

Facilitated Individualized Education Program (FIEP) Meetings

Promoting productive, student-centered
IEP meetings conducted in a respectful
and collaborative manner



New Jersey Department of Education
Office of Special Education



Facilitated IEP Meetings

What Is The Cost?

State-sponsored facilitation is a free service provided by the New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education (OSE). However, please note, the OSE will not pay for any attorney or advocate fees or any other costs to the parties associated with the facilitated IEP meeting (e.g. mileage, meals, wage loss, etc.).

What Is IEP Facilitation?

IEP facilitation is an option for using a neutral third party (facilitator) to promote effective communication and assist the IEP team in developing a mutually acceptable IEP. State-sponsored IEP facilitation is a voluntary process; both the parent and the district have to agree to participate in the facilitated IEP meeting.

How Long Does a Facilitated IEP Meeting Take?

The OSE recommends a three-hour time limit, but recognizes that for some cases the length of time may vary.



Confidentiality

The IEP parameters of confidentiality apply to all IEP meetings, including facilitated IEP meetings.



Enforcement

The IEP document is enforceable through the state complaint process or a due process hearing.

What Are IEP Facilitators?

The IEP facilitator keeps the focus of the meeting on a productive student-centered IEP process conducted in a respectful and collaborative manner, as well as on developing an appropriate IEP document in a timely manner.

Who Are The Facilitators?

The state-sponsored facilitator is a person specifically trained, but who is not an employee of the district, and who has no interest in advocating for either side. The facilitator is specifically trained to promote discussion between the parties and focus on collaborative efforts resulting in a mutually agreed upon IEP.

Does The Facilitator Make The Decisions About The Outcome?

No. The facilitator is not an IEP team member and his or her only focus is on the needs of the student, the IEP process and developing a mutually agreed upon IEP.

Facilitated IEP Meetings

In a facilitated IEP meeting, the IEP team can expect the following:



- Both parties are amenable to the IEP facilitation process;
- Ground rules that provide structure and focus for the meeting are established;
- The meeting is collaborative, and solution focused with all possible solutions being considered;
- The facilitator treats all parties fairly and with respect;
- There is a focus on listening for the purpose of understanding; and
- The goal is to develop the mutually agreeable IEP.

Who Attends a Facilitated IEP Meeting?

Facilitated IEP Participants:

All required IEP team members must be present to complete the IEP process, including the parent, and when appropriate, the student; and

It may also include attorneys, advocates, interpreters, and other relevant parties who have knowledge of the student.

Rights and Responsibilities



IEP facilitation does not relieve the district of the responsibility to meet regulatory obligations, including timelines. If an agreement is reached on the IEP, the school district is required to complete the IEP document and provide a copy to the parent or adult student, as well as send notice regarding the components of the IEP. The only record kept of the facilitated IEP session includes the date, time and location of the session, surveys, and the result. Neither OSE nor the facilitator will keep the IEP document.



Requesting a Facilitated IEP Meeting

State-sponsored IEP facilitation is a voluntary service offered at no cost to districts and families of students with disabilities. A parent/guardian, adult student, or school district representative may make the request for the state-sponsored facilitator. For more information or to download a facilitated IEP request form, please visit the NJDOE website or contact OSE (information below).

How Soon Can a Facilitated IEP Meeting Be Scheduled?

The school schedules the IEP meeting and sends out the notice to the parent/guardian. If the district and/or parent/guardian is interested in IEP facilitation, the request for an FIEP meeting should be made as soon as possible to allow enough time for the coordinator to reach both parties and assign a facilitator if one is available in the appropriate time frame. The FIEP meetings should be conducted in a timely manner.

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<https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/policy/iepdevelopment.shtml>

