



LET'S WORK TOGETHER... BEING THE BEST ADVOCATES FOR THE CHILD

WCC SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT TRAINING

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A Bit of Special Education History

1971:

- ▶ Washington State House Bill 90 – Education for All, was the first U.S. law to grant public education to people with disabilities. Before HB 90 was passed in 1971, children with disabilities were either kept at home or placed in institutions.

(Jane Taggart, Cecile Lindquist, Evelyn Chapman, Katie Dolan, Bill Dussault, George Edensword-Beck)

▶ 11/29/75

- ▶ PL 94-142 – The Education of All Handicapped Children's Act (Nov. 29, 1975)
 - ▶ Legislation was 24 pages long when approved.
 - ▶ How many pages is an IEP for an individual student today?

1975

- ▶ Mood Rings
- ▶ Rubik's Cubes
- ▶ Pet Rocks
- ▶ Hip-huggers, bellbottoms, leisure suits
- ▶ 8-Tracks
- ▶ Disco
- ▶ PEZ candy
- ▶ Magic 8-Balls
- ▶ Song of the Year: Captain and Tennille, "Love Will Keep Us Together"
- ▶ Album of the Year: Paul Simon, "Still Crazy After All These Years"
- ▶ Movies: "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," "Jaws," "Nashville."
- ▶ "Saturday Night Live" premieres on NBC; George Carlin hosts the first show.
- ▶ "A Chorus Line" appears on Broadway.
- ▶ "All in the Family" is America's top television show for the fifth straight year.
- ▶ President: Gerald Ford
- ▶ Vice President: Nelson A. Rockefeller
- ▶ Population: 215,973,199 (Currently 332,000,000)
- ▶ Unemployment: 5.6%
- ▶ Cost of first-class stamp: \$.10
- ▶ Quart of milk: \$.46; loaf of bread: \$.33
- ▶ Vietnam War ends (April 30).
- ▶ Apollo and Soyuz spacecraft take off for U.S.-Soviet link-up in space (July 15).
- ▶ Margaret Thatcher is the first woman elected to lead Britain's Conservative Party.
- ▶ Egypt reopens the Suez Canal after eight years.
- ▶ Home videotape systems (VCRs) are developed in Japan by Sony (Betamax) and Matsushita (VHS).
- ▶ Computer hobbyists Stephen Wozniak and Steven Jobs begin working on computer designs. Together they develop the Apple 1 prototype.
- ▶ Super Bowl: Pittsburgh Steelers 16, Minnesota Vikings 6
- ▶ World Series: Cincinnati Reds 4, Boston Red Sox 3



PL 94-142 was heralded as key civil rights legislation. Forty-eight years later hopefulness has faded. The enthusiasm and excitement of having a federal law that guaranteed a FAPE, has morphed from a three and - a half page IEP document, a conversation with parents and professionals brainstorming and collaborating on a plan that meets kids needs to a 25 – 30 page legal compliance document that undermines the original intent of collaboration, cooperation and effective working relationships between parents/families and school staff. Conflict within this complex work has taken a toll on the system and those committed to this work.

Let's Look at Special Education

A System that is Ripe for Conflict

- ▶ Parents want “BEST” for their child
- ▶ Free, Appropriate, Public Education (FAPE)
- ▶ Rights Based Discussion/Needs Based System
 - ▶ Federal & State Laws
- ▶ Inadequate Funding: \$ (Underfunded since 1975)



OUR SYSTEM IS BROKEN...
WE CAN ALL HELP FIX IT



We have observed and experienced a shift:

1975

- Celebration
- Culture of Hope, Optimism, Anticipation, Gratitude
- A focus on individualized SAI
- Adaptive
- Brainstorming what is appropriate
- Belief that that SAI/FAPE is determined by the IEP Team

Today

- Overwhelm
- A culture of Fear and Stress
- A focus on legally defensible
- Technical
- Determining what is legal
- Belief that that SAI/FAPE is defined by the Law

Let's Look at the Special Education Process

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- When the federal special education law was first passed in 1975 the IEP form was 3.5 pages long;
- The original legislative intent was to form a “team” of people to come together to have a conversation and discuss and agree to a plan of action to address student’s needs; it was seen as a very fluid process based on respectful, collaborative and cooperative working relationships between parents and staff.
- Now...
 - There are 856 rules that govern the special education process:
 - IEP forms are 25 – 30 pages long
 - Parents and districts are at odds and advocates/attorneys are involved.
 - It has at times become an adversarial “us against them” system and ripe for conflict!

