



Indicator #8: Changing Perceptions

Parent Involvement: It's not an event... it's an attitude



Good Morning, I am Kendra Bartholomew. I am the TA for Parent Involvement in Special Education and Title I. If you will look at your handouts you will see a flyer which explains this new program. My office is here in Minot. I am housed at Pathfinder Parent Center, and by the way they are back in Arrowhead Mall.

In this session we will discuss issues that we all have feelings and thoughts about. We have all had conflict in our life. Some was helpful, but most of the time it eats away at us. I want to encourage us to be honest with ourselves and to use wisdom in our thoughts and words.



We all come with preconceptions. How we are raised, our values, our traditions all affect the way we think. Families come with those as well.

When families enter into the world of education as adults many of them feel this way. I am talking about the ones who resist showing up to meetings and don't really participate.

So take a moment right now and think of a family or parent who is really frustrating you or you haven't been able to work with.

Write down what you think the barrier to their involvement is? Guess at what their feelings might be toward school.

Now I want you to focus on the bright spots.... think about what family participates in everything... helps the child with development, is at events, chats with you?

What is the difference between these two families? _____

Chances are one family is more secure in the school environment and they believe they are respected by you.

The Questions:

My child's teachers and school:

1. Offer training and information that will help me participate fully in the IEP meetings.
2. Treat me as an equal partner when we are planning for my child.
3. Use the ideas and suggestions that I share at the meeting.
4. Encourage me to speak up at IEP meetings.
5. Encourage me to participate in writing my child's IEP plan.
6. Carried out my child's plan last year as written and discussed.
7. Are carrying out my child's plan this year as written and discussed.
8. Share information with me on the progress my child has made on his/her IEP goals.
9. I am Comfortable contacting my child's general education teachers with any questions or concerns.
10. I am Comfortable contacting my child's special education teachers with questions or concerns.

These are the questions parents are asked to grade us on how we are doing. When we read these statements we think yeah we do that... but it is what is between the lines that makes or breaks us in true partnership.

This is were my catch phrase comes into play: "Parent Involvement: It's not an event... its an attitude!"

How would you grade yourself in this survey?



Here we are going to view an IEP meeting.

After Video: Just based on what you know what are your perceptions about this meeting? Write down what was good and what was not.

Now think about it specifically from the parent's perspective....lets go back and look at those questions. Was there partnership there?



When we come with preconceptions we don't see every action equally. Ok so what do we do about it?

Parent Involvement is the same as budgeting and dieting: Its really 80% behavior and 20% head knowledge, and we would all be skinny and rich if it were easy.

Step 1: Be Welcoming

1. your first contact should be social.... always. This is your chance for first impressions. If their first impression is: "Hi nice to meet you. Something is wrong with Joe." They then have a negative view of you and your words will always be filtered through that.
2. Is your environment welcoming? Do you have signs telling parents where to go? Do you meet them at the door to show them the way to the IEP meeting room.
3. Do you make them sit in tiny chairs?

Actions:

1. Welcome Mat
2. Signs showing where to go
3. Set up a home visit or meet at a local coffee shop and just talk about Joe.. the IEP meeting should not be the first one-on-one encounter that is too intense.
4. Parents want to know you care about their child and you think they are capable. When parents were surveyed ... they were asked who was their favorite teacher and why. Unanimously the why was because I could tell she cared about my child.
5. Display some of Joe's strengths, pictures, or work. Better yet, have Joe present.

Step 2: Honoring their role, their time, and their opinion

1. Do you state some where that you honor parents as the child's first teacher?
2. Do you respect their family values?
3. Are the meetings set for your convince or the family's?
4. When they give their opinion do you acknowledge it? rephrase it? Or use it in some way possible?
5. Do you ask them how they would do something?
6. What language do they use at home? (not just speaking language what idioms and phrases)
7. Do you acknowledge their overwhelming role " Professionals need to realize and appreciate the heavy load carried by parents of children with learning disabilities, ADHD, and other related disorders.

