# facilitation and mediation,

# a comparison

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## **WHO IS A FACILITATOR?**

* A process expert who does not offer advice or recommendations.
* An expert on the IEP process.

### a facilitator is not:

* Is not a source of advice, evaluation, or recommendations
* A judge of decisions made

## what are the benefits of a facilitator?

* Ensures the meeting is student focused
* Clarifies points of agreement and disagreement
* Encourages the team to identify new options to address unresolved problems
* Supports better IEP implementation by establishing roles and responsibilities for follow-up action
* Models effective communication and listening
* Supports participation of all team members
* Team members control outcome

## when might you use a facilitator?

You think it might be helpful to have assistance for people to do their best work.

## what can you expect a facilitator to do?

* Generate ground rules
* Maintain open communication
* Help set goals
* Create an environment that fosters collaboration
* Help the team members to see one another’s perspectives more clearly
* Shift from negative expectations to believing in possibilities
* Draw out expertise of the group
* Explore interests

## how is facilitation different from mediation?

* Facilitation is assisted discussion.
* Mediation is assisted negotiation.
* The facilitator helps with the meeting process.
* The mediator helps parties work on resolving specific disputes.
* The facilitator usually works with parties when the discussion is difficult and complex, but before an impasse is reached.
* The mediator works with people typically after an impasse has been reached and parties feel that they can go no further.
* The facilitator assists with communication in developing an IEP.
* The mediator assists in trying to resolve underlying issues.
* People in both roles help the parties create an agenda.
* In facilitation, the entire team works together.
* In mediation, the entire group works together, but the mediator may work separately with specific parties during the session.
* In facilitation, the outcome is the IEP, which is either revised or completed. It is not a contract.
* In mediation, the outcome will be a written agreement, if one is reached. It is a contract and enforceable in court.
* In facilitation, the IEP created is confidential.
* In mediation, the discussion is confidential. The agreement has the same confidential status as an IEP.
* Facilitation is not a dispute resolution process.
* Mediation is.