Let's Look at the Special Education process a little differently...

Instead of focusing on the 856 “rules” that govern special education; (IDEA, Title V...all sorts of “legal stuff”) which seems to keep us from having “crucial conversations” about the child)...

LET'S...LOOK AT THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS THROUGH THE
LENSE OF BEING...

A bona fide “*TEAM*”

(BTW: great teams practice together...and get better; they don't just meet once a year and “play”)

- The IEP meeting as a culmination of all our “conversations” PRIOR TO THE MEETING

Leadership Without Easy Answers

Ronald Heifetz

Technical & Adaptive Work

▶ Technical work

“Technical problems are those that, in some sense, we already know how to respond to them.”

▶ Adaptive work

“The problem definition is not clear-cut, and technical fixes are not available. Learning is required to both define problems and implement solutions.”



Special Education: Dealing with the Technical & Adaptive Processes

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Technical

(Legal IEP Requirements)

- ▶ Is clearly defined
- ▶ Can be solved by experts
- ▶ Can be resolved in shorter time spans
 - ▶ Can be issued by edict
- ▶ Is solved by authority/leadership or delegates
- ▶ Requires informative learning but basic perceptions remain the same
 - ▶ Faces less resistance

Adaptive

(The Ever Changing, Fluid IEP Process)

- ▶ Is harder to define
- ▶ Must be resolved by people, not experts
 - ▶ Has long term outcomes
- ▶ Requires changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviors
 - ▶ Requires collaboration
- ▶ Requires transformative learning & shifts in perceptions
 - ▶ Faces more resistance

Special Education is both a technical and adaptive process!

It's about relationships and having conversations

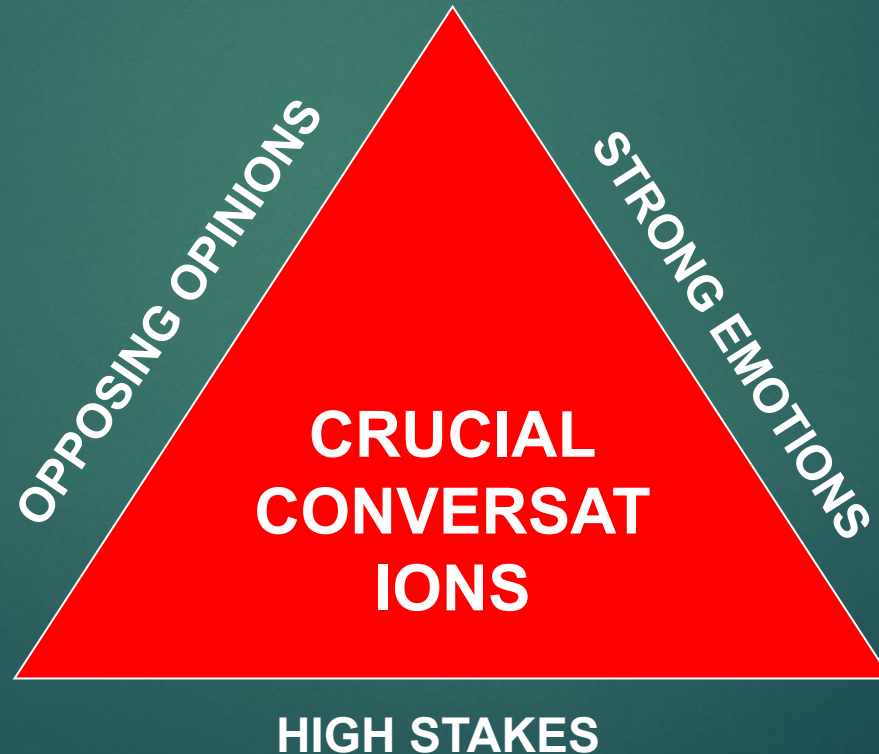
IT's not just about the IEP meeting

The IEP meeting is *ONE* part of the process

The IEP Meeting is a “crucial conversation*” that we need to have as part of the special education process

