

Collaborative Communication in Special Education

Special Education Mediation Services





Collaborative Communication in Special Education



***Special Education
Mediation Services***

Working Together for Student Achievement in Michigan

Special Education Mediation Services

Grant-Funded

A Grant-Funded Initiative of the Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education (OSE).

Free

Offer FREE mediation, IEP facilitation and collaborative communication training to schools and parents across Michigan.

Federally Mandated

Enables the OSE to meet its obligation under the IDEA to provide statewide mediation services at no-cost to schools and parents to resolve special education disputes.



What We Do



We support students who receive special education supports and services (IFSP/IEP) birth to age 26 by fostering cooperation and effective teamwork among those who plan their education. The overall goal is to help students, parents and educators make decisions that improve education outcomes.



How We Do It

Free • Effective • Fast

Mediation

A FREE neutral mediator leads families and schools through a process to resolve conflict and come to a mutual agreement on a plan to benefit the student and improve outcomes.

Facilitation

We help families and schools navigate complex meetings, stay on task, and make sure all points of view are heard by providing a FREE neutral meeting facilitator.



Mediation and Facilitation Comparison



Mediation:

When you know you disagree.

Facilitation:

When you don't know what you don't know and you do know that you should know, call us, we'll help you.

Both are **voluntary** processes.

	Mediation	Facilitation
Goals	Resolve a specific dispute	Complete the process efficiently and collaboratively
Process	Mediator establishes	School establishes
Who attends	People who disagree	Special Education team
Existence of "sides"	Mediator must be neutral	Facilitator must be neutral

How To Request FREE Service

(Did we mention they're free?)



Call
833-KIDS-1ST
Mikids1st.org



Participate in
Intake Process



We contact parties,
arrange schedules
and process
paperwork.



Parties Meet



Why Should You Use SEMS FREE Services?



Behavior plan
not being
implemented
as discussed.

Disagreement
about an
independent
evaluation for
speech
therapy.

Personality
conflict
between Dad
and Resource
Room Teacher.

School wants
student
placed in a
self-contained
classroom and
family
disagrees.

When you don't agree with one another.

Why Should You Use SEMS FREE Services?



Family feels out of touch with what's going on at school and wants better communication.

School wants family to stop texting teacher at 10pm and wants improved interactions.

IEP not being implemented as written and need meeting to discuss improved plan.

School believes student needs specialized instruction but family disagrees.

When you need help finding a solution that is focused on the student.



Where We Provide Services

- Mutually agreed upon
- Local
- Virtual



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When to Use Mediation



- Disagreements over
 - Eligibility for programs, services
 - Evaluation interpretations
 - Transition
 - Discipline
 - Service delivery
- Communication and/or relationship issues
- Due Process or State Complaint

Call us early call us often!
1-833-KIDS-1ST



Attorneys and advocates have no role in mediation.

FACT CHECK!
True or false?

False: Mediation is designed to let educators and parents speak for themselves and develop solutions to meet student needs. Attorneys and advocates may participate in mediation to support the parties and the process.





The Mediator's Role



Will

- Remain neutral
- Conduct the mediation
- Ensure that all parties have equal opportunity to express their ideas and thoughts
- Make sure everyone abides by rules for appropriate conduct
- Help the parties stay on the topic of their disagreement
- Guide the participants towards creating an agreement
- Record the agreement.

Won't

- Take sides
- Give legal advice
- Make a decision
- Enforce decision.



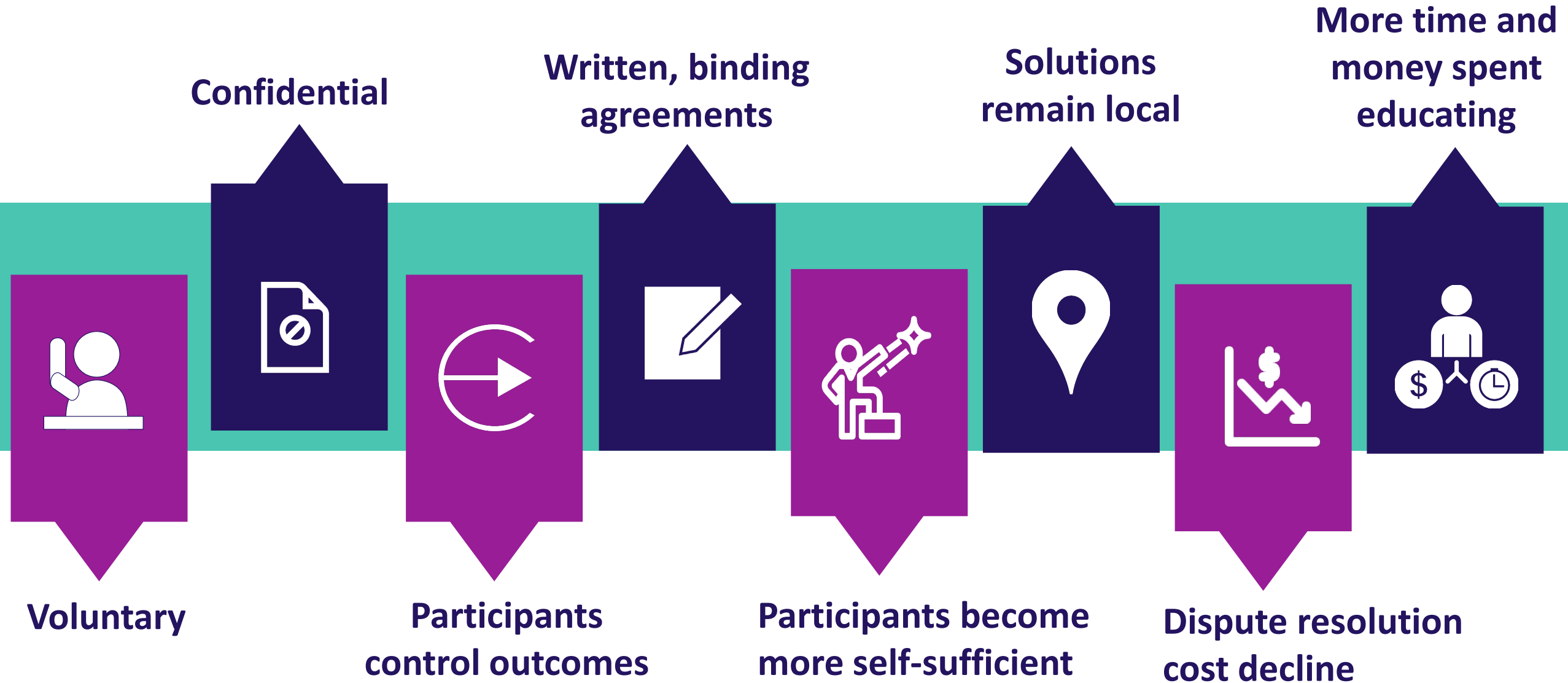
Mediation Agreements are written by the family and school.


