



IEP Collaboration

Building a Strong Team
through Voice and Agency

Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting

January 16, 2026



Welcome

Want to learn more about
collaborating with your IEP
Team?

You're in the right place!





Hi! I'm Kristy Branham

Over 25 years of experience in special education as a teacher, behavior specialist, and consultant. Coordinator at the NOC SELPA

Wife to Ben &
Mom to Hope (18) and Jake (15)





Hello! I'm Hong

Former school psychologist, Licensed Educational Psych in private practice, program specialist, and currently a special education coordinator at the NOC SELPA

Wife and mom of three
(2, 4, 8-years-old)



Building Strong Partnerships



Meaningful family involvement in your child's education:

- Improves academic achievement
- Is ESSENTIAL for improving learning and outcomes

Meaningful Collaboration is not agreement on everything

- but a commitment to problem solving together



Voice and Agency in the IEP Process



Voice: Being able to share concerns, ideas, and priorities

Agency: Having influence over decisions that affect your child

Agency shows up when:

- Questions are welcomed
- Differences are explored, not dismissed
- The conversation ensures that everyone understands

IEP Team Members

Parent, teachers, administrator (or designee), psychologist,
related service providers, etc.



Keep an Open
Mind



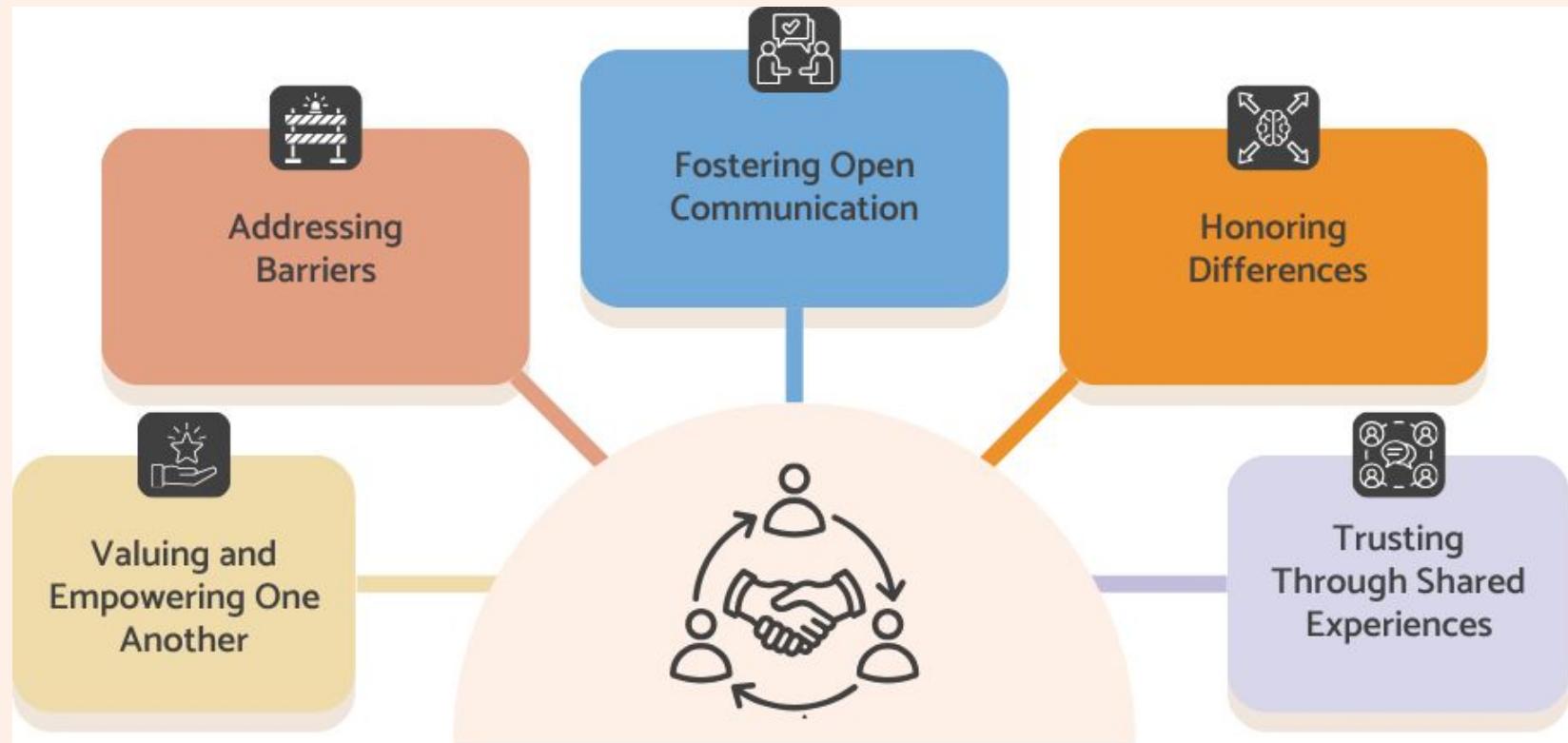
Stay Curious



Try to
Understand Each
Person's
Perspective

YOU are an essential member of the IEP team!