Notes Continued:

Step 2 Actions:

1. Again signs showing you value family
2. In your letters and communication make statements like: I know you have taught Joe a lot in his life. What do you do that he responds best too? When I watch Joe play he seems to like green toys, do you see that too? What else does he enjoy?
3. Thank them for coming to the meeting. Thank them for listening to you during the meeting.
4. Give them a place of honor at the table. Have them sit next to you instead of across from you. This lets them know they are a partner not an enemy.

Step 3: Connecting through Communicating and complementing

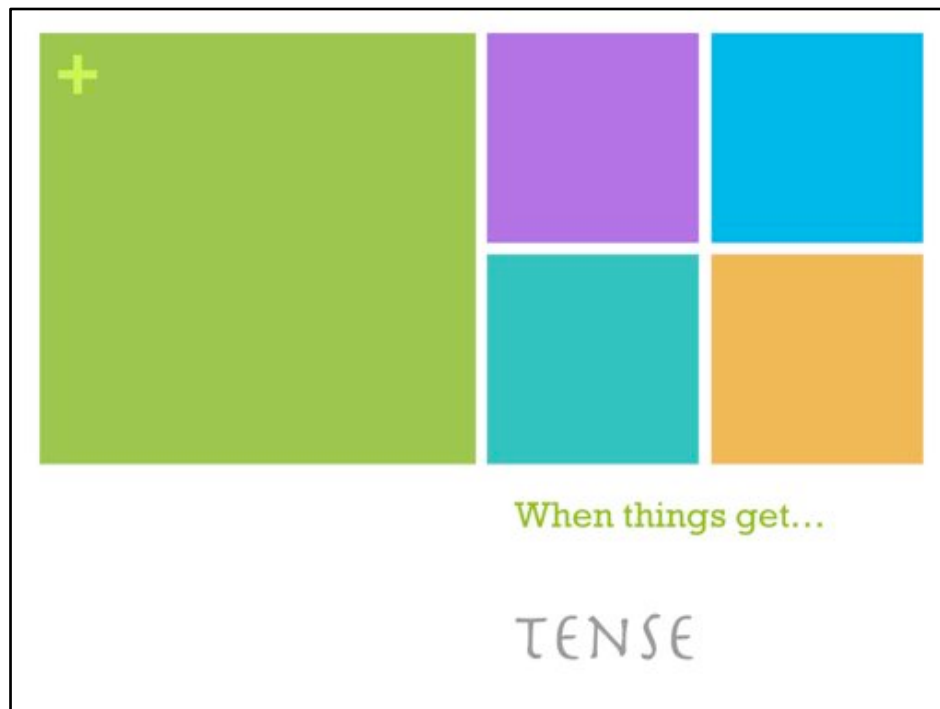
1. Sending notes and newsletters is a good first step, but can they themselves read?
2. Double check to see that positive complements going home.
3. Are you reaching out to the parents, or connecting them with other parents for support?

Actions:

1. Vary your forms of communication: Newsletter once a week, text/note bi weekly, phone call once a month, personal social contact once a month. (create a table or cute checklist)
2. When you set up a meeting instead of just a letter put the letter in an invitation card or a thinking of you card.
3. Once a quarter write a thank you note or a compliment to the parent.
4. Ask the parent if you can send video diaries of the child or voice memos.
5. Send Photos of the child.

Step 4: Involve them in Decision Making

1. For this to work parents have to know the rules of the game. Let them know about the limitations in services and be honest with them. They may want what is best, but what is appropriate is what is legal.
2. Let them know you want their input and ask specific questions
3. Remind them this is their child so they want to make sure you feel comfortable
4. Give them a worksheet in parent language to help them develop goals before a meeting
5. Start the meeting with the family talking and expressing their thoughts.





