

## **ADR is:**

- **RAPIDLY RESPONSIVE;** appointments are typically scheduled within three days to two weeks
- **FREE OF CHARGE:** No fees associated with any of these options
- **CONFIDENTIAL:** Information is shared outside of the process on a “need to know” basis
- **PROTECTIVE OF LEGAL RIGHTS:** No one relinquishes their right to pursue legal remedies, should they not be satisfied with the outcome of an ADR strategy
- **FOCUSED ON DESIRED OUTCOMES:** Written agreements are integrated into the IEP document, with support provided for progress monitoring



**IF YOU THINK ADR MIGHT  
BE HELPFUL IN YOUR  
SITUATION, PLEASE CALL  
THE ADR INTAKE  
COORDINATOR AT  
650.802.5473 FOR A  
CONSULTATION.**



San Mateo  
County  
SELPA

## **APPROPRIATE DISPUTE RESOLUTION OPTIONS**

*The San Mateo County SELPA Office provides IEP Team members with a variety of Appropriate Dispute Resolution (ADR) strategies when disagreements stall decision making in an IEP meeting. ADR options utilize neutral facilitators or neutral panel members who guide the team through specific strategies to yield creative, legally compliant, and collaborative solutions. Along the way, IEP Team members learn to communicate openly and heal damaged relationships while crafting stronger plans for students with special educational needs. Through ADR, IEP Teams ultimately retain control of the decision making process, rather than abdicating to a hearing officer or judge who dictates one and only one solution- without ever even meeting the student, or seeing the classroom options.*

The San Mateo County SELPA Appropriate Dispute Resolution (ADR) options address four stages of conflict management. Stage 1, the most important stage of conflict management, is Prevention. The foundation of our ADR program is the avoidance of conflict at the family and district level. Through parent engagement and training, staff training in communication and conducting productive meeting skills, conflict is preempted. A more detailed description of these processes is displayed in the Prevention column below.

In later stages, conflicts may be resolved through a “third-party assistance” approach, including more formal procedural actions to prevent the need for legal actions. A more detailed description of ADR Dispute interventions is displayed in the table below. In each column are specific processes currently available to *any* member of a student’s IEP Team. Stage 2 is the Disagreement stage, with interventions designed to head off further conflict and damage to the relationships between IEP Team members. Stage 3, the Conflict stage, includes ADR processes that are helpful when an IEP Team is frustrated by repetitive meetings and conversations in which conflict is never resolved. And finally, Stage 4 suggests a powerful intervention for when legal proceedings seem imminent.

If you have questions about the information below, or find your IEP Team in one of these stages, contact the ADR Intake Coordinator for a confidential initial intake consultation at 650.802.5473.

<b>STAGE 1</b>
<b>CAPACITY BUILDING AS PREVENTION;</b> Providing support to IEP Team members to prevent conflict from occurring
<b>SEDAC;</b> Special Education District Advisory Council- Parents of children with special needs are available to provide factual and emotional support to other parents within the district.
<b>RPC TRAINING;</b> Resource Parent Council- Parents with additional training in the IEP process maintain an informational website and host training sessions for parents new to the process. Visit the website at <a href="http://www.smcoe.org/selpa">www.smcoe.org/selpa</a>
<b>STAFF DEVELOPMENT;</b> Throughout the year, the SELPA Office provides technical training in compliance, Evidence Based Best Practices, and study sessions for teachers and related service providers.
<b>TELEPHONE/E-MAIL CONSULTATION WITH THE INTAKE COORDINATOR;</b> The SELPA ADR Intake Coordinator is available via phone and e-mail to parents, educational advocates, school administrators, teachers and related services providers to answer questions or refer you to other SELPA staff with a specialty in the area of your concern

<b>STAGE 2</b>
<b>WHEN IEP TEAM MEMBERS DISAGREE;</b> At the first sign of conflict, these interventions can head off further conflict or damage to relationships
<b>RPC PARENTS;</b> Resource Parent Council- Parents with additional training in the IEP process are available for support and individual consultation on the IEP Process, how to effectively advocate for your child, and how to maintain positive relationships with your child’s teachers and service providers.
<b>FACILITATED MEETINGS;</b> Meetings with a trained neutral facilitator can help focus the entire IEP Team, or particular members, on what their Desired Outcome is for a student. This type of meeting may be helpful to assist families to identify clear goals for their child and to explore future possibilities, or if there are questions about the value of a service for their child. It is similarly helpful for school staff members of an IEP Team to explore options for a student, the meaning of conflicting data, or to resolve philosophical differences.
<b>FILE REVIEW;</b> Any member of an IEP Team can request a review of a student’s file for technical advice or as a compliance review.
<b>EXPERT TEAMS;</b> Teams of specialists in the areas of Behavior, Autism, Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) are available to advise IEP Teams as they seek solutions to the challenges a child faces in the classroom.

<b>STAGE 3</b>
<b>WHEN IEP TEAM MEMBERS ARE “STUCK”;</b> If you find you or other members of the IEP Team keep having the same conversations, more intensive interventions are available
<b>FACILITATED IEP;</b> A neutral facilitator is available to prepare separately with a family and one school contact person to define Desired Outcomes and determine the best problem solving strategies to get the team to these outcomes. <i>See brochure at <a href="http://www.smcoe.org/assets/files/learning-and-leadership/selpa/forms/IEP%20Meetings%20Document.pdf">http://www.smcoe.org/assets/files/learning-and-leadership/selpa/forms/IEP%20Meetings%20Document.pdf</a></i>
<b>SOLUTION PANEL;</b> A panel comprised of an administrator, teacher, related service provider, and other community member can be available to hear a summary from IEP Team members and to suggest solutions for the team to explore.
<b>STAGE 4</b>
<b>WHEN DUE PROCESS SEEMS IMMINENT;</b> This level of intervention is a final attempt to resolve the conflict before handing the case to an Administrative Law Judge or Mediator, where the IEP Team is given a solution by a third party who is not even familiar with the child or the school.
<b>FACILITATED RESOLUTION SESSION;</b> A neutral facilitator reads the Due Process or Complaint filing and the responding party’s written response, brings the parties together to suggest a resolution, and then guides the family and district Special Education Administrator through problem solving strategies to see if the issues can be resolved.