Special education is a series of conversations and meetings that are “Crucial Conversations”

Grenny, Patterson, McMillan, Switzler



What Can We Do?

- Recognize that all parties need to prepare for engaging in the process;
NOT JUST THE MEETING!
- Acknowledge and appreciate the knowledge, dedication and expertise of staff and providers and parents; we are all working hard for the child
- While legal compliance is indeed important...dialogue and lot's of work BEFORE the meeting is MOST important
- Your ACTIVE preparation and participation as parents is one of the most critical components to the process...let's focus on that!

Basic Principle

Nobody knows what it's like to be the parent of a child w/ a learning challenge...unless you are one!



Basic Principle

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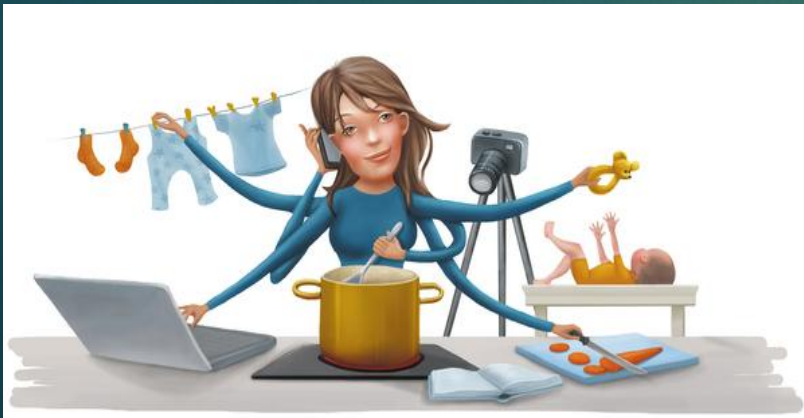
- ▶ Nobody knows what it's like to face the challenges that come with teaching/administering special education programs unless you do that!



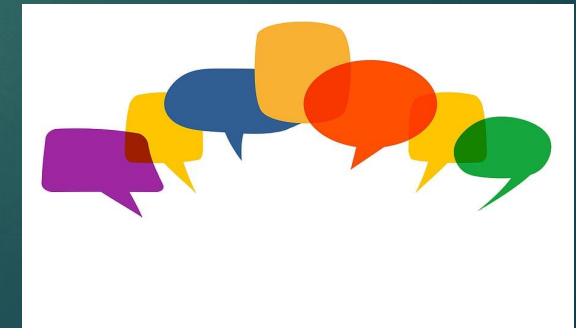
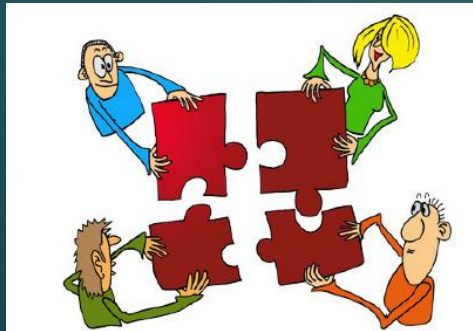
Basic Principle

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- ▶ The work that WE ALL do is really important, really hard and is always be focused on the child!
 - ▶ It's not “us against them”...it's WE!



