



Arc Guide to Facilitated Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting

What is a facilitated IEP meeting?

A facilitated team meeting is an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting led by a neutral, state-provided facilitator to assist an IEP team in developing an IEP. The facilitator is provided at no cost by the Minnesota Special Education Mediation Service (MNSEMS).

The focus of a facilitated IEP is to improve communication among IEP team members and to discuss areas of disagreement. The goal is to develop an IEP that is agreed upon by all IEP team members.

Some situations when a facilitated IEP can be beneficial are:

- The parents and school (parties) do not agree on the needs of the child
- Federal setting (placement in a certain school or program) is an issue
- The parties do not agree on goals and objectives
- The parties do not agree on services - what they should include, how many minutes and how often, who will provide them, where,
- There is not agreement on accommodations or modifications
- Any other disagreement related to what is or is not included in the IEP

What is the role of the facilitator?

The facilitator:

- Assists IEP members to actively communicate and listen to one another
- Organizes the meeting and keeps parties on task
- Helps resolve disagreements related to the IEP
- Remains neutral
- Helps the parents and school team to reach an agreement
- Does not make decisions related to the IEP

How do I request a facilitated IEP?

Complete a form entitled "Request for a Facilitated IEP/IFSP Meeting" available on the Minnesota Department of Education Dispute Resolution webpage:

<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/sped/conf/team/>



The form lists information about the facilitated IEP process including:

- The parents and the school must agree to have a facilitated IEP meeting. If the parties don't agree, the team can proceed with the regular IEP process or look at another form of alternative dispute resolution such as mediation
- The goal is to write a mutually agreed upon IEP
- A facilitated IEP will occur only if the minimum required team members are present. These are:
 - The parent(s)
 - At least one special education teacher or provider of the student
 - An administrator or someone they assign to serve in their place
 - An individual who can explain evaluation results who may also be provider described above
 - Other individuals who have special knowledge or expertise about the student by request of the parent or school
 - The student, whenever appropriate
- Return the completed form to MDE or send it to your student's

What happens after I request a facilitated IEP?

The MNSEMS coordinator will contact the parents and school to see if they want to have a facilitated IEP. IF the parties agree, the coordinator will schedule an IEP at a mutually agreed upon time and place and assign a facilitator. At the meeting, team members sign an agreement to participate which describes the responsibilities of participants.

What should I do to prepare?

Before the facilitated IEP meeting, prepare by reviewing the IEP, listing concerns and thinking about ways to address your issues. Call an Arc advocate to help you prepare and organize your concerns.

A facilitated IEP meeting will typically last longer than a regular IEP meeting. MDE suggests a maximum of 4 hours but, in The Arc's experience, meetings often last 4 to 8 hours.

Sometimes 2 or 3 meetings may be required.

What happens after the meeting?

Shortly after the meeting, the parent will receive a Prior Written Notice (PWN) Form and an IEP. The parent has 14 calendar days to respond and agree or disagree with



the proposed IEP. If they agree, the IEP will go into effect. If not, the parties need to go back to the regular IEP process or use another dispute resolution process such as mediation.

How is a facilitated team meeting different from mediation?

The purpose of a facilitated team meeting is to develop an IEP that both parties agree to. It involves the IEP team members and the facilitator. The facilitator walks the team through the development of the IEP.

The purpose of mediation is to resolve specific issues beyond IEP development. Mediation usually involves a smaller number of participants and a mediator. Mediation may deal with a broad range of issues and, when agreements are reached, it results in a binding agreement which may or may not become part of the IEP.

For further information or advocacy services, contact The Arc Minnesota at 952-920-0855 or toll-free at 833.450.1494 or visit www.arcminnesota.org. (Please note: *This document is not legal advice, and should not be construed as such. Thus, no information herein should replace the sound advice of an attorney.*)

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