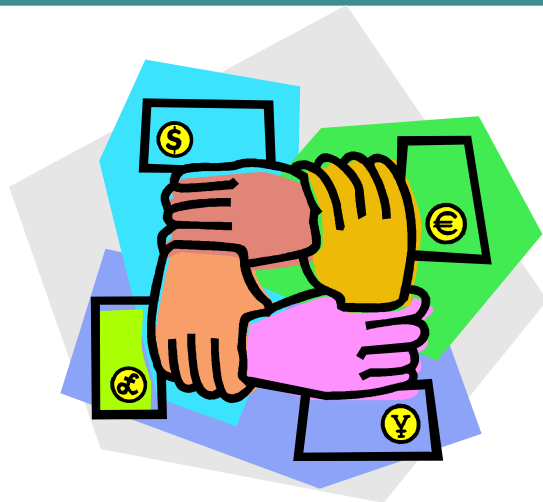


# Working Together to Develop a Winning IEP!



Presented by:  
Christa Smith, Coordinator  
Riverside County SELPA

# AGENDA:

## I. How to prepare for an IEP

- Keeping Accurate Records
- Checklist for Preparation of an IEP

## II. Your role in the IEP Process

## III. Tips on Communication


## IV. After the IEP Meeting

# PREPARING FOR THE IEP:

- Checklist for Preparation of an IEP
  - Page 20 in Reference Guide for Parents
- Your Role in the IEP Process
  - Page 21 in Reference Guide for Parents
- Keeping Accurate Records
  - Page 22 in Reference Guide for Parents



# CHECKLIST FOR PREPARATION OF AN IEP



**In order to help you prepare for an IEP team meeting, here is a simple checklist to help you**

**How to prepare for an IEP meeting**

- Be clear on the purpose of the IEP meeting (e.g. sample - initial, annual, triennial, and addendum). This will help you prepare for the meeting.
- Sit down with your child and others involved in his/her education, brainstorm strengths/needs/challenge areas. List some of the areas of concern you would like to share with the IEP team.
- Be sure to write down your questions and concerns. This will help the IEP meeting move smoothly as well as address your concerns.
- Be sure to respond to the IEP notification sent to you! You are invited and encouraged to attend as a member of the team to develop, review, and/or revise your child's IEP. You may reschedule the meeting or ask to attend via phone conference. If you need to reschedule, notify the school as soon as possible. Have a couple of alternative dates ready when you call.
- Be sure to have copies of your child's previous IEP available to review prior to your meeting. If you cannot find it, you may make a written request for a copy from the school district. (Remember, it may take up to 5 business days to get a copy).
- If you have specific areas or goals in mind, contact the case carrier to discuss your ideas as they may be included on the IEP agenda.
- If the meeting plans to address a change in program or transition to a new school, you may want to visit that program prior to the IEP. If you intend to visit that program, contact your child's special education teacher for help to set up a visitation date and time.
- If you wish to tape record the IEP team meeting, notify the IEP team at least 24 hours before the meeting. You may indicate this on the IEP conference notice if returned within the timeline above.

# YOUR ROLE IN THE IEP PROCESS

The image shows a screenshot of a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation. The slide is titled "Your role during the IEP meeting" and contains three main sections: "Your role during the IEP meeting", "Tips on communicating in an IEP meeting", and "After the IEP meeting". Each section contains a list of bullet points. The slide is displayed in a window titled "Page 1 of 1" with a "View Options" button in the top right corner. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button, a taskbar with "3 Microsoft O...", "Hemet", "Microsoft Powe...", and "Your role durin...", a search bar, and the system tray with the time "9:23 AM".

**Your role during the IEP meeting**

- Be sure you are introduced to everyone at the meeting (if their title is not determined, ask them in what capacity they serve your child)
- Listen
- Share your child's needs, strengths, what motivates him/her
- Give input and feedback
- Ask questions, especially if the team is referring to terms with which you are not familiar
- Take notes
- Be sure to be an equal partner in the decision making

