



Individualized Education Program (IEP) Facilitation

When you have a concern regarding your child's special education and related services, the first thing you should do is request an IEP meeting. You can request one at any time in the year.

When IEP teams think a conversation may be difficult or the meeting is not making progress, it may be helpful to have an independent, trained facilitator guide the process. The facilitator is an impartial person (who will treat the school and family equally) provided by MSDE (Maryland State Department of Education) through an independent agency to work with a student's IEP team. IEP Facilitation is an optional process. *Either the parent or the school may request a facilitated team meeting and both parties need to agree to participate.* There is no cost for the service to the parents or school district.

When might you use a facilitator?

- You want to plan ahead and feel that a discussion in the IEP meeting may be challenging.
- You want help before relationships in the IEP team start to worsen.
- Multiple IEP meetings are not reaching resolution or completing a quality plan.

What Are the Benefits of Facilitated IEPs?

- Concerns may be resolved at a local level, at the IEP table.
- The trained facilitator can assist keeping the IEP meeting on track.
- Improved communication skills
- Resolutions to disputes that are more satisfying to both families and schools
- Build up the ability of local facilitators and team members to hold successful meetings
- Recent data in Maryland finds that 68% of participants agree that through the facilitated meeting process they were able to understand other people on the IEP team better; and 66% agree that through the facilitated meeting process other people on the IEP team understood them better.

Who Can Request an Independent Facilitator?

Either the parent or the school, in any of the participating school districts. However, both parties must agree to participate in this voluntary process.

What is the process to request in Maryland?

In Maryland this free service is provided through Community Mediation Centers (CMM). CMM works with MSDE, local centers, and local school systems to provide these services in specific counties. School systems that offer facilitation services have their own process for requesting a facilitator. To find out how to request the service, use this [MSDE FAQ document](#) to find your school system's contact or you can call Community Mediation Maryland (301- 270-9700) or toll free at 888-826-2262.

Please note that at least 10 days of lead time are requested to provide facilitators.

Resources

[PACER Center: Facilitated Team Meetings](#)

[Facilitated IEP Team Meetings in Maryland – An Introduction and FAQ](#)

[Maryland Independent IEP Facilitation Brochure](#)

[CADRE: About IEP Facilitation](#)