IEP Conflict vs Collaboration

INTRODUCTION

The IEP meeting can be a stressful event for any family. IEP collaboration strategies can help your meeting go smoothly while fostering a positive relationship with your school district.

CONFLICT

Conflict usually occurs when the process is not well understood; the perception is that the school district is against you, or there is a lack of structure or time. IDEA mandates that the parent be an active member of the IEP team and that the creation of the IEP result from efforts of both the parents and the school district. If you choose not to participate in your child's IEP you are giving up both your voice and the voice of your child.

If you have experienced conflict in the past, jot down the reasons why you feel the conflict occurred. Chances are you experienced hurt feelings, betrayal, anger, or injustice. If you are feeling this way now, it is best to put your feelings on the table. It is difficult for the IEP team to reach an agreement and to move from conflict to collaboration unless your feelings are heard. For most of us, sharing personal feelings is not easy especially when those feelings involve your child. meeting go smoothly while fostering a positive relationship with your school district.

COMPONENTS OF IEP COLLABORATION

IEP collaboration is promoted by the following events:

1. Remember that you have a common purpose which is your child's education.
2. Everyone on the IEP team has a voice.
3. Communicate openly and with respect.
4. Value the team and members.
5. Trust the process.
6. Practice effective listening skills.
7. Use "I messages" when sharing your point of view and listen to others.
8. Practice and Rehears what you are going to say prior to the meeting. Rehearsal helps us to relax and be comfortable with our voice and our opinion.

COLLABORATION TECHNIQUES

1. Focus on the problem, not the people.
2. Be open to new ideas.
3. Ask clarifying questions if you need more information.
4. Find common ground.
5. It is ok to decide that an issue cannot be solved.
6. Pick solutions that both sides agree upon.
7. Verbally agree to the next steps.