The most common causes that create tension: · Design · Delivery · Relationships

Design conflicts arise when stakeholders have differing understandings or ideas about special education services. These debates typically concern eligibility for services; methodology of intervention; perceptions about student needs; the scope of the IDEA entitlement; and educational placement.

Examples: Parents may contend that their child has needs that warrant special education services while the school team may conclude that the child is ineligible for these services and/or that the educational needs of the child can be met through the general curriculum. In other cases, the school team may contend that a child has needs that warrant special education services but the parents may conclude that the needs of the child can be met without the services. Once a child is determined eligible for special education services, disputes may arise over the most appropriate methodology for intervention. Parents may come to an IEP meeting with an independent assessment identifying a preferred methodology. The goal of providing appropriate educational services to children with special educational needs in the least restrictive environment is an additional source of disputes for parents and school districts.

Delivery problems are those associated with implementing an IEP that has been agreed upon by the family and the school district. Although the stakeholders may have reached agreement both on the needs of a child and on the services that child should receive, conflict may arise if either the school district fails to provide the agreed upon services or the parents feel that services are not being appropriately provided.

Examples: Delivery conflicts often involve issues of provider competence, scheduling, transportation, coordination of services, procedural requirements, privacy, and/or confidentiality. Conflicts frequently include parental contentions that the district failed to implement agreed upon services and/or violated procedural safeguards. Personnel shortages have created serious problems in this regard for many school districts. School districts are struggling with the challenge of implementing individualized educational programs in the face of increased special education costs and reduced staff.

Relationships are perhaps the most important but elusive source of disputes between school districts and parents. Relationship conflicts may stem from loss of trust, breakdowns in communication, and cultural differences. Although only a handful of states include this category in their analysis of requests for mediation, mediators and mediation program coordinators consider relationship conflicts to be a central reason that increasing numbers of parents seek mediation.

Examples: Disagreements over substantive issues among parents and members of school teams frequently devolve into interpersonal antagonism. By the time mediation takes place under IDEA, the details of the dispute may have become less important than the animosity between the parties. At this point the parents may accuse the school personnel of not acting in good faith, trying to deny their child an appropriate education, not individualizing the child's program, and only



Together we
can create
partnership

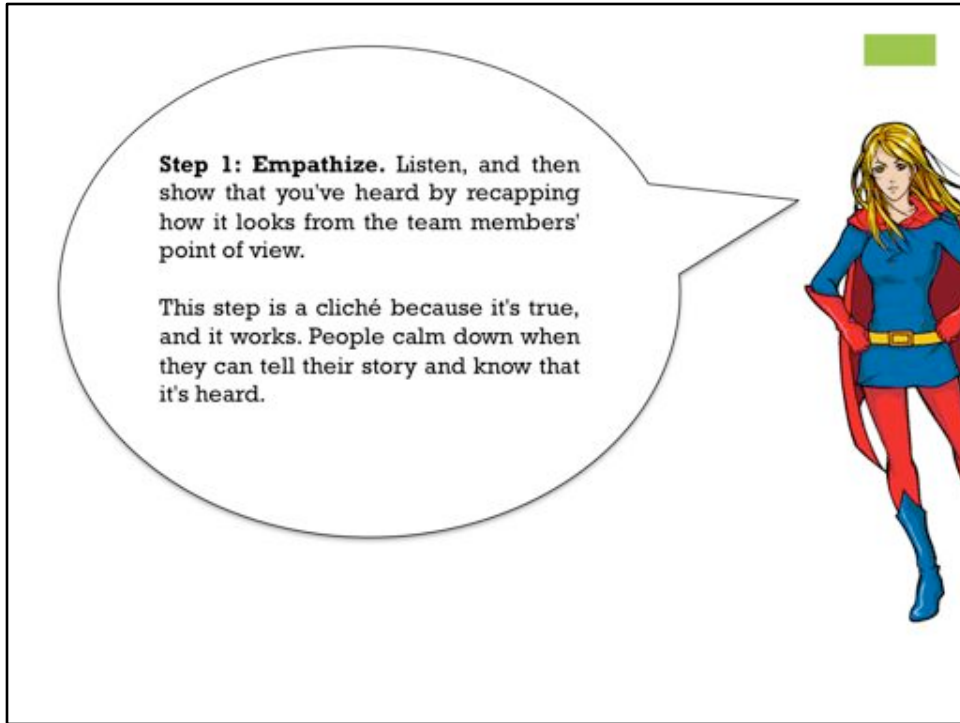
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The Diffuser....

