

Learning Block 1: Proactive Strategies for IEP Conflict and Family Partnership

Independent Activity

The Solution-Based Learning Series Independent Activity is an opportunity to review, apply, and reflect on proactive strategies to engage in supportive and constructive dialogues to prevent IEP conflicts and foster family partnerships.

Putting Knowledge to Practice

The independent activity is a video comparison from Pennsylvania's Office for Dispute Resolution (ODR) titled "A Tale of Two Conversations." The videos are a two-part series originally developed by ODR featuring actors portraying a parent of a child with a disability and a school administrator meeting in the administrator's office at the parent's request and were reproduced by The Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE).

Step 1- Watch the Videos

Watch the two videos linked below.

While watching the videos:

- Use the Step 2 checklist to track proactive conflict resolution strategies demonstrated in each video.
- Watch for key behaviors, such as reflective listening, acknowledgment of differing perspectives, and genuine care for the family's experience.
- Note how these strategies shape the tone and direction of the discussion.

After viewing both videos:

- Participants will analyze two conversations to identify which one fosters constructive dialogue, and which risks escalation due to missed trust-building opportunities or lack of active listening.
 - This comparison highlights how intentional communication can shift adversarial interactions into collaborative partnerships that advance student success.

Take One



[Take One YouTube Link](#)

Take Two



[Take Two YouTube Link](#)

Step 2 – Complete the Comparison Chart

Check the cell to indicate the presence of each proactive conflict resolution strategy item.		Take One Did the Administrator or Parent ...		Take Two Did the Administrator or Parent ...	
		Admin	Parent	Admin	Parent
Procedural Safeguards	Had an opportunity to review education records	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Contributed to creating an environment or feel comfortable disagreeing with decisions made by the school system related to identification, evaluation, placement and special education services	☐	☐	☐	☐
Collaboration	Limited use of jargon and overly technical language	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Provided time adequate information sharing	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Established clarity of roles and alignment of expectations	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Acknowledged emotional responses, daily stressors, and differing perspectives or values	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Reduced pressures regarding time or resource	☐	☐	☐	☐
Communication	Kept an open mind and held off judgements	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Used reflective listening and asked open-ended questions	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Used silence strategically	☐	☐	☐	☐
Building Trust	Created a trusting relationship by demonstrating mutual respect for situations and experiences	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Made the family feel heard and valued	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Ensured that the collaboration will support their child's needs	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Delivered or planned for timely and complete information	☐	☐	☐	☐

Step 3 - Self Check

In **Take One**, the parent and administrator discuss the child's special education program, but their communication is ineffective—they talk, but don't truly listen.

In **Take Two**, both individuals demonstrate more effective communication skills, resulting in a more productive conversation.

Step 4 – Reflect on Your Practices

One successful strategy I noticed in the videos was...

One challenge I notice in the videos was...

One thing I'll do differently in my next IEP meeting or meeting with parents is...

One way I'll engage advocates more effectively is...

One barrier I'll work to remove is...

How can the interactions seen in the Take Two video build the parent partnership and reduce the need for the family to seek support from an advocate?

Additional thoughts I had while engaging in this activity are...