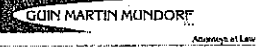


MO-CASE
Special Education Administrators'
Conference

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Parent Friendly IEP Meetings





Shelle L. Guin
sguin@gmmschoolaw.com
 (816) 333-1700

Why foster parent
friendly IEP meetings?

The first IEP meeting...

**1. Develop positive
relationship with parents
as early in the process
as possible.**

- Parents' First IEP Meeting**
- Prepare parents for meeting
 - Describe parents' role
 - Identify IEP team authority and responsibility
 - Explain that IDEA requirements guide team decisions
 - Explain consensus
 - Give parents an "ally"
- 

- Focus on positive, not negative
- "Can't" do this
 - "Failed" at that
 - "Unable" to do these things
 - "Struggles" at this
- 

Positive Approach

- What student "can" do
- What would expect same-aged non-disabled peer to be able to do
- Soften the blow

Remember Parents Are Part of the IEP Team

- Don't refer to the IEP team when you mean the district



2. Provide parents with a mentor or parent assistant within the district.



3. Maintain control of parent relationships and IEP meeting.



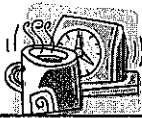
Control Strategies

- Identify agenda/parameters for meeting
- Establish guidelines/rules
- Maintain extraneous lists

Avoid surprises and prepare parents as much as possible for new issues

- Keep parents informed

- Provide advance copy of draft IEP to parents?
- Pre-planning meeting or conversation with parents?
- Allow to come in early to read present level?



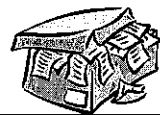
Maintain Credibility

- Do what you say you are going to do.
- Under promise, don't over promise.

Know your "stuff" and be able to quickly reference commonly used legal standards.

Don't send the wrong message

- Team members late
- Paperwork not in order
- Last minute copies
- Meeting location not ready
- Office not aware of meeting
- Forms not readily available



Difficult IEP Meetings

- Be organized
- Be prepared
- Be competent
- Be confident





Hold pre-IEP planning meeting


Advance planning
v.
Advance decision-making

Assess parent skills

- Training needed in IDEA process?
- Training needed in conflict resolution?
- Training needed in FAPE standard?




4. De-escalate emotion and manage conflict.



Circular IEP Meetings

- Arguing and re-arguing positions escalates anxiety and anger



Strategies to de-escalate emotion and manage conflict

- Use active listening
- Acknowledge why parent is upset
- Ask for specifics
- Use neutral questions to defuse emotion
- Confirm understanding of issue
- Deal directly with issue
- Speak calmly
- Offer concrete suggestions or options (if appropriate)

Misdirected anger and frustration

- Respond with calm, positive but honest statements

Consider appointing neutral staff member as facilitator/mediator

Custodial/Noncustodial Parents

- Develop relationship with both parents
- Do not support one over the other
- Must have court order to the contrary

5. Resolve disputes as early as possible.

- Identify the specific issues in dispute
- Develop proposals and options to resolve the issue
- Address head on/no run around

Consider dispute resolution alternatives

- Neutral staff member
- Meeting facilitator/mediator
- Agree to exploratory, non-binding discussion
- Use of agreed third-party expert/arbitrator
- Mediation
- Resolution conference

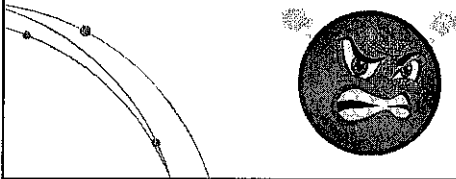
Informal discussions

- Doesn't have to be IEP team
- Remove team members who may be hindrance to reaching consensus

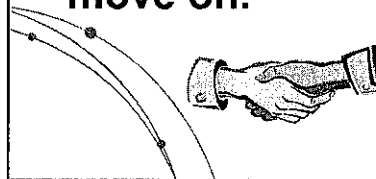
Empower parents with options to resolve the issue



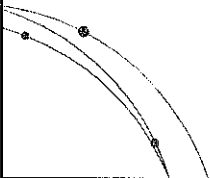
6. Don't allow issue to escalate past the point of no return.



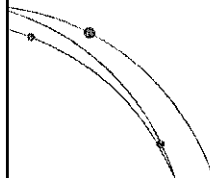
Agree to disagree and move on.



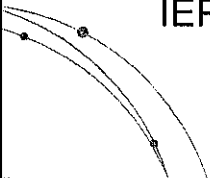
7. Be willing to acknowledge and correct known errors or problems.



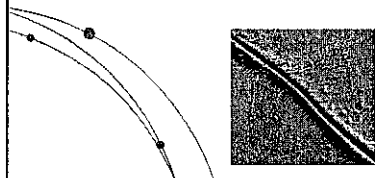
8. Complete the IEP and offer FAPE.



When parents present outside evaluative information for first time in IEP meeting....

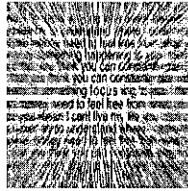


9. Know when to draw a line in the sand.



Focus on Issues for Due Process

- Identification
- Evaluation
- Placement
- Provision of FAPE



10. Determine when to get your attorney involved.

