

Consider SPARC when...

- You have done your best to resolve disagreements between the family and school, but cannot reach a resolution.
- You want to resolve differences quickly, inexpensively, and confidentially.

Inquiries are free and confidential. **Contact us today!**

Conflict Resolution Program

Phone: 302-831-8158

Email: sparc-info@udel.edu

www.bidenschool.udel.edu/ipa/serving-delaware/crp/sparc

Conflict Resolution Program

For more than 20 years, the Conflict Resolution Program has been dedicated to building statewide capacity for collaborative approaches to resolving conflict. The foundation of our work is built on key democratic practices: debate, dialogue, consensus building, and collaboration.

Institute for Public Administration

The University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration (IPA) addresses the policy, planning, and management needs of its partners through the integration of applied research, professional development, and the education of tomorrow's leaders.

Visit us online at www.ipa.udel.edu.

*Resolution services for
families and schools in conflict*

SPARC

*Special Education Partnership
for the Amicable Resolution of Conflict*

Program

Provided by the

Conflict Resolution Program
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware

In cooperation with the

Delaware Department of Education

SPARC

Special Education Partnership for the Amicable Resolution of Conflict

Overview

SPARC is a statewide special education dispute resolution program serving families and schools in Delaware. When families and schools disagree, SPARC may be able to help with one of two services:

- **Special education mediation**, where a trained mediator assists the parties to resolve specific conflicts regarding a student's education.
- **IEP meeting facilitation**, in which a trained facilitator assists the IEP team in working together to develop an IEP for the student.

Our services are built on respect and self-determination, which nurture the family-school relationship. We help all parties work together in a positive way to resolve disputes by creating conditions for constructive dialogue and collaborative decision-making.

Participating in SPARC services may not be used to delay or deny the right to a due process hearing or any other rights afforded to parents under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Staff

SPARC is administered through the University of Delaware's Conflict Resolution Program by experienced mediators and facilitators who specialize in special education dispute resolution.

SPARC staff adhere to the highest standards of ethics, professional competence, and personal integrity. We are committed to providing confidential and impartial dispute resolution services to those in need.

SPARC services are...

- Confidential
- Free
- Voluntary
- Effective
- Expedient
- Respectful

You gain...

- A voice in discussions and decisions
- Confidential and impartial assistance
- Facilitated, open dialogue and problem-solving
- Recognition of your perspective and goals

Exceptional children deserve exceptional family-school partnerships.

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IEP Meeting Facilitation

About SPARC IEP Meeting Facilitation

IEP meeting facilitation is quickly becoming the most recognized strategy for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of IEP meetings.

Facilitated IEP meetings...

- Allow team members to focus on the student's education in a collaborative and respectful manner.
- Create an environment of open dialogue, understanding, and trust among all team members.
- Ensure balanced participation and shared decision-making in order to reach decisions that are in the best interest of the student.

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IEP Meeting Facilitation

How does a facilitated meeting work?

1. A SPARC facilitator will speak with both parties to listen to concerns, explain the facilitation process, and answer questions.
2. If all parties are willing to participate, the facilitator will create an agenda for the meeting incorporating all concerns.
3. During the meeting, the facilitator manages the meeting process so the team can focus on the needs of the student.
4. The participants control and create the outcome of the IEP meeting. The facilitator is impartial.
5. If the meeting does not end in agreement, the parties may pursue other forms of resolution or exercise their procedural safeguards.

The facilitator is not a member of the IEP team or an advocate for any person on the team.

The facilitator is an independent impartial person to the IEP team meeting process.

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Mediation Services

About SPARC Mediation Services

SPARC mediation services are available to families and schools who want to resolve differences regarding the education of a student with a disability.

SPARC mediation...

- Is free, voluntary, and confidential.
- Encourages dialogue.
- Ensures concerns are heard.
- Finds common ground.
- Rebuilds home-school relationships.
- Empowers participants to find a mutually agreeable solution.

In mediation, the participants determine the outcome, not the mediator.

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Mediation Services

How does mediation work?

1. A SPARC mediator will speak with both parties to listen to concerns, explain the mediation process, and answer questions.
2. If all parties are willing to participate, the mediator will coordinate a time and place for the mediation.
3. The mediator guides the participants through a process that encourages open dialogue, helps clarify the issues, promotes understanding, and works to reach a mutually satisfying agreement that is in the best interest of the student.
4. The participants control and create the outcome of the mediation, and the resolutions reached are documented in a mediation agreement, which is legally binding.
5. If the participants do not reach a resolution, the participants may pursue other forms of resolution or exercise their procedural safeguards.