

Special Education IEP Facilitation Workshop - Program Agenda

Part 1

Special Education Overview

Participants begin to focus on the typical challenges faced by parents/guardians, educators, and school districts as they navigate the processes of special education.

Historical Development of Special Education

Participants receive training on the evolution of special education, with the particular focus on cases that have shaped education law for children with special needs.

Analyzing the Individual with Disabilities Education Act

Participants receive basic training on the overall construction and various components of the extensive law that guarantees a free appropriate public education for all children with disabilities within the least restrictive environment.

Navigating the Procedural Safeguards Document and Reviewing State Guidelines

Participants access documents including state law and procedures. A class homework exercise reading over specific state guidelines that will be necessary to understand while working as a special education mediator.

The IEP Process

Participants receive detailed training on the IDEA requirements for the IEP process, including referral, evaluation, eligibility, and holding the IEP meeting.

Special Education Services, Including Related Services

Information regarding special education services will be discussed in detail, as they will often be a focal point within disputes that need resolution during IEP meetings. Participants will discuss various typical areas of dispute that lead parents or caregivers of special needs children to request assistance outside the school through litigation or mediation.

Overview of Facilitation & Mediation

Participants learn what facilitation and mediation are, as well as what facilitators and mediators do, contrasting the similarities and differences in these two processes and roles.

Facilitation Defined

The facilitation process is compared and contrasted with Presentation and Conflict Resolution. Circumstances under which it is appropriate and inappropriate are identified. The impact of facilitation techniques on groups, teams and organizations is discussed.

Process and Content

Participants learn the specifics of the facilitator's role in meetings, including the exercise of

judgments and decisions during facilitated meetings. Facilitative styles are presented.

Part 2

Laying the Groundwork for a Facilitated IEP Team Meeting

It is important to know when to choose a facilitative approach to a meeting and how to plan a facilitated meeting. Collecting data prior to, and during the facilitated meeting are often critical to the successful meeting outcomes.

Building Consensus

Key consensus-building skills are discussed, including guidelines, participation requirements, the facilitator's interactions with the group and the facilitator's interaction with individual group participants.

Gathering Information

Methods and techniques for gathering information during a facilitated meeting are presented, including round robins, brainstorming and the creation of subgroups.

Reaching Decision Points

Weighing realistic options is a critical component of successfully facilitated meetings. The process for doing this will be presented.

Dealing with Difficult People

Types of "difficult" people and typical "difficult" behavior are considered. Methods of managing the behavior of difficult people are presented.

Addressing Disruption and Dysfunction

Identifying intention and using rules to move a group meeting back to productivity is an important skill for facilitators.

Intervention Techniques

A good facilitator knows when intervention is necessary, and uses process and awareness (emotional and social intelligence) to turn issues into group discussions.

Learning through role play

Small groups engage in role plays designed to "test drive" the facilitation techniques and skills learned throughout this program.