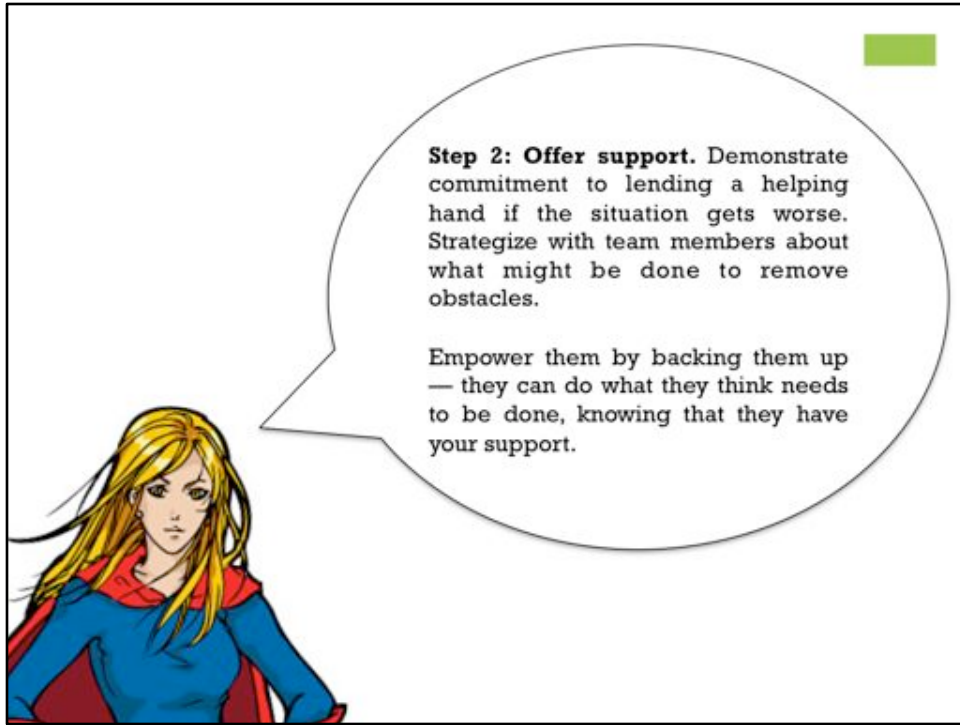
Her power... unsurpassed calmness and
ability to make others feel valued and
listened to.



Step 1: Empathize.

