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What an IEP/IFSP Facilitator Is and Is Not

(based on "The Skilled Facilitator" by Roger Schwarz)

"The objective of facilitation is to help a group improve its process for solving problems and making decisions so that it can achieve its goals and increase its overall effectiveness."

A Facilitator IS:

- Substantively Neutral/Impartial
- A guardian of team collaboration with chairperson support
- An advocate for the IEP/IFSP process, not either party
- A model of effective communication and listening techniques
- Responsible for:
 - Conducting intake interviews with the designated school contact and family contact
 - Supporting consensus decision-making
 - Creating an acceptable comfort level for participation by all IEP/IFSP Team Members
 - Gaining agreement on guidelines the group decides to follow during the IEP/IFSP Meeting
 - Inviting discussion between the IEP/IFSP Team Members
 - Maintaining focus on the student's needs
 - Reinforcing the common goal of developing an educational program for the student
 - Guiding attention toward the future
 - Checking for understanding by all IEP/IFSP Team Members throughout discussions
 - Clarifying concerns expressed by IEP/IFSP Team Members
 - Encouraging investigation of options
 - Promoting a review of agreed-upon items to establish on-going consensus
 - Adhering to confidentiality
 - Monitoring established time frames
 - Helping the IEP/IFSP Team consider *how* its process may lead to more effective decisions

A Facilitator IS NOT:

- A judge or arbitrator, thus given no authority to make decisions
- An advocate for either the school district or the family
- A consultant or trainer
- A content expert or information resource
- A clerical person for the IEP/IFSP Team
- Responsible for the IEP/IFSP Team's ineffective behavior or its consequences
- Formally a member of the IEP/IFSP Team
- Responsible for:
 - Evaluating any IEP/IFSP component, the IEP/IFSP document or a team member's input
 - Providing technical assistance before or during the IEP/IFSP Meeting
 - Enforcing the mediated settlement agreement or Due Process Decision, if one exists
 - Writing a report of findings before or after the IEP/IFSP Meeting
 - Investigating the student's records before or during the IEP/IFSP Meeting
 - Interviewing various IEP/IFSP Team Members prior to the IEP/IFSP, except the designated school district contact and family contact
 - Observing or meeting the student and/or the family before the IEP/IFSP Meeting
 - Designating any IEP/IFSP Team Member's role or participation level
 - Judging *what* the IEP/IFSP Team decides