



IDEA Outreach Unit

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Role of the IDEA Ombudsman

- Builds a reputation for being a neutral party that is accessible.
- Is a neutral party that connects families, Local Agency Authorities (LEAs) and stakeholders at large in the interest of students with disabilities (SWDs).
- Serves as a source of information regarding state and federal laws and regulations governing special education.

Role of the IDEA Ombudsman

- Provides information to parents of SWDs to help them understand and navigate the special education process.
- Provides communication strategies to parents, LEAs and stakeholders at large for resolving disagreements and special education issues in a non-legal manner.
- Assists parents, LEAs, and stakeholders at large with developing strategies and informal options to address issues and concerns.

Role of the IDEA Ombudsman

- Promotes collaboration and positive communication between parents and school district personnel in addressing special education issues and concerns.
- Provides information and resources on available options for dispute resolution, such as mediation, state complaints, and due process hearings when collaboration efforts fail.

Role of the IDEA Ombudsman

- Serves as a resource for IDEA related information and referrals to available programs and services for individuals with disabilities.
- Identifies, track, monitor, and report to the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) Leadership on suspected systemic patterns of concerns that emerge from constituent contacts regarding special education services in local school districts to aid in addressing noncompliance with special education laws and regulations.

What The IDEA Ombudsman Does Not Do:

- Does not serve in a role that would compromise neutrality.
- Is not an attorney and cannot provide legal advice.
- Does not make decisions or mandate policies.
- Does not have the authority to direct a LEA, parent or stakeholders at large to make decisions.

Facilitated IEP Team Meetings

- IEP Team Facilitation is an optional process, not required by the IDEA that state educational agencies (SEA) or school districts may provide to parents and schools.
- A facilitated IEP Team meeting is the same as any other IEP Team meeting, except that a facilitator joins the meeting.

What is IEP Team Facilitation?

- In a facilitated IEP Team meeting, an impartial facilitator helps to keep members of the IEP Team focused on the development of the IEP while addressing conflicts and disagreements that may arise during the meeting.
- At the meeting, the facilitator will use communication skills that create an environment in which the IEP Team members can listen to each member's point of view and work together to complete the development of a high-quality IEP.

Benefits of IEP Team Facilitation

- IEP Team Meeting Facilitation is a collaborative dispute prevention and resolution process used when members of an IEP Team agree that the presence of a third party would help facilitate communication and problem solving.
- IEP Team Meeting Facilitation can be especially useful when there is a history of communication challenges, or a meeting is expected to be particularly complex or controversial.

Benefits of IEP Team Facilitation

- The IEP Team may work together more effectively and efficiently to create an IEP that benefits the student and is supported by all IEP Team members
- Keeps decision-making with the IEP Team members who know the student best
- Helps resolve disagreements more quickly than other dispute resolution processes

Benefits of IEP Team Facilitation

- May build and improve relationships among IEP Team members
- Team members may feel better heard when a facilitator is involved
- Allows all members of the IEP Team the chance to participate fully

Communication and Visibility Specialist

- Help manage already established social media pages (Facebook, Twitter) dedicated to special education news, resources, and success stories.
- Share tips and resources for parents and educators online via social media content and newsletters.
- Highlight success stories of special education students and teachers.
- Run social media campaigns to promote special education awareness and advocacy.
- Partner and showcase with all teams within the Division of Special Education Services and Supports (GaDOE).

Communication and Visibility Specialist

- Run social media campaigns to promote special education awareness and advocacy.
- Partner and showcase with all teams within the Division of Special Education Services and Supports.
- Increase awareness and support for special education stakeholders and students with disabilities through social media.

What Did You Learn?

- Share what you have learned about the role of the ombudsman, benefits of IEP facilitation, and the role of communication visibility specialist.



Georgia
Parent Mentor
Partnership

Together, We Can!

21 Years Together 2002-2023

Families of Students with Disabilities



Ga Parent Mentor Partnership

Working to Connect Families, Schools and Communities

The Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership is parents and professionals working together to improve outcomes for students with disabilities by enhancing communication and collaboration between families, educators and the community.

Our Mission

The mission of the Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership is to build effective family, school, and community partnerships that lead to greater achievement for students, especially those with disabilities.

Our Vision

The vision of the Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership is Parent mentors and special education administrators will lead the way in Georgia to bridge the gap between home, school and community partnerships.



Georgia
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Partnership

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Sharing the Journey



- Established in 2002
- 84 districts across the state & over 101 mentors
- Family members who have the shared, lived experience
- Provide family training & support
- Statewide reach for information distribution and stakeholder input
- Work to build capacity through collaboration with other agencies and organizations
- Promote family engagement as an integral strategy for school improvement & increased positive outcomes for students

Focus Areas for Family Engagement

- Two-way Communication
- Show up at school meetings and trainings
- Provide buy-in for priorities
- Change mindset around possible outcomes (raise expectations)
- Collaborate in the IEP process
- Build partnerships

www.parentmentors.org

[Visit our website to Find A Mentor](#)

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Life is a journey,
not a destination.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Annual Kickoff



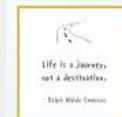
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Parent Mentors in Action



Real stories at home, in schools and in our communities

RECENT NEWS

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