

# What Is Alternative Dispute Resolution?

Alternative Dispute Resolution, or ADR is a process for resolving conflicts, one that respects the dignity of individuals while creating mutually satisfying solutions. ADR uses communication, collaboration, negotiation and mediation to produce an agreement that meets the interests of the parties involved. When participating in Alternative Dispute Resolution, parents and districts maintain the right to seek state-level due process.

The San Joaquin County SELPA will facilitate an Alternative Dispute Resolution process to help resolve conflicts between schools and families with children in special education. The program serves families of all children in special education within the San Joaquin County SELPA.

## How to Start

When you call for assistance your ADR contact person will listen to your concerns and help you identify your issues and interests. Information about special education laws and practices may be provided, if relevant, and a referral may be made to others who can appropriately work with your issues.

## Informal Local Mediation

When parents feel that they want a neutral third party to hear their concerns, informal local mediation is always available. Parents are always informed of their right to file for formal mediation and due process with the state Office of Administrative Hearings instead of or after using informal local mediation. Many parents are happy to use a more informal method of working out conflicts and informal mediation often results in successful agreements with signed Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

## IEP Facilitation

Trained IEP facilitators help IEP teams build and improve relationships among team members. The facilitator moves the team through the IEP process allowing team members to focus on content and the needs of the student. The goal is to assist the team to reach consensus in the IEP process. Parents or school staff may request a facilitated IEP to help resolve difficult issues.

## SELPA Educational Specialists

Parents or school staff may request that a SELPA Educational Specialist review questions about a child's placement or program. The Educational Specialists are knowledgeable about the variety of programs and practices throughout the county.

# Why Use . . . . .

## Alternative Dispute Resolution Strategies?

## Legal Protections

Participation in the ADR process does not prevent any future use of the more traditional due process procedures which can be initiated at any time by either party.

## No Cost

SELPA assistance, conferences or facilitations are provided at no cost to families and do not involve the use of advocates or attorneys except under unusual circumstances.

## Confidentiality

All participants are legally bound by the agreement to maintain confidentiality. This means, what is said or written in the ADR process cannot be used outside of that setting without the consent of all parties.

**SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY SELPA  
LOCAL INTERVENTION RESOURCES**

- |                                 |                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Expanded IEP Team               | Expert Teams             |
| IEP Facilitation                | Intake Coordination      |
| Parent Education                | Resource Parent Program  |
| Staff Development               | Informal Local Mediation |
| Educational Specialist Services |                          |

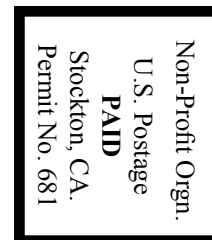
**WHO TO CALL**

The following SELPA staff will answer questions and concerns for parents within these districts:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Rolf Athearn</b><br>Educational Specialist<br>468-9283                       | Lincoln<br>Non-public schools   |
| <b>Vince Hernandez</b><br>Coordinator IV<br>Psychological Services<br>468-9285  | Charter Schools   |
| <b>Debra Hopman</b><br>Project Administrator<br>468-4907                        | Banta<br>County Programs  |
| <b>Staci Johnson</b><br>Educational Specialist<br>468-4928                      | Linden<br>Manteca   |
| <b>Kris Rodriguez</b><br>Educational Specialist<br>468-4928                     | Biddick<br>Escalon<br>Juvenile Hall<br>Lincoln<br>Non-public schools<br>Venture |
| <b>Margaret St George</b><br>Educational Specialist<br>Psychologist<br>468-4908 | Lammersville<br>Ripon<br>Tracy<br>Tracy Learning Centers                        |



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**San Joaquin County SELPA**



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**Margaret St. George, Coordinator  
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