SPARC Brochure

What you Gain

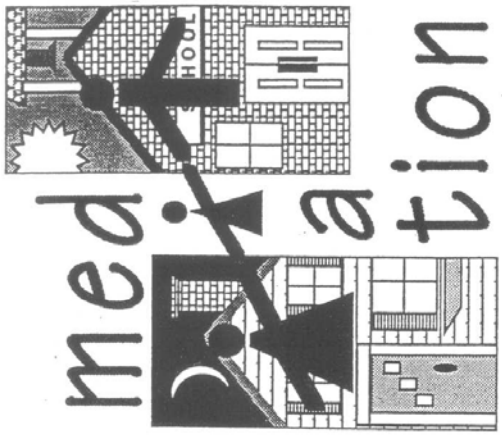
- ✓ Collaborative problem solving
- ✓ Mutual decision making
- ✓ Clarification of issues
- ✓ Positive working relationship
- ✓ Focus on common ground
- ✓ Friendly, neutral atmosphere
- ✓ Quick action
- ✓ No legal costs
- ✓ High rate of compliance
- ✓ Agreements that hold up
- ✓ Focus on win/win solutions
- ✓ Problem-solving experience

What you Lose

- ✓ Nothing. (All traditional options are still open to you.)

For more information about mediation services, contact:

The Conflict Resolution Program
177 Graham Hall
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware
Newark, DE 19716
(302) 831-8128



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Everything to Gain Nothing to Lose

Now there is an alternative path for solving problems between home and school

A service to parents and schools provided by

SPARC
Special Education Partnership for the Amicable Resolution

MEDIATION • • •

Working out the details of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) can be a challenge for parents and school personnel alike. Sometimes it's even difficult to agree whether or not a child needs an IEP.

Voluntary

When such conflicts arise it is quite natural to want to fight or to wish it would "just go away." It probably won't "just go away" and fighting is costly and counter-productive for people who should be acting as partners to support a child's education. It's always best when people involved solve problems on their own. But sometimes, that just isn't likely. Sometimes the problems seem too complex, or we feel too "hot" to handle the conflict constructively. That's when mediation can really make a difference.

Free mediation services are available to you through SPARC, a joint project of the Office of Conflict Resolution in Education (OCRE), the Delaware Department of Education and the Parent Information Center of Delaware, Inc. Read on for more information.

What is Mediation?

Mediation is a voluntary process designed to help people solve their problems, together, in a safe, productive, neutral environment. It seeks to create win-win results by giving everyone involved a chance to shape the solution. Mediation works because it is tough on the problem without being tough on the people involved. This is important for parents and school personnel who work together to support children.

If you and the school district have tried, but just can't agree about services or the program for your child, you may call this office to talk with someone about mediation and to get more information.

Respectful

If mediation is agreed to by you and the school, a neutral place and a mediator will be identified. At the mediation session, you and one representative from the school district sit down and try to work out your problems through a third person who is trained to help people settle their differences. If the mediation results in agreement, there will be follow-up to see how things are going. If no agreement is reached, you and the school will get a report summarizing the unsettled issues and advise you about what you can do next.

Non-threatening

If you choose to decline mediation from the start, all of the existing state and court options remain open to you.

Win - Win

What is a mediator?

A mediator is someone trained to assist people in solving problems. A mediator is not a judge or a hearing officer. The mediator does not suggest or impose solutions, but helps people talk through their problems, identify their most important concerns, find common ground and come to an agreement that meets everyone's most important needs.

SPARC mediators are parents and school personnel who volunteer their service. These volunteers have been trained in conflict resolution skills and special education mediation. Because it is important that mediators be unbiased, mediators will be assigned to provide service outside of the district in which they work or in which their child attends school.

What does it cost?

The mediation service is provided *free of charge* as a service of the special Education Partnership for the Amicable Resolution of Conflict (SPARC), the Office of Conflict Resolution in Education at the University of Delaware, and the Exceptional Children and Early Childhood Group of the Delaware Department of Education.