

NAVIGATING IEP MEETINGS TO OPTIMIZE YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION

The IEP Institute

The IEP Institute

- The IEP Institute is designed to support parents, educators, administrators, related service personnel, students, lawyers, advocates and policy-makers who strive to serve the educational needs of children with disabilities through federal law and policy.
- www.IEPinstitute.com

Our Mission

- Through education, training, facilitation, community outreach, and interdisciplinary and collaborative research, we strive to support all parents and professionals who work to ensure that all students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate education.

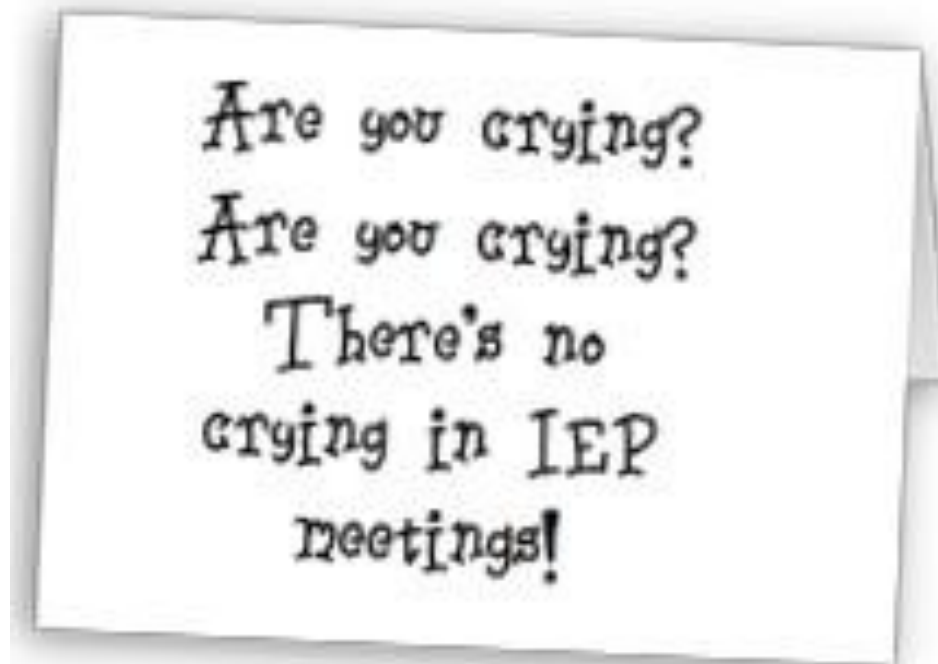
New Developments

- Non-profit status in 2013
- Nation-wide focus
- Pay-what-you can pay structure
- Posts on Facebook
- News updates on website

Objectives: To Understand...

- ...that the general notion of “rights” is ambiguous
- ...the statutory purpose of IDEA and IEPs
- ...the “core concepts” of IDEA and IEPs
- ...“best practices” that parents and schools can utilize to optimize the quality of IEPs
- ...how to handle difficult IEP issues

Why the Conflict?



Why the Conflict?



Multiple
sources of
law

Different
roles and
perspectives

Ambiguity

Multiple Sources of Law

- U.S. Constitution
- Federal statutes (IDEA, 504, ADA)
- Federal regulations
- Case law
- States have laws, too!

Why the Conflict?



Multiple
sources of
law

Different
roles and
perspectives

Ambiguity

Different Roles and Other Factors

- Roles
 - Parent
 - General education teacher
 - Special education teacher
 - Related service personnel
 - Building administrator
 - District administrator

Different Roles and Other Factors

□ Factors

- Political ideology
- District culture
- Building ethos
- Quantity/quality of professional development
- Money (IDEA is only partially funded)
- Resources
- Setting a precedent (a.k.a. “opening the floodgate”)

Why the Conflict?