Meaningful Collaboration



Before the IEP

Tips to help you prepare



Stay Organized!

- It can be helpful to keep all of your paperwork, assessments, and IEPs in one place
- Folders, Binders, Google Drive, etc.

How are you currently organizing your child's IEP paperwork?



Parent Pre-IEP Checklist - Link

- ❑ Review, sign, & return the invitation - Think about other invitees
- ❑ Ask for an interpreter if needed
- ❑ Review your Parent Rights
- ❑ Be prepared to discuss your child's strengths
 - ❑ Fill out teacher input requests
 - ❑ [Building on My Child's Strengths](#)
- ❑ Review goals & services from last year
- ❑ Gather any new info to share
- ❑ Send questions, concerns, requests to case manager
- ❑ Consider requests for excusal of team members

During the IEP



During the IEP

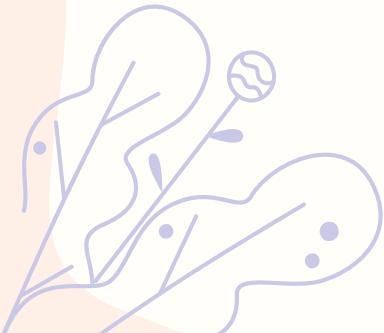


When Disagreements Happen

- Disagreements are normal and expected
- Different perspectives come from different roles & experiences

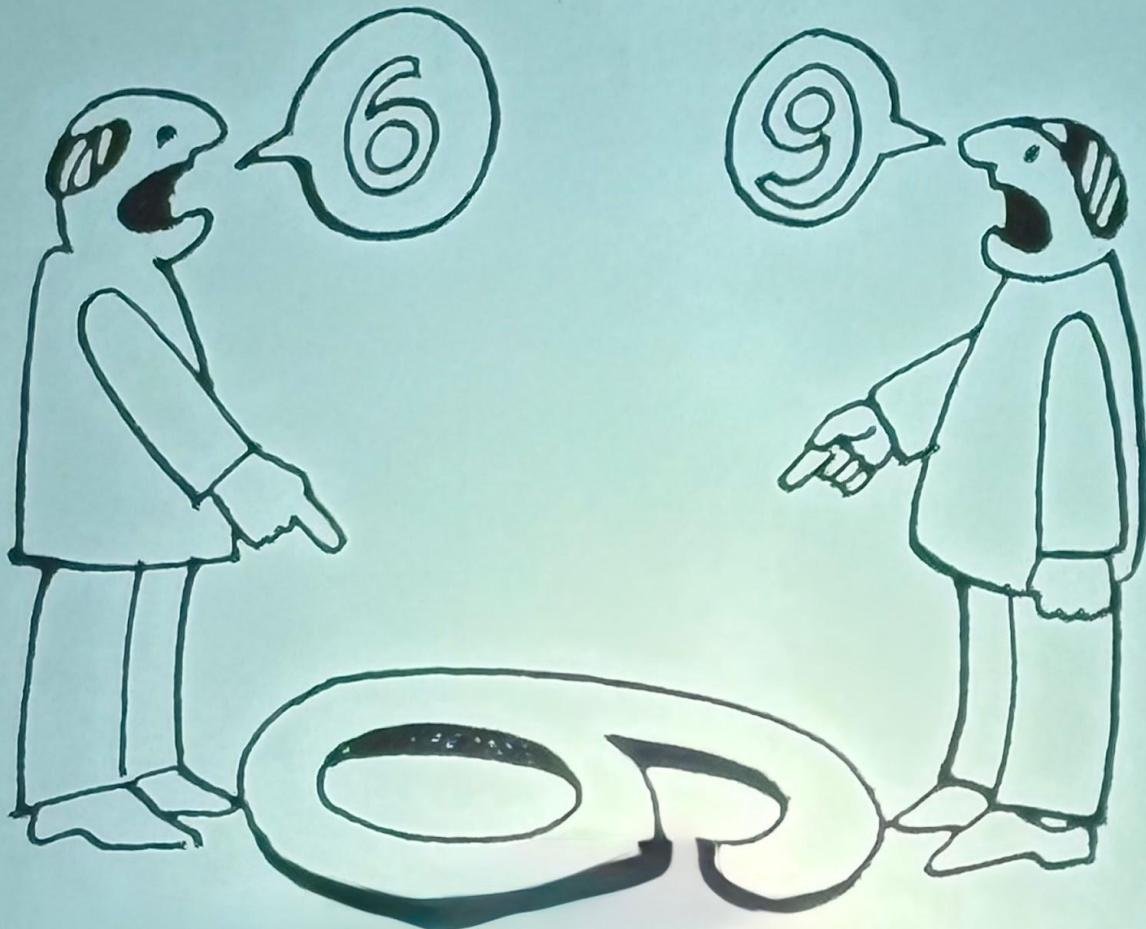
The goal is **NOT to “win” but to:**

- Understand concerns
- Find solutions that support the student



What If You Disagree?