Where does this parent/educator need empathy? _____

How can you express your empathy? _____

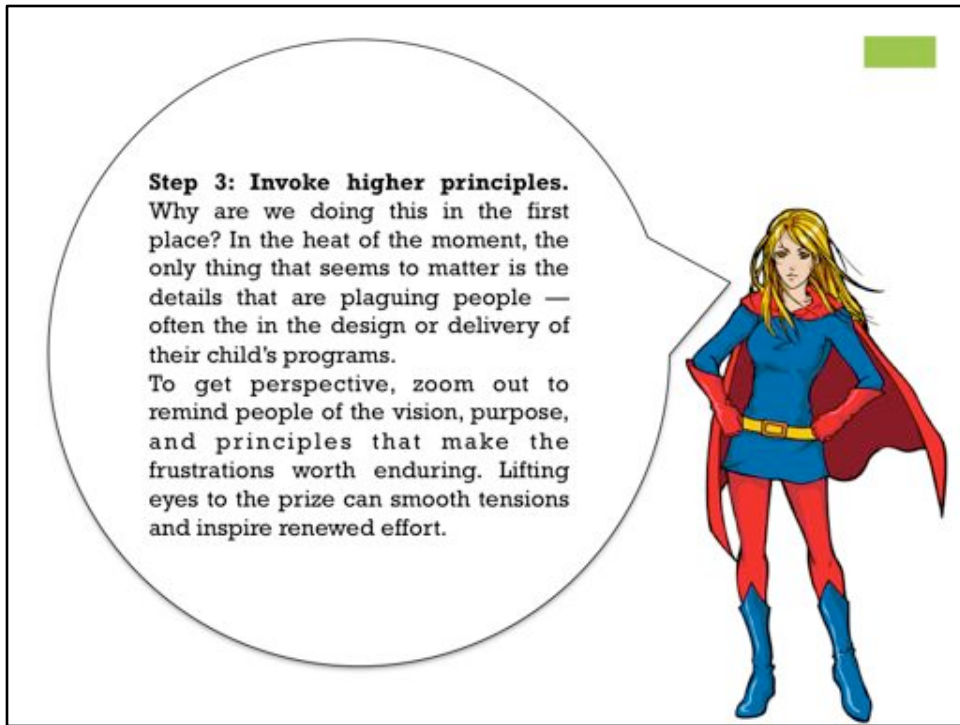


Step 2: Offer support. Demonstrate commitment to lending a helping hand if the situation gets worse. Strategize with team members about what might be done to remove obstacles.

Empower them by backing them up — they can do what they think needs to be done, knowing that they have your support.

Step 2: Offer support.

What support can you offer? _____

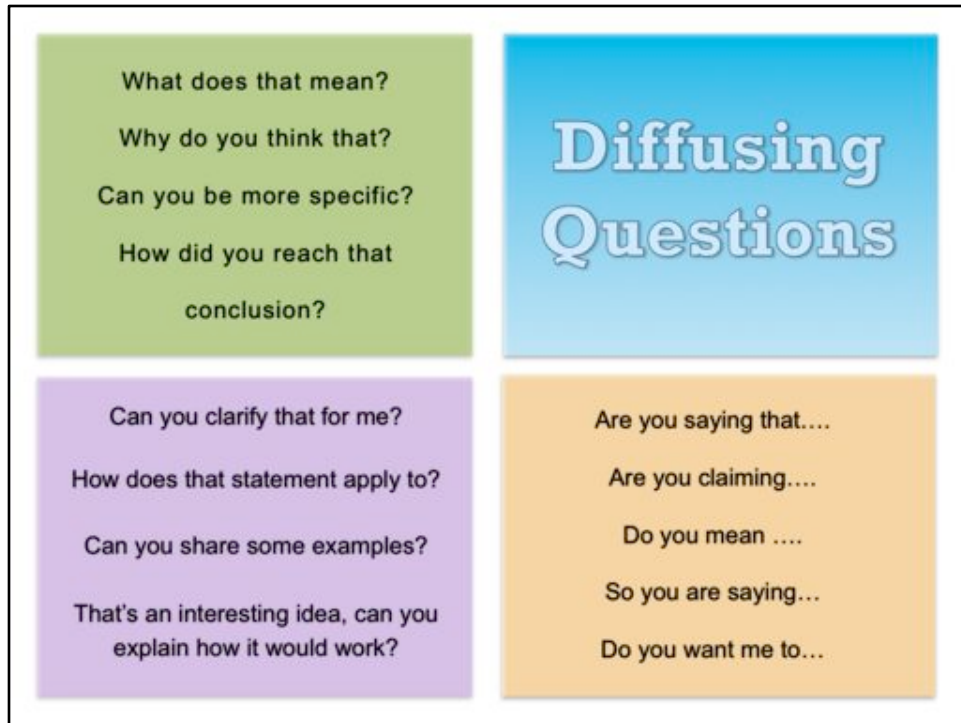


Step 3: Invoke higher principles.

