

**New York State Education Department
Individualized Education Program (IEP) Facilitation Pilot Program**

The IEP Facilitation Process

1. Asking for IEP Facilitation

Either a parent or a school district may ask for IEP Facilitation. Both the parent and school district must agree to use IEP Facilitation. While IEP Facilitation may be used for any IEP meeting, it should be used when communication is breaking down and there are signs that an agreement is not likely to be reached on a student's IEP; when due process is likely and/or when there is a feeling from any of the participants that the issues at the meeting are creating difficult or angry feelings.

Upon receiving a parent request or when the school district requests to use IEP Facilitation, the parent and school district complete and sign an 'IEP Facilitation Request Form'. Both the parent and the school district keep a copy of the signed form. This form is an agreement between the parent and school district that IEP Facilitation will be used in a meeting of the committee on special education (CSE) or committee on preschool special education (CPSE) that will be held soon. The signed form also gives consent of the parent and the school district for the IEP Facilitator to have access to private information about the student that is shared during the IEP facilitation meeting.

2. Appointment of IEP Facilitator

Upon receiving the 'IEP Facilitation Request Form' signed by the parent and school district, the school district will fax the request to the New York State Education Department (NYSED). The NYSED will appoint an IEP Facilitator from a rotational list of New York State trained IEP Facilitators and will confirm that the appointed IEP Facilitator can participate in the meeting and has no conflict of interest (reason why he or she should not facilitate the meeting) that would interfere with his/her facilitation of the meeting.

The NYSED will notify the school district of the name of the appointed IEP Facilitator.

3. Written Agreement (Agreement Form)

After the NYSED has appointed the IEP Facilitator, and before the meeting, the IEP Facilitator gives a written agreement form to the school district which the Facilitator has signed and which the parent and school district must also sign. The district must get the parent's signature on the agreement form before the meeting. Whenever possible, this agreement should be signed before the day of the meeting.

The agreement form includes, but is not limited to identifying the following:

- the role of the IEP Facilitator and agreement to participate in the IEP Facilitation;
- that the IEP Facilitator has no conflict of interest;
- that the parent has given permission for the district to share personal student information with the IEP Facilitator for use at the meeting; and
- that use of IEP Facilitation may not be used to deny or delay a parent's right to a hearing or a parent's due process complaint, or the parent's and district's use of mediation to settle disagreements.

4. IEP Facilitation

The following generally describes the IEP Facilitation process.

The IEP Facilitator greets all participants and asks each participant to identify the role he/she is in at the meeting (e.g., parent, chairperson - representative of the district, speech therapist who serves the student). An agenda is developed with suggestions from all participants and the desired outcome of the meeting is identified and agreed to by everyone. Group norms (rules) are agreed to (e.g., communicate clearly; respect the views of others). The agenda, desired outcome and group norms are posted so everyone can see them and refer to them throughout the meeting. The meeting occurs with facilitation techniques being used such as shared responsibility (everyone in the meeting plays an active role in producing meaningful results), a collaborative attitude (participants act in a cooperative manner), strategic planning (selection of an appropriate course of action to achieve desired results) and facilitative behaviors (building understanding and agreement among participants). An IEP is developed or revised and an action plan for implementing the IEP is agreed upon. Finally, the participants review what was successful in the meeting due to IEP Facilitation and what could be changed in the future.

5. Evaluation following conclusion of IEP Facilitation (Evaluation Form)

Upon completion of the IEP Facilitation, each of the CSE/CPSE members involved in the meeting will be asked to complete an evaluation form to be mailed to NYSED. Completion of the form is voluntary and will provide valuable information on the CSE/CPSE's experience with the IEP Facilitation that has taken place and feedback on how well the IEP Facilitator met the role in helping the Committee to develop a mutually agreeable IEP.