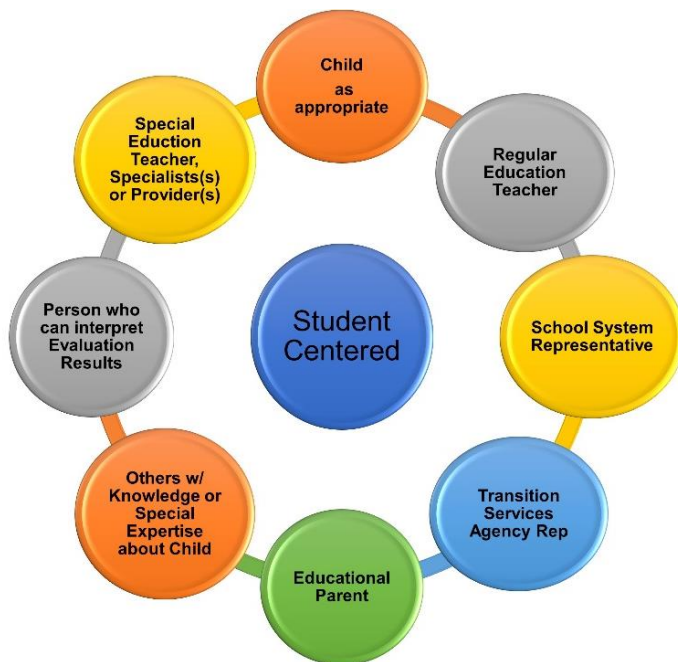


Special Education Facilitation

Exceptional Student Services Unit



Promoting productive student- centered Special Education meetings conducted in a respectful and collaborative manner.

Facilitated Meetings

What is Facilitation?

Special Education Facilitation is an option for using an impartial third party to promote effective communication and assist a student's Special Education team in coming to consensus on issues related to the student's education needs. State-sponsored facilitation is a voluntary process; both the parent and the district need to agree to facilitation. Facilitation can be used for any Special Education process.

What to Expect at a Facilitated Special Education Meetings

All team members participating in the facilitated meeting can expect that:

- All parties have agreed to be receptive and respectful of the facilitated meeting process.
- Guidelines that provide structure and focus for the meeting will be established.

- The meeting will be collaborative and solution-focused with all presented ideas carefully considered.
- There is a focus on listening for the purpose of understanding by all parties.
- The primary goal is to develop an IEP that meets the student's needs or come to consensus for other special education meetings.

Who attends a facilitated IEP meeting?

- All required IEP team members must be present to complete the IEP process, including the student, when appropriate.
- It may also include "guest" participants or relevant parties who have knowledge of the student.

How long does a facilitated special education meeting take?

We recommend that a facilitated meeting be scheduled for 90 minutes to 2 hours, but that is flexible depending on the scope of the agenda.

What is the Cost?

State-sponsored facilitation is a free service provided by the Colorado Department of Education Exceptional Student Services Unit (ESSU). However, the ESSU will not pay for any attorney or advocate fees or any other costs to the parties associated with the facilitated meeting (e.g. mileage, meals, wage loss, etc.).

Who are the Facilitators?

- Specially trained Facilitators promote effective listening and discussion between all meeting participants.
- Facilitate collaborative, future facing, solution-oriented conversations.
- Are a neutral third party who is not an employee of the district, does not advocate on behalf of any involved parties, and does not participate in decision-making. They are not an IEP team member.

Is a Facilitated IEP confidential?

The IEP parameters of confidentiality apply to all IEP meetings.

Requesting a facilitated meeting

An educational parent or school district representative may make the request for a state-sponsored facilitator. Once the request has been received, CDE will gain agreement from the other party. After the agreement is confirmed, a facilitator will be assigned. That facilitator will email all team members to gain additional information. Please submit your request 10-14 business days prior to the scheduled meeting. If the meeting has not yet been scheduled at the time of requesting facilitation, please wait to schedule the meeting until you receive the confirmation email from your facilitator. Include your facilitator in scheduling the meeting to ensure their availability. The school schedules the IEP meeting (or other Special Education meeting) and sends out the notice to the parent.

For more information or to request a facilitation, please visit the [CDE website](#) or contact the Dispute Prevention and Assisted Resolution Supervisor directly:

Katherine Rains, JD
Colorado Department of Education
Exceptional Student Services Unit
Rains_K@cde.state.co.us
720-990-1464

Rights and Responsibilities

Special Education facilitation does not relieve the district of the responsibility to meet regulatory obligations, including timelines.

The school district is required to complete the IEP document and provide a copy to the parent and, when appropriate, adult student, as well as Prior Written Notice regarding the components of the IEP.

The only record kept of the facilitated session includes the date, time and location of the session, surveys, and the result. Neither the ESSU nor the facilitator will keep any official documents.

Dispute Resolution

Special Education Facilitation does not prevent a parent or district from exercising the right to resolve disagreements through additional meetings formal dispute resolution processes. The formal option for dispute resolution is outlined on the [DR webpage](#)