One parent suggests having a picture of the child on the table. If the student is older... they could be there.

What are some other ways ? _____

Listen, support, and uplift. These steps are good practice even when times are not tense. When people feel understood, empowered, and guided by higher goals, tensions are defused and momentum restored.



Sometimes we can't think of what to say.... Here you go. 😊

What are other clarifying or restating phrases you could use? _____

**Keys to Successful
Negotiation**
from the book "Beyond Reason"

TABLE 3
FIVE CORE CONCERNS

Core Concerns	The Concern Is Ignored When . . .	The Concern Is Met When . . .
Appreciation	Your thoughts, feelings, or actions are devalued.	Your thoughts, feelings, and actions are acknowledged as having merit.
Affiliation	You are treated as an adversary and kept at a distance.	You are treated as a colleague.
Autonomy	Your freedom to make decisions is impinged upon.	Others respect your freedom to decide important matters.
Status	Your relative standing is treated as inferior to that of others.	Your standing where deserved is given full recognition.
Role	Your current role and its activities are not personally fulfilling.	You so define your role and its activities that you find them fulfilling.

We all have emotions... they can be our ally or our enemy.

There are 5 fundamental feelings we have to address if we want a relationship or negotiation to happen.

Now go back to that parent/educator that you are struggling with..

Ask yourself which of these 5 core concerns are do you think they might not be feeling supported in?

TABLE 4
THE RISK OF *IGNORING* CORE CONCERNS

My Core Concerns Are <i>Unmet</i> Whenever:	The Resulting Emotions Can Make Me Feel:		When This Happens, I Am Prone:
I am unappreciated	Angry!	Disgusted	To react negatively, contrary to my interests.
I am treated as an adversary	Enraged	Repulsed	
My autonomy is impinged	Furious	Sickened	To "go it alone"
My status is put down	Indignant	Resentful	
My role is trivialized and restricted	Irritated	Contemptuous	To think rigidly
	Annoyed	Guilty and Ashamed	To act deceptively and be seen as untrustworthy
	Hateful	Remorseful	
	Spiteful	Humiliated	
	Impatient	Embarrassed	
	Anxious	Sad	
	Regretful	Anguished	
	Fearful	Hopeless	
	Nervous	Gloomy	
	Uneasy	Devastated	
	Alarmed	Apathetic	
	Envious and Jealous		

These are the outcomes of ignoring those five concerns. Is it more clear now what the parent or teacher maybe feeling?

Write down the exact emotions you are seeing: _____

THE POWER OF MEETING CORE CONCERNS			
My Core Concerns Are Met When:	The Resulting Emotions Can Make Me Feel:		When This Happens, I Am Prone:
I am appreciated	Enthusiastic! Cheerful Playful Amused Ecstatic	Affectionate Fond Caring Compassionate	To cooperate
I am treated as a colleague			To work together
My freedom to decide is acknowledged	Happy Content Pleased Jovial Comforted Glad	Proud Accomplished Courageous	To be creative
My high status is recognized where deserved			To be trustworthy
My role is fulfilling; it includes activities that convince me that I can make a difference	Hopeful		

So now that you may have an idea of how they are feeling you can build them up so you can work together. However, you still need to listen to the person to hear their real feelings.

What can you do to meet those concerns that they have? _____

TABLE 7
FIVE STEPS FOR JOINT BRAINSTORMING

1. Decide who should participate.

- Select six to a dozen people with knowledge on the subject and differing points of view.
- Include some who have access to a decision maker.
- Invite each participant "in their personal capacity"—not as a representative.
- If participants hold strong views on the topic, consider getting a facilitator.

2. Explore interests.

- Participants on each "side" jointly draft their best estimate of the other side's interests.
- Each side shares their list and invites feedback and "corrections" from the other.

