MEDIATION IN EARLY INTERVENTION DISPUTES

Mediation is an informal option that uses a neutral third party to help resolve disputes. Both sides – the family and the Early Intervention (EI) agency – attend a meeting conducted by a trained mediator. The mediator helps the two sides agree on some or all of the issues.

The mediator does not make decisions, however. Any agreements that are reached are included in a written mediation agreement. The mediation agreement, once signed by the parents and the EI agency, is a legally binding agreement and is enforceable in a court of law. It is important that decisions reached through mediation be included in the child’s Multidisciplinary Evaluation Report and/or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) so service providers know about the decision.

Mediation must be agreed to by the parents and the EI agency. It cannot occur without both parties’ consent. If you would like to try mediation, you should request mediation in writing. There is no charge to families for mediation.

It is important to note that mediation sessions are confidential. Neither the parents nor the Early Intervention agency can use anything that is said in a mediation session in a hearing or court proceeding.

Related Articles:

- Procedural Safeguards in Early Intervention
- Overview of Dispute Resolution Procedures for Families Receiving Early Intervention
- Early Intervention Evaluations
- Your Child’s Service Plan: IFSP Basics
- How to be a Good Parent Advocate
- What Happens to My Child’s Services During Dispute Resolution?
- **When Do I Need a Special Education Attorney?**
- **Using a Special Education Advocate**
- **Rights of Recovery in Early Intervention**

**Recommended Link:**

- **CAR Resource Directory (Select Advocacy)**

**Additional Resources:**

- **Your Guide to Mediation, a publication of the Pennsylvania Office for Dispute Resolution**
- **Mock Mediation Video, produced by the Pennsylvania Office for Dispute Resolution**