

Collaborative Communication in Special Education

Special Education Mediation Services





Collaborative Communication in Special Education Dispute Resolution



***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.

Why are we HERE?

More need to know!

Enhanced efforts on SEMS program outreach

- Attend special education related conferences.
- Attend family serving conferences related to children with special needs.
- Speak with Parent Advisory Committees.
- Speak with ISD, LEAs and PSA administrative staff.
- Professional development.



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 need help navigating complexity.

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

Why Should You Use SEMS FREE Services?



Behavior plan not being implemented as discussed.

Disagreement about an independent evaluation for speech therapy.

Personality conflicts.

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 10 pm 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



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.

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.



FACT CHECK!
True or false?



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?





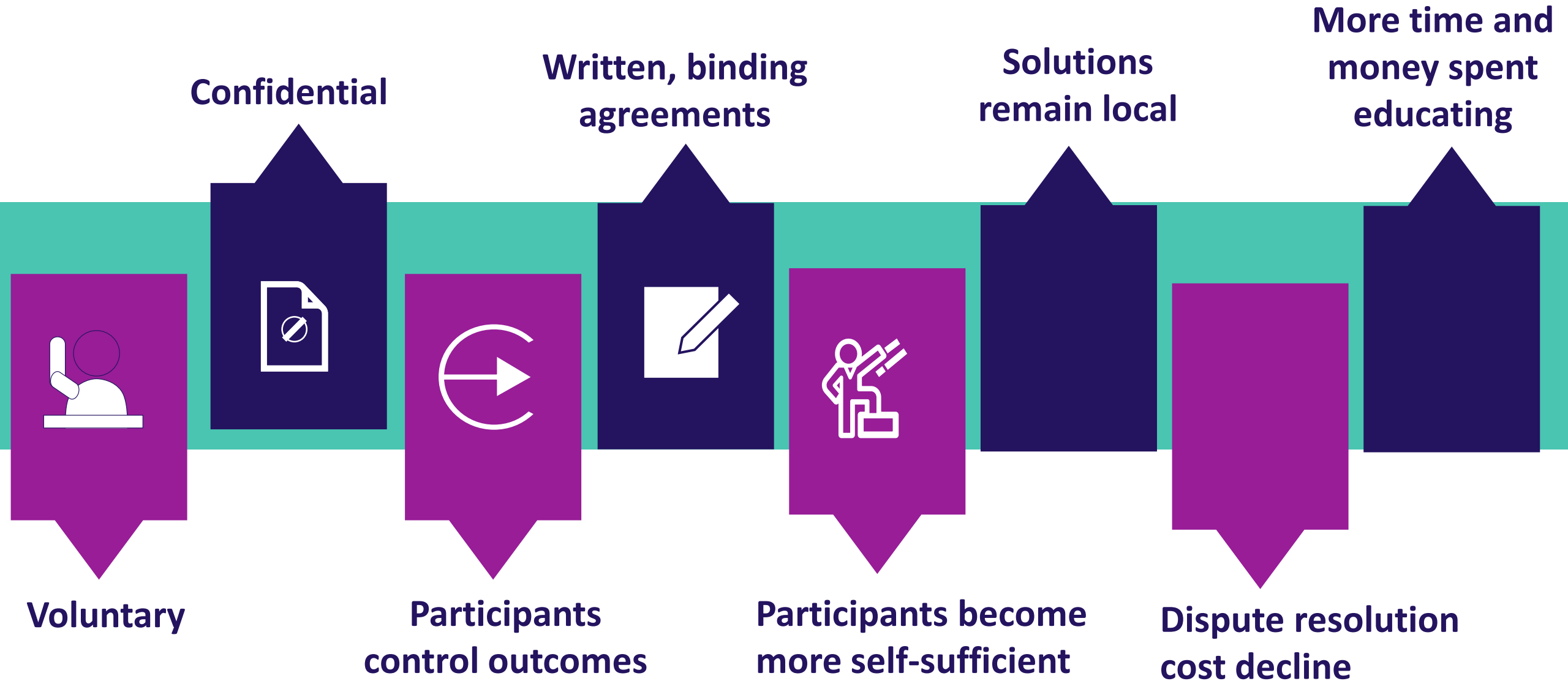
Mediation is considered a district failure.

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.



FACT CHECK!
True or false?

Benefits of Mediation



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!



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?

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						

How To Request FREE Service

(Did we mention they're free?)



