



## Facilitated IEP/504 Plan Meetings and Mediation

### *A Resource Document*

**A facilitated IEP/504 meeting** is a voluntary process designed to help an IEP/504 team have a successful student-focused meeting. A trained facilitator helps the meeting run smoothly and remains focused on the needs of the student and the development of the IEP/504. The facilitated IEP/504 meeting is not a formal [dispute resolution process](#), like mediation. Sometimes people get confused between these two processes. The chart below describes the role of the facilitator and the difference between facilitated IEPs/504s and Mediation.

Facilitated IEPs/504s	Mediation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Through assisted discussion, the facilitator assists IEP/504 team members to work together and accomplish meeting goals.</li><li>• The facilitator helps with the meeting process when discussions are difficult and complex, but parties are still willing to collaborate.</li><li>• The entire IEP team works together through the facilitation process. Attorneys are not present.</li><li>• The facilitator assists team members to communicate effectively and collaborate to develop an appropriate IEP/504 plan.</li><li>• A facilitator does not engage in discussion of the issues; instead, they guide the process.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A formal, voluntary dispute resolution process involving assisted negotiation.</li><li>• A trained, impartial mediator helps the parties resolve specific disputes, usually after the parties have exhausted all other options to reach a decision by consensus.</li><li>• The parties to the mediation are typically the family and school representative, not the entire IEP team. Attorneys may be present.</li><li>• The mediator may work separately with each party during the mediation session.</li><li>• A mediator engages in discussion of the issues and tries to resolve those issues through negotiation.</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The outcome of the facilitated IEP/504 is an IEP/504 plan which is revised or completed, not a negotiated contract/agreement.</li> <li>• The IEP/504 plan created is confidential.</li> <li>• A facilitated IEP/504 plan may be less stressful than a formal dispute resolution process.</li> <li>• Facilitated IEP/504 plan discussions are confidential and cannot be used as evidence in a due process hearing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The outcome of mediation is a written agreement/contract, if one is reached, which is enforceable in court. The agreement/contract may include a provision involving revision of an IEP.</li> <li>• Mediation discussions are confidential and cannot be used as evidence in a due process hearing or civil proceeding.</li> </ul>
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<b>Role of the Facilitator</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes meeting guidelines/group norms and may help develop the meeting agenda.</li> <li>• Remains impartial and objective and creates a collaborative environment.</li> <li>• Models and promotes effective, open communication among IEP/504 team members.</li> <li>• Keeps the meeting focused on the agenda and the student.</li> <li>• Clarifies points of agreement and disagreement and encourages mutual problem-solving and solutions.</li> <li>• Helps team members understand each other's perspectives.</li> <li>• Keeps team members on task with time allotted for the meeting.</li> <li>• Does not provide advice or recommendations.</li> <li>• Does not negotiate an agreement or render an opinion on agreements that are reached.</li> </ul>

If you need assistance with choosing the option that is right for you, please contact the:

- **OSCAS Special Education Call Center** at (401) 222-8999 or [RIDECallCenter@ride.ri.gov](mailto:RIDECallCenter@ride.ri.gov).
- El Centro de Llamadas al (401) 222-8999.