- Share your thoughts with the team
- Communicate why you disagree
- Hear responses & ensure your concerns are noted and addressed
- **Reminder:** Decisions at an IEP meeting do not have to be agreed upon that day - you can ask for time to review the IEP or ask to reconvene the team for another meeting



*“I wonder
why”*

**Assumptions
end
conversations,
curiosity
starts them**

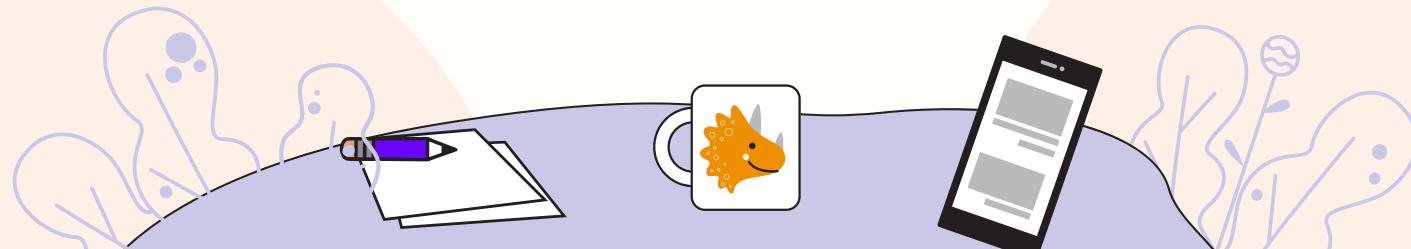


After the IEP



Collaboration Continues

- Review the finalized IEP - communicate questions & concerns
- Make sure you receive the final documents (Ex. IEPs, reports, etc.)
- Continue open communication
- When your team understands your child's full picture (including changes like meds or family), they can better support them



Strong Teams Build Trust and Relationships Over Time

Strong teams: Communicate Regularly, Assume Positive Intent, & Address Concerns Early

Collaboration grows with: Consistency, Transparency, & Mutual Respect

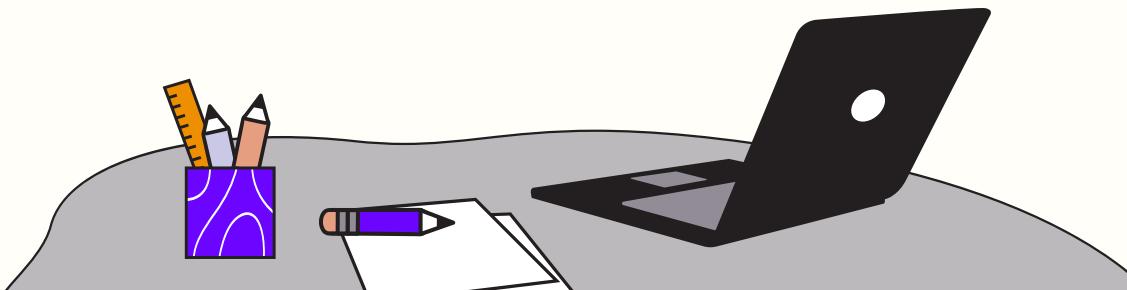


Key Takeaways

- Parents are essential IEP team members
- Collaboration leads to better outcomes
- Disagreement can be productive when handled correctly

Strong teams are built through:

- Preparation - Communication - Shared Commitment to Students



Reflection

- What does strong collaboration look like to you?
- What are some strategies that have helped you before, during, or after IEP meetings?



Parent Resources

- [Disability Support](#)
- [Support for Parents](#)
- [Parent Checklist for IEP Meetings](#)
- [IEP Tip Sheet for Parents- Overview of the IEP](#)
- [Building on My Strengths](#)
- [IEP Tip Sheet for Parents](#)
- [English to Spanish Translation Glossary](#)
- [IEP Timelines](#)

Recursos Para Padres

- Calendarios para la educación especial en California
- Lista de verificación de los padres para las reuniones del IEP
- Aprovechar mis fortalezas
- Generalidades del IEP
- OSEP English to Spanish Translation Glossary - Glosario de Términos

Thank You!

Please feel free to contact
us with any questions!

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