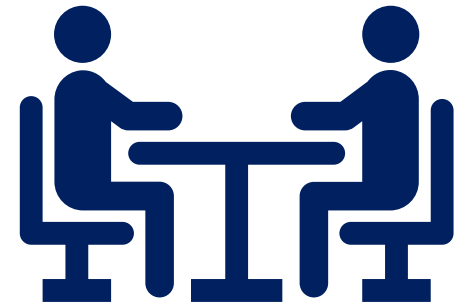
Call
1-833-KIDS-1ST
Mikids1st.org



Participate in
Intake Process



We contact
parties, arrange
schedules and
process
paperwork.



Parties Meet

Keep in Touch



Newsletter



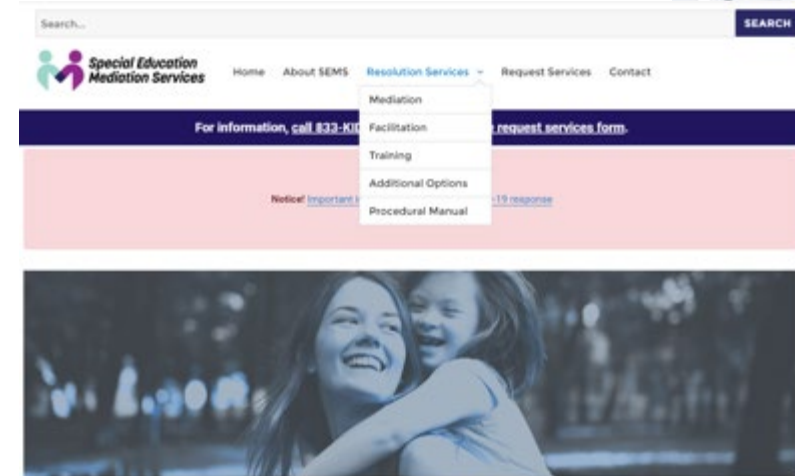
December 2020 | Issue 3



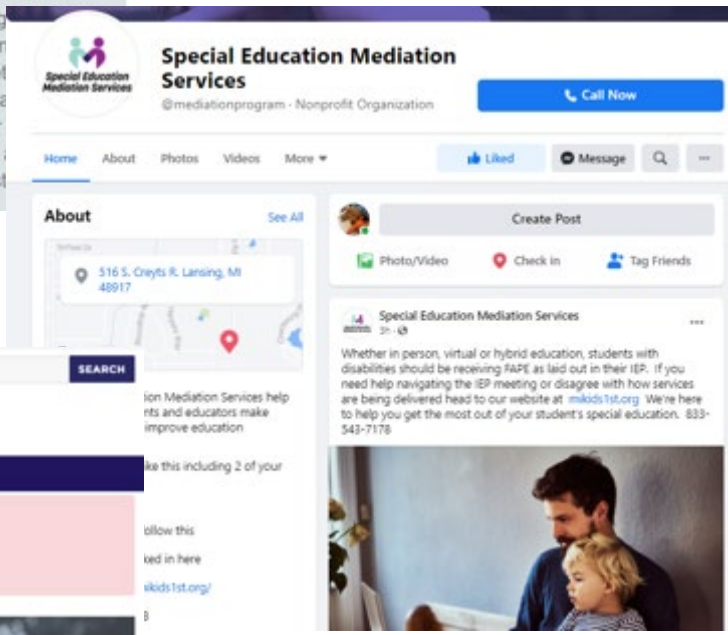
Contingency Learning Plans and Recovery Services

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

Website



Social Media



Communication Workshops



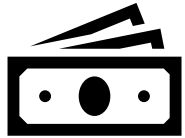
Possible workshop topics

- Dispute Resolution Options in Special Education
- Conflict Resolution and Communication in Special Education
- Discipline for Students with Disabilities
- Effective IEP Team Meeting Participation Techniques
- How to Develop Trusting Relationships Between Families and Schools
- How to Communicate with the Most Challenging Personalities Customized upon request.



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

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)



Program
Information

2111 University Park Dr., Ste.550,
Okemos MI 48864
Phone: 517.334.0034
Fax: 517.220.4181
Email: info@MiKids1st.org



Website

Mikids1st.org

Thank You

Bern Dempsey, Training Coordinator

Taryn Francis, Outreach Representative

Beth Kohler, Outreach Coordinator

Rebecca Kozlow, Outreach Representative

Diane Kullis, Intake Specialist

Cheryl Levine, Project Coordinator

Cindy Van Neste, Outreach Representative

Laura Zangara, Intake Coordinator



Michigan Department of Education
Office of Special Education



We are here to support you!

 @MichiganAllianceForFamilies

 @michiganallianceforfamilies

 /MichiganAlliance

For more information visit

www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org

Call 800-552-4821

En Español 313-217-1060

248-963-0607 للغة العربية

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).

www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org

1-800-552-4821

info@michiganallianceforfamilies.org