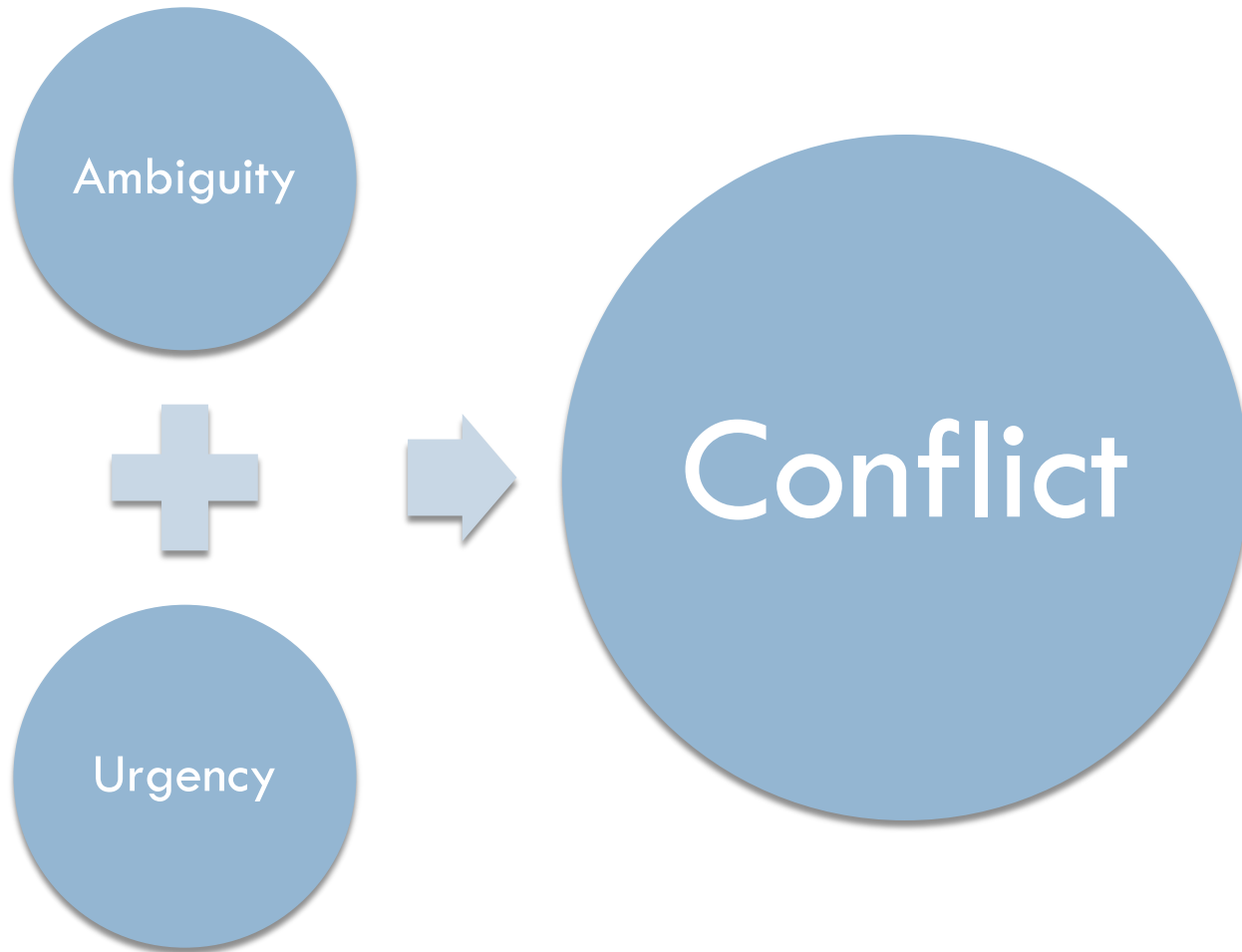


Multiple
sources of
law

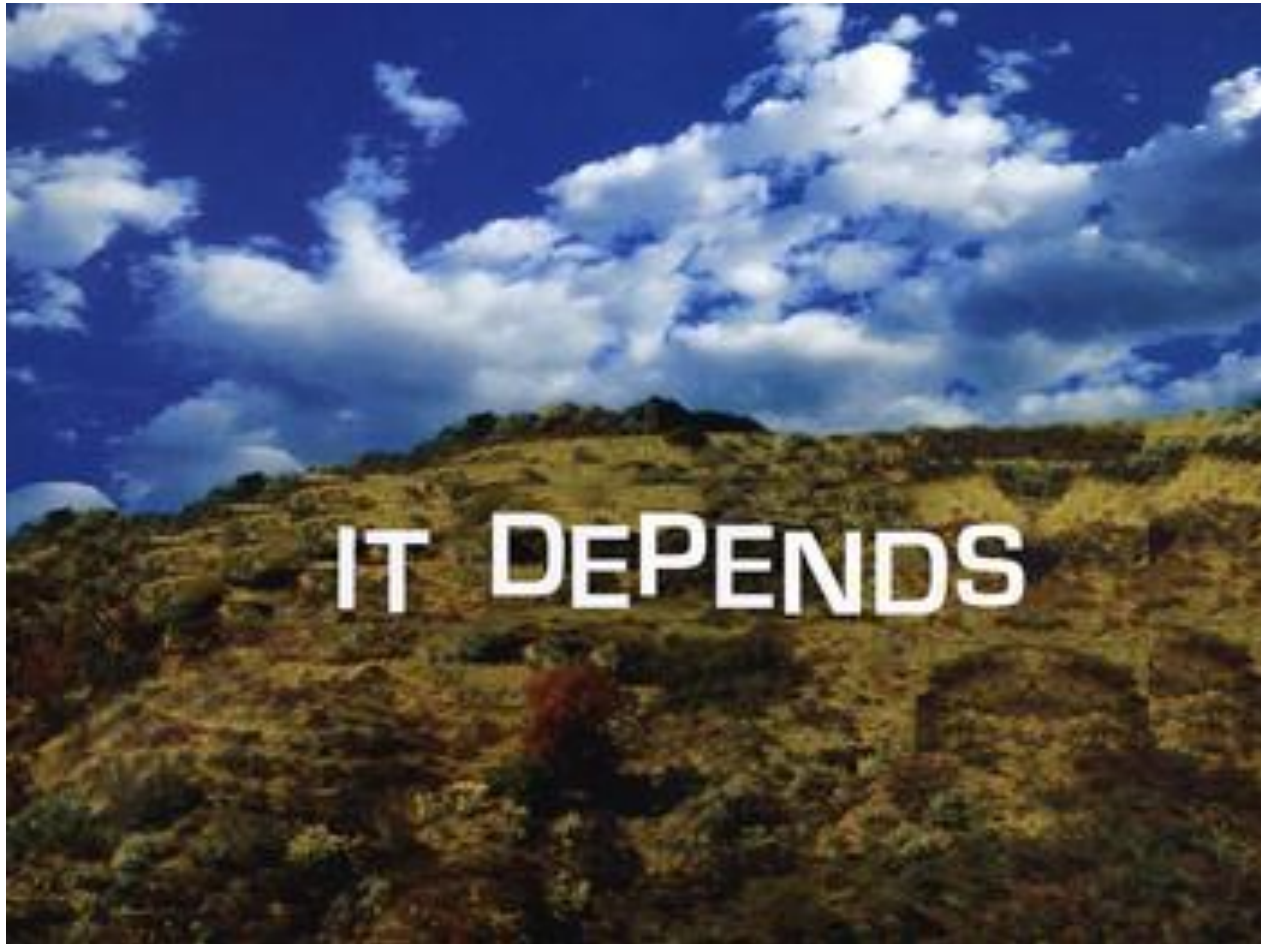
Different
roles and
perspectives

Ambiguity

Why the Conflict?



Million Dollar Question: “What are my child’s rights?”



Statutory Purpose of IDEA and IEPs

- “...to ensure that all *children with disabilities* have available to them a *free appropriate public education* that emphasizes *special education* and *related services* designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living...”

Core Concepts

- Eligibility

Core Concepts - Eligibility

- Autism
- Intellectual disability
- Emotional disturbance
- Orthopedic impairment
- Traumatic brain injury
- Specific learning disability
- Speech or language impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Vision impairment
- Deaf-blindness
- Multiple disabilities
- Other health impairment

Core Concepts

- Eligibility
- Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Core Concepts

- Eligibility
- Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
- Special education

Core Concepts

- Eligibility
- Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
- Special education
- Related services

Core Concepts

- Eligibility
- Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
- Special education
- Related services
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Provision of Rights – IEP Mandate

- IEP mandate: “a written statement for a child with a disability that is developed and implemented in accordance with [the requirements of the law].”
- An IEP is to be based *solely upon the child’s individual needs*, not availability of services

Provision of Rights – IEP Team

- Developed by IEP Team:
 - Parent
 - Representative of the school
 - Regular education teacher
 - Special education teacher
 - Person to interpret evaluation results
 - Child, when appropriate
 - Related services personnel
 - Other persons

Provision of Rights – IEP Components

- Present levels of performance
- Measurable annual goals
- Description of child's progress
- Statement of special education and services
- Participation with nondisabled students
- Statement of accommodations
- Projected date for beginning of services
- Transition services

Best Practices

- Educate yourself on IEPs and IDEA
- Pre-write your optimal IEP as a “game plan”
- Discuss annual goals/objectives prior to IEP meeting
- Plan for regular communication
- Work on IEP goals at home & communicate progress
- Have realistic expectations (of both child & school)
- Start planning before the school year begins
- Consider an independent evaluation

Question and Answer

- Please feel free to ask general questions
- For more “specific” questions, please feel free to contact the IEP Institute for a consultation

The IEP Institute

- Visit www.IEPinstitute.com for more information