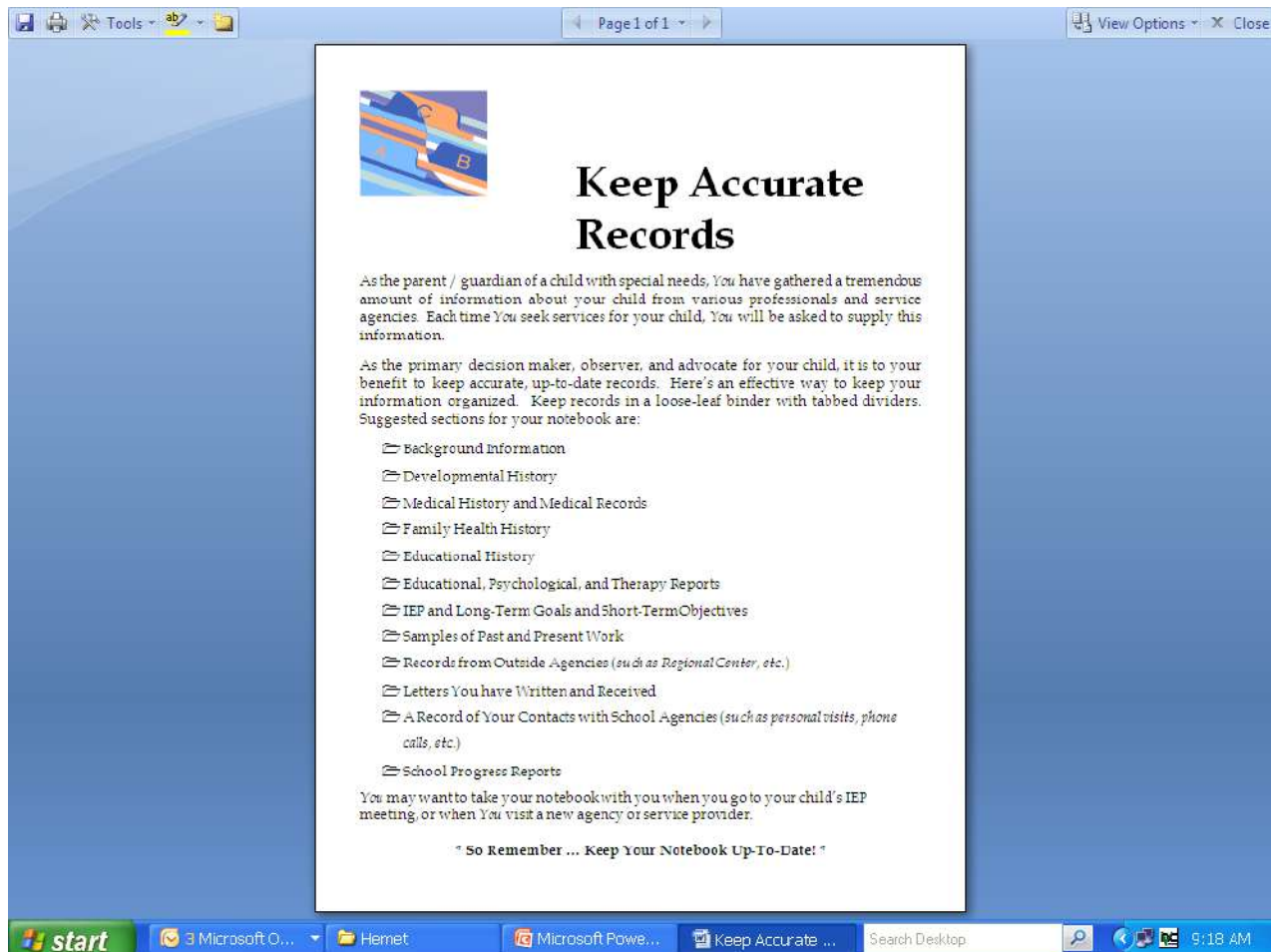
**Tips on communicating in an IEP meeting**

- Have a positive attitude
- Give and expect treatment with respect; everyone on the team has feelings
- Remember that your child is the focus on the IEP process
- Involve your child whenever possible
- Have goals in mind and let the team know what they are
- Remember that the team is there to make your child successful
- Remember, you share a common goal
- Keep the lines of communication open
- Be fair and be willing to compromise

**After the IEP meeting**

- Review the results of the meeting with your child, if appropriate
- Maintain communication with your child's teacher
- Were new services or resources to be put in place?
- Have the related service providers seen the current IEP?
- Visit your child's program on a regular basis
- Periodically check the IEP against school work for consistency
- Monitor homework
- Evaluate progress
  - ◆ Are you receiving periodic reports from school on progress or problems?
  - ◆ How is your child progressing?
  - ◆ Do you think the program is working?
  - ◆ Are there some changes you would like to make?
    - If so, can they be done informally, or do you feel they require a more formal agreement or new IEP?
  - ◆ How does your child feel he/she is doing?
  - ◆ Is your child happy at school?

# KEEPING ACCURATE RECORDS



The image shows a presentation slide titled "Keep Accurate Records" displayed in a software window. The window has a title bar with "Page 1 of 1" and "View Options" and "Close" buttons. The slide content includes an illustration of a binder, a main title, two paragraphs of text, a bulleted list of suggested notebook sections, and a concluding note.

## Keep Accurate Records

As the parent / guardian of a child with special needs, You have gathered a tremendous amount of information about your child from various professionals and service agencies. Each time You seek services for your child, You will be asked to supply this information.