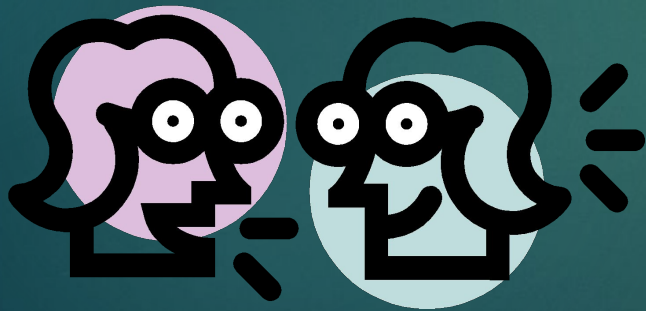
“In great teams, conflict becomes productive. The free flow of conflicting ideas is critical for creative thinking, for discovering new solutions no one individual would have come to on his own.” Peter Senge, MIT Sloane School of Management



Foundation of Effective Communication

Dialogue, Dialogue, Dialogue

The free flow of information between two or more people



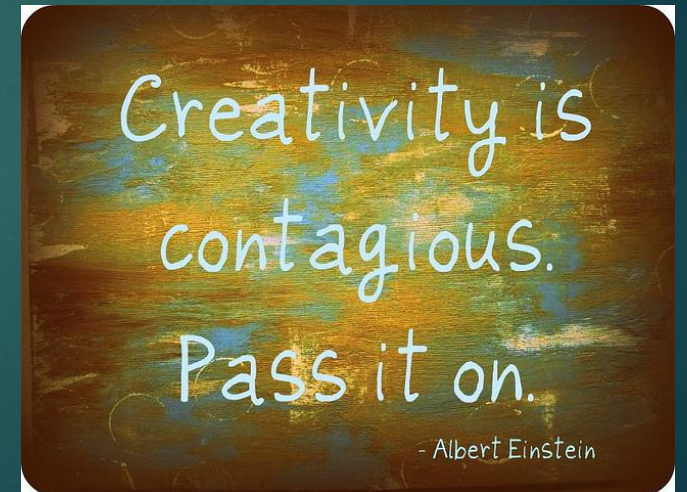
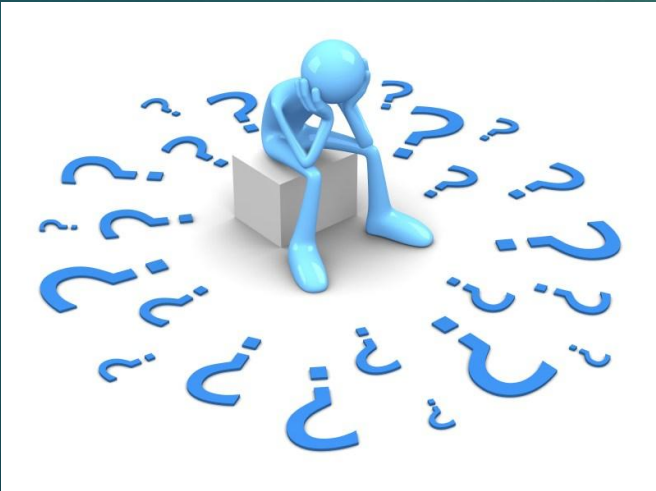
Confusion leads to Creativity

“We can’t be creative if we refuse to be confused.”

margaret j. wheatley

turning to one another

simple conversations to restore hope to the future



Positive Student Profile




1. Who is _____? (Describe your child, including information such as place in family, personality, likes and dislikes.)

2. What are _____'s strengths? (Highlight all areas which your child does well, including education and social environments.)

3. What are _____'s successes? (List all successes, no matter how small.)

4. What are _____'s greatest challenges? (List the areas in which your child has the greatest difficulties.)

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5. What supports do you think might be needed for _____? (List supports that will help your child achieve his/her potential.)
 6. What are your dreams for _____? (Describe your vision for your child's future, including both short-term and long-term goals.)
 7. Other helpful information. (List any pertinent information, including health care needs that have not been detailed elsewhere on the form.)

Resources for Parents

Center for Parent Information and Resources

Developing Your Child's IEP <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/pa12/>

CADRE: Center for the Appropriate Use of Dispute Resolution in Special Education

(Family Section) <https://www.cadeworks.org/for-families>

It's all about relationships!

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