

Mediation

Information Sheet

Mediation is a meeting where parents and schools agree to have a neutral, third party (a professional mediator) come to a meeting to help them resolve disagreements about the education of a student with a disability or a student who might have a disability. Mediation is available to parents and schools any time there is disagreement. No one has to file a complaint or due process before mediating. Mediation may take a few hours, so parents and schools should plan to set aside a whole day for the meetings.

What are the benefits of mediation?

The parents and the school:

- Keep the focus on the student;
- Are in control of the outcome;
- Are more satisfied with the outcome when they have worked out the agreement together;
- Better understand the other's point of view;
- Can settle the issues more quickly; and
- Do not have to pay for it.

How do we ask for a mediator?

The parents and the school:

- Agree to ask for a mediator;
- Contact the Office for Exceptional Children. It does not matter who makes the contact;
- Can contact the office's Dispute Resolution section and ask for the mediation/facilitation coordinator at 877-644-6338;
- Receive an explanation of the process and get questions answered by the mediation/facilitation coordinator;
- Get a letter from the mediation/facilitation coordinator explaining how to select a mediator and receive information about the mediators who are available;
- Agree to a mediator and let the Office for Exceptional Children know who they have selected. The office will assign the selected mediator;

- Are contacted by the mediator who will assist them in scheduling the meeting;
- Are offered mediation whenever a state complaint has been filed or a due process hearing has been requested; and
- Do NOT have to file a complaint or make a due process hearing request to ask for mediation.

What happens at the meeting?

The parents and the school:

- Work with the mediator to decide what the issues are and what the possible resolutions are;
- Complete a written agreement about the issues that are resolved;
- May go to court to enforce the agreement if either does not do what the agreement requires; and
- Are asked to evaluate the mediation process and the mediator to help the Office for Exceptional Children make the process better.



Office for Exceptional Children
Mediation/Facilitation Coordinator
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