As the primary decision maker, observer, and advocate for your child, it is to your benefit to keep accurate, up-to-date records. Here's an effective way to keep your information organized. Keep records in a loose-leaf binder with tabbed dividers. Suggested sections for your notebook are:

- [-] Background Information
- [-] Developmental History
- [-] Medical History and Medical Records
- [-] Family Health History
- [-] Educational History
- [-] Educational, Psychological, and Therapy Reports
- [-] IEP and Long-Term Goals and Short-Term Objectives
- [-] Samples of Past and Present Work
- [-] Records from Outside Agencies (such as Regional Center, etc.)
- [-] Letters You have Written and Received
- [-] A Record of Your Contacts with School Agencies (such as personal visits, phone calls, etc.)
- [-] School Progress Reports

You may want to take your notebook with you when you go to your child's IEP meeting, or when You visit a new agency or service provider.

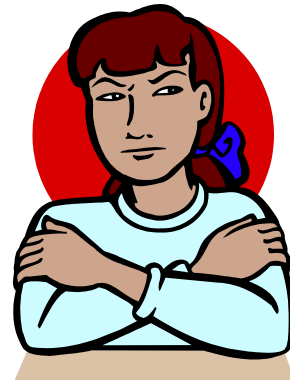
**\* So Remember ... Keep Your Notebook Up-To-Date! \***



# COMMUNICATION

- The exchange of information
- Verbal and Non-verbal
  - Facial Expressions
  - Posture/space
  - Eye contact
  - Volume

Requires ALL parties to understand the shared messages



# VERBAL TECHNIQUES

- Simple acknowledgement
- Paraphrasing
- Clarifying
- Answer a question with a question
- Specific objective feedback





# VERBAL STATEMENTS

## Causes Conflict

- "You" statements
- Interrupting
- Ignoring
- Becoming defensive
- Using an accusing, blaming or questioning tone
- Generalizing
- Impersonal
- Being negative

## Resolves Conflict

- "I" statements
- Consciously listening to the person
- Paying attention
- Staying open minded
- Using a calm, stable tone
- Being specific
- Showing concern
- Being positive

# DEALING WITH PEOPLE WHO MAY BE UPSET



- Don't take the behavior personally
- Remain courteous - be professional
- Use a quiet and calm voice
- Practice active listening - show respect and acceptance
- Try to get the person to work through the situation
- Stay calm
- Don't downplay their position or ignore their feelings

# EMOTIONS THAT "SHUT DOWN" LISTENING

- Anger



- Anxiety



- Fear



# REMEMBER TO FACILITATE WORKING TOGETHER...

## PARENTS AND TEACHERS CAN -

- Establish most efficient mode of communication with staff (e.g. email, phone calls)
- Strive to maintain two-way communication
- Have realistic expectations
- Provide concrete feedback
- Approach meetings with mutual respect



# AFTER THE IEP MEETING

Generally there are three outcomes to an IEP-

- SUCCESS!
- Concerns
- Disputes/Disagreements



# FOLLOW-UP

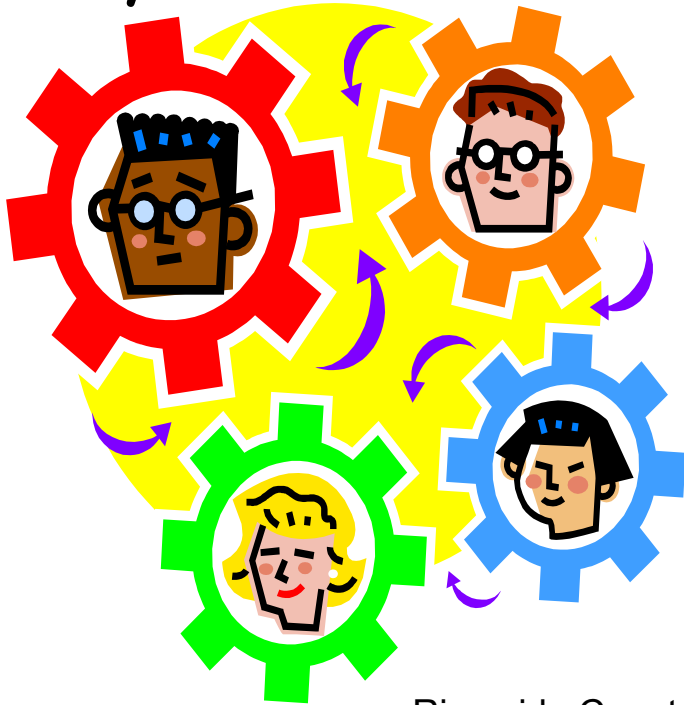
## After a productive IEP:

- Maintain communication with your child's teacher
- Were new services or resources to be put in place?
- Have the related service providers seen the current IEP?
- Periodically check the IEP against school work for consistency
- Monitor homework
- Evaluate progress



# EARLY SOLUTIONS ARE BEST!

It is best for the **CHILD** if problems can be quickly resolved by the IEP team or by local staff members



Teachers and district staff want to work with you!

