# Facilitated IEPs

## who is a facilitator?

### A facilitator is a person who is:

* Substantively neutral, impartial;
* Well-versed in the requirements of the IEP process;
* An advocate for the IEP process, not for either party; and
* A person who models effective communication and listening techniques.

### A facilitator is not:

* A decision maker
* A mediator
* A member of the IEP Team
* A consultant or trainer
* A clerical assistant to the IEP Team
* Responsible for evaluating any IEP component
* A judge of what the IEP Team does

## when might you use a facilitator?

* You conclude that discussions or interactions at IEP meetings are creating an unproductive climate.
* You want some assistance before relationships start to fray.
* Multiple IEP meetings are not reaching resolution or completing a quality plan.

## what are the benefits of a facilitated IEP meeting?

* Concerns may be resolved at a local level.
* The trained facilitator can assist keeping the IEP meeting on track with regard to content and process.
* The challenges of communication during an IEP meeting where parties are encountering continued difficulty may be improved with the aid of a facilitator.

## what can you expect a facilitator to do?

The facilitator will:

* Assist the team in establishing an agenda;
* Make sure everyone has a chance to speak and be heard;
* Help keep the team on task and within the time allotted; and
* Seek to improve clarity and understanding in communications.

## how is facilitation different from mediation?

* It occurs at a regular IEP meeting.
* There is no written document, other than the IEP and prior written notice.
* Mediation is the format to use when there is a *difference of opinion* between parents and school staff and is typically used when there is a significant disagreement, which the parties have been unable to resolve.

## how is facilitation requested?

Like mediation, a joint request needs to be made by the parent and local education agency. The request needs to be forwarded to Art Stewart, Coordinator of Mediation, Art.Stewart@doe.virginia.gov.