True: The parties remain the decision makers in mediation. The mediator cannot decide the issues for them.

FACT CHECK!
True or false?



Benefits of Mediation





Mediation is considered a district failure.

FACT CHECK!
True or false?

False: The OSE is aware that there are disputes in special education. Its primary concern is how they will be resolved. OSEP and OSE policy favors dispute resolution among the parties first through direct talks or mediation. SEMS reports data in the aggregate only.



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When to Use Facilitation



- Complex issue
- Relationships strained
- Need help focusing on student issue(s)
- IEP/IFSP
- Disagreement
- Manifestation Determination Review
- Resolution Session related to Due Process.

Call us early call us often!
1-833-KIDS-1ST



The Facilitator's Role

Will

- Receive information about concerns in advance of meeting.
- Acknowledge/Review agenda understanding and meeting guidelines
- Make sure everyone abides by rules for appropriate conduct
- Keep the meeting centered on the student's needs
- Help negotiate disagreements
- Keep the meeting on track and on time
- Conduct meeting if requested.

Won't

- Be a part of the team
- Give legal advice
- Take sides
- Make a decision.





Mediators and facilitators are
NOT advocates.

True: Mediators and facilitators are obligated to remain neutral. Advocating for a school or parent could upset the balance between them and make solutions harder to reach.



FACT CHECK!
True or false?

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The Big Picture

Michigan Special Education Communication Continuum

	Stage 1	Stage 2				Stage 3	Stage 4				Stage 5	
Level of Intervention	Prevention	Discomfort, Questions, Complexity				Disagreement	Procedural Safeguards				Legal Review	
Assistance, Intervention Options	Conflict resolution skills training	Informal party-to-party discussions	MDE toll-free information phone line 888-320-8384	Conciliation (telephone intermediary)	IEP, IFSP facilitation	Pre-filing mediation	Mediation under IDEA	Complaints	Resolution sessions	Due process hearings	Litigation	Legislation
Dimensions	Third party assistance						Third-party intervention					
	Decision making by parties						Third-party decision making					
	Interest-based						Rights-based					
	Informal, flexible						Formal, fixed					

Communication Workshops



Possible workshop topics

- Collaborative Communication Skills
- Effective IEPs
- Engaging Families
- Conflict Resolution
- Meeting Management
- Customized upon request.

Visit www.mikids1st.org to complete form
or call (517) 334-0034

Keep in Touch




Newsletter



**Special Education
Mediation Services**
Working Together for Student Achievement in Michigan

COMMUNICATION CONNECTION

December 2020 | Issue 3



**SEMS Is
Open to
Help You
VIRTUALLY**

Contingency Learning Plans and Recovery Services

Recent guidance from the Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education encourages districts to implement Contingency Learning Plans to help meet the obligation to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities. As districts determine the appropriate mode of instruction...

Website

Search...


**Special Education
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For information, call 833-KIDS1ST or visit [request.services.form](#)

Notice! Important! [19 response](#)

Mediation
Facilitation
Training
Additional Options
Procedural Manual



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Special Education Mediation Services

Whether in person, virtual or hybrid education, students with disabilities should be receiving FAPE, as laid out in their IEP. If you need help navigating the IEP meeting or disagree with how services are being delivered head to our website at [mkids1st.org](#). We're here to help you get the most out of your student's special education. 833-543-7178





Remember SEMS Is...



FREE



FAST



CONFIDENTIAL



EFFECTIVE





Results

- Improve communication and relationships
- Created safe space to problem solve
- Build collaboration skills
- Improve student outcomes.



Contact SEMS



Services

1-833-Kids1st
(833-543-7178)



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Thank You

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Michigan Department of Education
Office of Special Education



We are here to support you!

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For more information visit:

<https://www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org>

Call: 800-552-4821

En Español 313-217-1060

Statewide Email: info@michiganallianceforfamilies.org



Michigan Alliance for Families

Michigan Alliance for Families is an IDEA Grant Funded Initiative of the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education, and Michigan's federal Parent-Training and Information Center (PTIC) funded by U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

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