# WHEN CONCERNS ARISE OUTSIDE THE IEP TEAM MEETING...

Concerns are best addressed at the lowest level following the chain of command-

- Site Level
- District Level
- State Level





# REMEDIES - SCHOOL SITE LEVEL

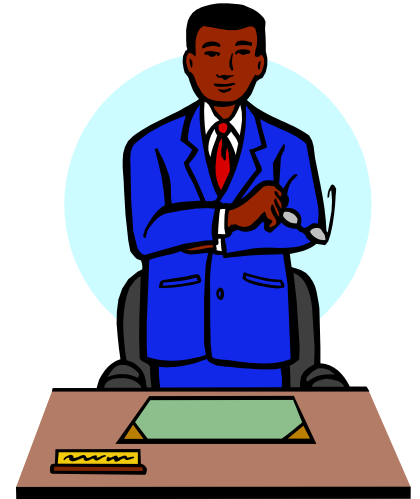
- Start with the teacher
  - Schedule a time to meet
  - Be specific about your concerns
  - Focus on student/program needs
  - Be flexible and open to working together on creative solutions
  - Know what response you are seeking
  - Set a timeline for response
  - Always provide feedback



# SCHOOL SITE REMEDIES

continued...

- Notify appropriate administrator/staff
  - Contact the site administrator for...
    - Safety issues
    - Communication /personnel
  - Contact the psychologist for...
    - Behavior, program, or placement issues



# DISTRICT LEVEL REMEDIES

## Special Education Staff:

### Program Specialist/Coordinator

- Focus on program concerns, not personalities
- Briefly outline concerns
- Clearly state desired remedies

### Director of Special Education

- List the chain of command exhausted
- Review same concerns listed in previous steps
- Review desired remedies discussed in previous steps

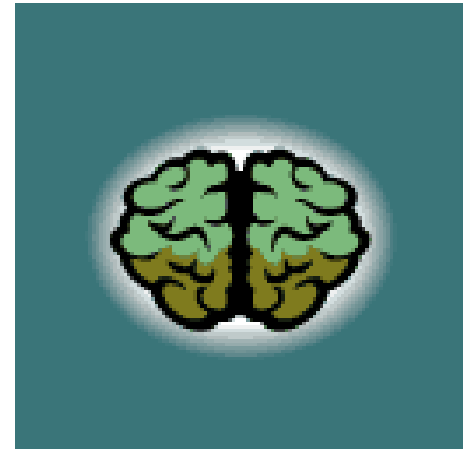
### District Superintendent

- Review list from above



# WHEN DISAGREEMENTS ARISE AT IEP TEAM MEETINGS

- Parents can work with the other IEP team members to:
  - Identify a problem statement
  - Brainstorm possible solutions
  - Clarify and discuss each solution
  - Brainstorm possible barriers
  - Work with team to develop a new IEP
  - Evaluate and revise the IEP, if necessary
  - If needed, reschedule to reconvene meeting



# ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is an informal method of settling concerns or disagreements. It is a process that encourages all parties to problem solve and reach a mutually beneficial agreement.

## Benefits of ADR:

- Fast
- Confidential
- No cost
- Does not prevent use of Due Process



# ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION continued...

The following are options FOR Alternative Dispute Resolution:

District resources  
Intake Coordinator at  
SELPA



The following are NOT options for Alternative Dispute Resolution:

File with California Department of Education (CDE):

Compliance complaint

File with Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH):

Mediation Only

Due process

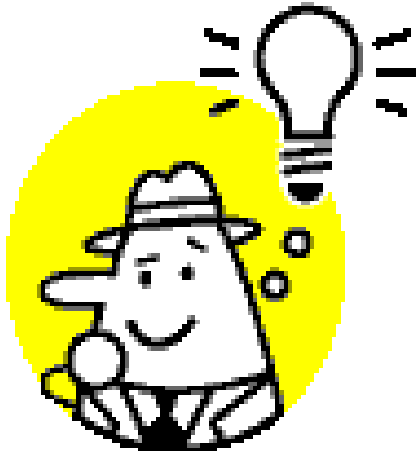
# SELPA INTAKE COORDINATOR:

- Listens to concerns and helps identify/clarify problems and conflicts
- With permission, contacts the district
- With agreement of both parties, will coordinate a dispute resolution option
- Follows up to check on outcomes
- Supports both parties to build relationships



# THANK YOU!

I appreciate your time tonight and hope that you have taken away at least one new idea in the development of your child's IEP.



Take care!