Now that we have equal footing in the meeting now lets act on it and brainstorm together.

Here are some ground rules for both parties.

A smart board, white board, or projector is very helpful for this process.



3. Invent options without commitment.

- Make clear: "Nothing said at this stage is a commitment."
- Each participant generates ideas that might satisfy important interests of everyone.
- Welcome wild ideas. (They might stimulate better ones.)
- List all ideas on a flip chart for everyone to see.

4. Refine options

- Everyone nominates ideas that might best meet the interests of all.
- The group selects a shorter list of options that deserve further consideration.
- The group sharpens those ideas into operational possibilities.
- They simplify each idea until the word "yes" is a sufficient and realistic response.

5. Decide what to do with the ideas.

- Nominate deciders to whom these options might be recommended.
- Enlist volunteers to convey ideas to deciders.
- If some participants are themselves deciders, ask their advice: "Is there something we could do that would make it easier for you to say yes?"

THE SEVEN ELEMENTS: THE ANATOMY OF A NEGOTIATION		
Element	Some Diagnostic Questions	Some Prescriptive Advice
Relationship	How does each negotiator think and feel about the other?	Build rapport and a good working relationship with fellow negotiators. Work together, side by side.
Communication	Is communication poor, deceptive, one way? Are negotiators <i>telling</i> one another what to do?	Build easy two-way communication. Inquire, listen, be worthy of trust. Avoid fuzzy promises.
Interests	Are negotiators making demands and stating positions while concealing their true interests that underlie them?	Respect the interests of others. Understand and disclose your own interests. (You need not disclose how <i>highly</i> you value what you want.)

This chart is negotiating in a nut shell. Since we are looking through the eyes of special education lets change the terminology a bit.

The first 2 are pretty straight forward. No rewording needed.

Interests: Are negotiators making demands and stating positions while concealing their true interests that underlie them? Ok this is a loaded statement because in our case it means we are looking out for our interests instead of the students. Maybe we don't want to do that accommodation because of the time required and we are already stretched. Or the parent doesn't want something at home because in reality she is stretched and won't get it done. This is were respect and honesty really come into play. Parent: Do you feel that this would be hard to implement because of time? Ok, well could we take the idea and tweak it to be more streamlined?

Teacher: I can feel that you are really excited to see Job's progress when using this method. Are there elements of the program that are similar to what we have at school? What is Job's favorite part? You are acknowledging progress, excitement, and you are offering an olive branch. This leads into the next step...

Options	Does the negotiation look like a zero-sum game where each side's choice is between winning or losing?	With no commitment, jointly brainstorm possible ways of meeting legitimate interests of both.
Legitimacy	Does no one seem to care about being fair? Are they simply haggling by saying what they are willing or unwilling to do?	Look for and request external standards of fairness that will be persuasive to both.
BATNA (Best Alternative To Negotiated Agreement)	Is each side threatening the other without knowing what they will do if no agreement is reached?	Consider your walk-away alternative as well as theirs. Recognize that any agreement must be better for both than walking away without an agreement.
Commitments	Have negotiators demanded unrealistic commitments from the other side? Have they failed to draft commitments they would be willing to make?	Draft fair and realistic commitments that each side could make.

Now comes the brainstorming. Play with both side's ideas. How can you find common ground. At this point everyone is just telling their story... there is no commitment to any side.

Legitimacy: can what is proposed be done? Its it fair to Job? He is the reason for the meeting. At this point the brainstorming should be changed to how will it effect Job?

If a settlement is not coming to light then write up the alternative. If no agreement is reached what will happen? Get a mediator? What will Job do in the mean time? Are you sure that in the brainstorming there is not something better than nothing?

Commitment: These would be the final goals of the IEP.



Kendra Bartholomew
ND DPI Parent Involvement TA for Special Education and Title I
701-240-2609
kendrab@pathfinder-nd.org
www.pathfinder-nd.org/parentinvolvement