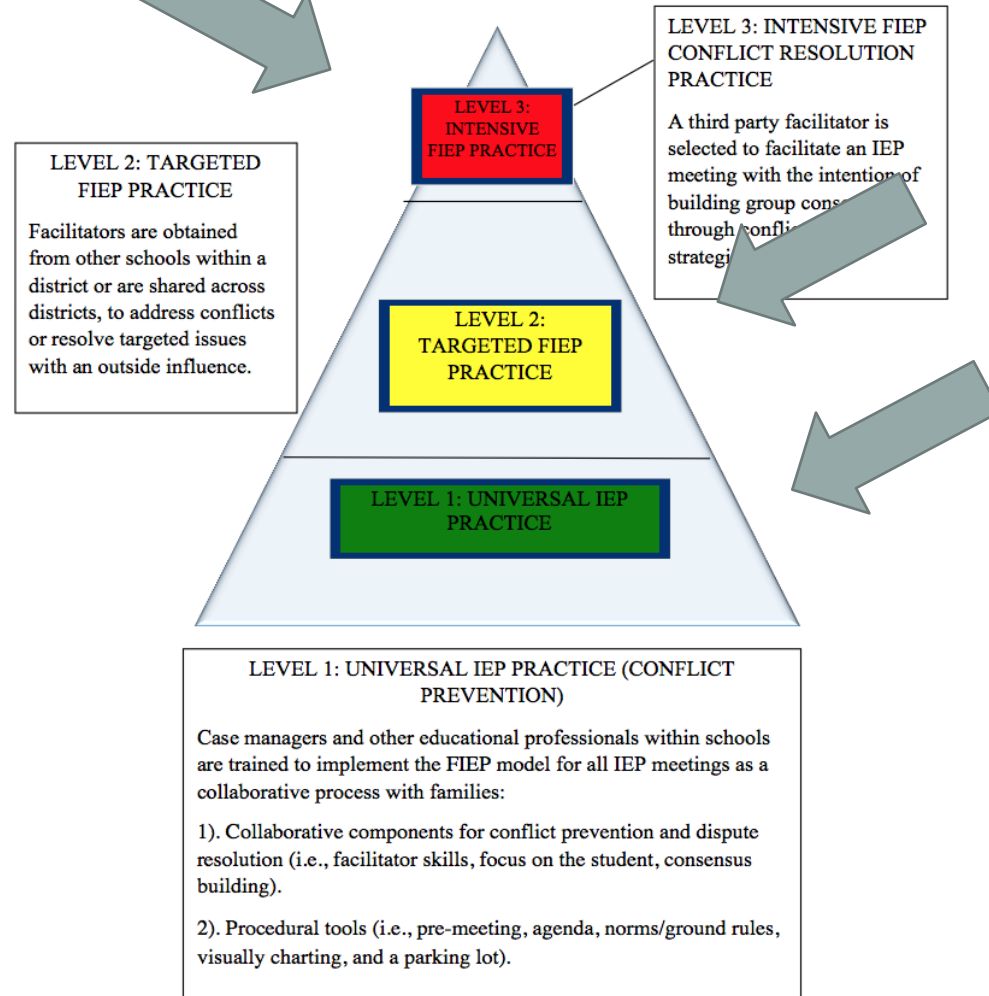
- (a) Neutral and unbiased
- (b) Trained in conflict resolution



## **Meaningful Process for Conflict Resolution**

- (1) Focuses on the student
- (2) Builds group agreement/consensus

FIEP Model: Application from Least to Most Intensive Intervention Level



<b>IEP Facilitation Procedural Components</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Preparatory Meeting	Describe process, plan for meeting, and include all IEP team members in the process.
Meeting Agenda	Visual tool for meeting schedule and topics.
Meeting Norms	Creates agreeable meeting expectations to promote a respectful and collaborative environment during the meeting.
Parking Lot	Meeting tool that ensures the team stays on topic and allows space for off-topic issues to be addressed later in the agenda.
Shared Agreement/Consensus	Ensures shared-decision making and active IEP team agreements.
Action Plan	A process for planning next steps for follow through and fidelity.
Debrief/Evaluate Process	Evaluates the effectiveness of the meeting process.

“  
*Alone we  
can do so  
little; together  
we can do  
so much.*”

Helen Keller





THE END