



# Checklist: Preparing for a Facilitated Team Meeting

Ensuring that your child with a disability receives an appropriate education is an important part of your role as a parent. You may not always agree with the other members of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) team. One option for resolving a dispute is a Facilitated Team Meeting.

You can take the following steps to help you prepare for success in a Facilitated Team Meeting:

## Prior to the meeting

- Contact PACER Center regarding having an advocate attend the meeting with you.
- Be sure that you have all the necessary school records, such as the proposed IEP/IFSP, current IEP/IFSP, most recent Evaluation Summary Report, and some recent progress reports. If necessary, ask the school staff to send them to you.
- Review your child's most recent Evaluation Summary Report and highlight the "needs" identified. This information may validate your concerns and provide what you feel your child needs.
- Make a list of your concerns and prioritize them in order of importance.
- Make a list of your child's strengths.
- Make a list of what you see is and is not working for your child.
- Think about possible solutions or options that might help your child to share at the meeting.
- Think about how you communicate. If you need to refresh your skills, PACER's website has publications and workshops to help you with your communication skills.
- Decide if your child will participate in the meeting. If they will be attending, talk with them about what to expect. You may also want to help them prepare their own talking points. Things for your student to consider include:
  - What do you feel your strengths are?
  - What is the most difficult thing for you in school?
  - What helps you be successful in school?
  - Is there something specific you want everyone to know about you?

## At the meeting

- Bring a picture of your child if they are not attending and place it on the table.
- Arrive a few minutes early so that you can organize your thoughts and paperwork. PACER encourages the school has a printer available if one is not provided by the facilitator.
- Be ready to communicate effectively.
- Bring the lists you have developed. These can help you stay on track, focus on your child's needs and remember your concerns. After an item is discussed, check it off your list.
- Be willing to actively listen to everyone at the table and consider the information they share. That does not mean you have to agree, but you should listen and consider what is presented.

- Bring any supporting documents and share with the team as you feel necessary. You may want to bring copies for the school or ask if they would like to make a copy. You could also provide them with a copy prior to the meeting.
- Keep the issues focused on your child's needs.
- Ask for clarification on anything you do not understand such as educational terminology.
- Make sure that all agreements are written into the IEP/IFSP. The facilitator will help with this.
- Ask for a break during the meeting if you need one.

### **After the meeting**

- If the district provides you with a proposed IEP/IFSP and prior written notice, read the draft copy of the IEP/IFSP and if you are in agreement, you can sign the parental consent/objection form. You may request to take it home and review it. With a facilitated team meeting the goal is that everyone in attendance is part of writing the IEP/IFSP, and so all are in agreement. However, due process options are still available to you, which include 14 calendar days to consider the IEP/IFSP, notify the district of any objections, and request either a meeting with relevant IEP/IFSP team members or a conciliation conference.
- Thank everyone for their participation.

### **Resources**

#### **PACER Center**

(952) 838-9000

(800) 537-2237

PACER@PACER.org

#### **PACER.org**

“Facilitated Team Meetings” [PACER.org/parent/php/PHP-c90.pdf](https://www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-c90.pdf)

“Resolving Special Education Issues: Keeping special education records” [PACER.org/parent/php/PHP-c94.pdf](https://www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-c94.pdf)

“Keeping Good Records Helps Special Education Stay on Track” [PACER.org/parent/php/php-c155.pdf](https://www.pacer.org/parent/php/php-c155.pdf)

#### **Minnesota Department of Education**

(651) 582-8200

<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/fam/sped/conf/index.htm>

#### **National Center on Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE)**

<https://www.cadeworks.org>

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