

# ARD Collaboration

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PATH Project



# Collaboration

Collaboration is a group of people working together to make one goal or one project happen, but they are working together and feeding off one another.

# Communication

Communication is essential in collaboration In the IEP process. Communication simply means that all members of a team are talking to one another, updating one another on what they are doing and what progress they are making, and asking questions of one another to make sure the team is on track as a whole.

# Collaboration

Collaboration on the other hand, is held with the intention of brainstorming ideas, strategizing, or otherwise putting heads together to get creative, make decisions, or think strategically.

## **COLLABORATION HAS TO BE BASED ON RESPECT THAT IS DEMONSTRATED...**

- By holding ARD meetings at mutually convenient times and places
- By insuring that everyone has the same information
- By incorporating differing viewpoints
- By giving validity to differing viewpoints

# IEP Collaboration is promoted by the following events.

- Remembering that you have a common purpose (your child)
- Letting everyone have a voice
- Communicating openly with respect
- Assuming good intentions
- Valuing the team and members
- Trusting the process
- Practicing effective listening skills

# *I Statements*

During the meeting, let each person have the opportunity to tell his or her story.

Try to use "*I statements*" when sharing your point of view and listen to one another.

# I statements and positive rephrasing

- I feel (*state your feelings*), when (*state the undesired behavior you wish to stop*), because (*state why you feel the way you do*) and (*state your future expectations and or future consequences*).

**I statements** refer to a way of phrasing thoughts or feelings in an *assertive*, rather than *aggressive* way.

# **I statements and positive rephrasing**

## **Continued**

**It's generally harder to express anger through 'I' statements without it coming out as blame and attack.**

**Remember to practice using positive 'I' statements, too.**

# I Statement Tips

- 1. Say 'I' (instead of 'you' or 'they')
- 2. Say what you feel
- 3. Say what is the event/situation that provoked your feelings
- 4. Say what it is about the behaviour or its consequences that you object to
- 5. Say what you would have preferred to happen

## Alternatives to using I-statements-

**Example #1** You can't talk to them. They don't care

**What you can say is:**

*'I find it difficult to talk to them'*

*I get the same response from them whenever we have an ARD meeting.*

**Example #2** 'The Teacher doesn't care about my child.'

**What you can say is :**

*'I have often felt that the teacher does not understand the characteristics of Autism'*

# **Before the IEP Meeting**

Before the meeting, practice these IEP collaboration tips at home.

It **may** sound silly, but practicing helps us relax and feel more confident.

# IEP COLLABORATION TECHNIQUES:

- Focus on the problem, not the people.
- Be open to new ideas.
- Ask clarifying questions if you need more information.
- Find common ground.
- Sometimes it's okay to decide that an issue cannot be solved.
- Pick solutions that both sides agree upon.
- Verbally agree to the next steps.

# PARENT TIPS for a SUCCESSFUL IEP:

- Be prepared at the IEP meeting.
- Ask for more time if needed
- Ask questions! Don't feel embarrassed to ask for more clarification. You should be able to comfortably explain what happened at the IEP to someone who wasn't there.
- Try to keep your emotions at home. If you feel yourself getting emotional, ask for a quick break. Remember, anger is an emotion!
- Know the names of the team members. Refer to them by their name to show you are paying attention and to make the meeting more personal.
- Refer to your child by name during the meeting.
- Make sure you understand who, what, where, when and why.
- Keep notes and refer to them if necessary.
- Be polite. Say thank you when appropriate. Manners can go a long way.

# ARD Conflict

Sometimes different ears and eyes are necessary to work through conflict. Ask that the principal or a special education administrator be present and have the meeting **take place at the district office** instead of at the school site.

## **ARD Conflict continued**

If the meeting does not go well or you are not in agreement with the recommendations made by the IEP team, before you call an attorney or jump to the due process phase, try having another IEP meeting.

# Educational Hierarchy

- Remember that the educational system is based on a hierarchy usually consisting of the following positions:
- **SUPERINTENDENT**
- **ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS (Secondary and Elementary)**
- **DIRECTORS (Heads of departments, including Special Education)**
- **PROGRAM SPECIALISTS (assigned to specific schools or regions)**
- **PRINCIPALS**
- **ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS**
- **SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS, COUNSELORS and SPECIALISTS**
- *Don't be afraid to ask for another meeting and request*

# **REMEMBER...**

90% of conflicts are resolved with IEP collaboration strategies or mediation.

These are highly effective in negotiating for special education services.

# Consent and signing the IEP

## Do I have to sign ?

As with any other legal document, when you sign school district papers your signature is very important.

There are three times that your signature is required during the IEP (Individualized Education Plan) process.

- When your child is first evaluated you must give your informed consent.
- When your child is reevaluated you must give your informed consent.
- You must also give your consent before the initial provision of special education and related services.

# Signing the IEP

- You do not have to sign the IEP at a meeting.
- You can request a copy to take home, to review its content, and to think about it. But, if you disagree with your child's IEP, you have an obligation to let the district know that you disagree and with what part of the IEP you disagree.
- Always do this by writing a *Dissenting Opinion*.
- Ask that it be attached to the IEP.
- Best practice in our state recommends giving the parents 10 days to consider their decision. Otherwise, schools are obligated to go ahead with the new IEP under their IDEA requirements.

# FAPE

Parents are often under the impression that if they do not like an IEP all they have to do is **not** sign it and it will **not** take effect. This is not true.

**Schools are required by law to provide FAPE (a free appropriate education).**

When a special needs child is covered by special education law (IDEA), districts are required to have a legal IEP for that child at all times.

**If a parent attends a meeting and **simply walks** out and does not sign an IEP, schools are required by law to provide FAPE, thus the new IEP goes into effect.**

Not signing an IEP does not invalidate that IEP as many parents think.

# Mediation

If you've exhausted all of your efforts at IEP collaboration, try mediation.

This is a highly effective technique that is less adversarial than a due process hearing.

*Mediation booklets are at the back for those of you who need one .*



**THANK YOU  
FOR  
ATTENTION!  
ANY QUESTIONS?**



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