

THE ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

1. When a call for assistance is left on the ADR Helpline (707) 524-2785, an ADR-trained SELPA program specialist will respond to the phone call within 48 hours (response time will be longer on weekends and holidays). The program specialist will listen to the concerns and help identify key 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 the issues.
2. The program specialist will explain how the ADR program and its components work, then determine the best option for resolution.
3. If Phone Mediation is determined to be the best option, the program specialist will coordinate communication between the parties and facilitate resolution through this communication. The majority of ADR cases start at this level of intervention.
4. If IEP Facilitation is determined to be the best option, the program specialist will assign a case-carrier to proceed with the case.
5. If the Independent Child Advocate is determined to be the best option, the program specialist will have the Advocate contact the party directly.
6. If Local Mediation is considered the best option, the program specialist will mediate the parties' concerns. When a mediation agreement is reached, the details are put into an agreement form and signed by everyone involved.



SONOMA COUNTY SELPA

Alternative Dispute Resolution Program

5340 Skylane Boulevard, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

If you have a disagreement involving a child with disabilities, Alternative Dispute Resolution may be the solution.

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

“ADR is a great process for bringing together schools and families. We wholeheartedly endorse this program.”

Sonoma County SELPA
Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

ADR HELPLINE ■ (707) 524-2785



SONOMA COUNTY SELPA

5340 Skylane Boulevard
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
(707) 524-2750

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 Sonoma 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 the families of all children in special education within Sonoma County. Major components of the program include:

■ PHONE MEDIATION

Phone mediation is the first level of response that the ADR team employs. Following the identification of the parties' issues and interests, the ADR case-carrier will coordinate communication between the parties and facilitate resolution over the telephone.

■ IEP FACILITATION

Parents or school staff may request that an ADR-trained SELPA program specialist facilitate an IEP meeting if the meeting is expected to be difficult. The facilitator uses specific techniques designed to assist the parties in completing the IEP while maintaining good relationships.

■ INDEPENDENT CHILD ADVOCATE

The Independent Child Advocate is a neutral ombudsperson trained in ADR. The Advocate is assigned to difficult cases where relationships are at risk and communication is limited. The Advocate is knowledgeable about special education law and programs.

■ LOCAL MEDIATION AND RESOLUTION SESSIONS

Both Local Mediation and Resolution Sessions use an effective problem-solving method that allows parties in dispute to reach a mutually agreeable solution. It is a safe, low-pressure process guided by a trained mediator. Local Mediation or participation in Resolution Sessions does not prevent either party from pursuing state-level mediation if the parties are not satisfied with the result.

It's an idea whose time has come

WHY CHOOSE ADR?

The Alternative Dispute Resolution process was developed in response to the growing need for a better way for families and schools to resolve their differences around special education. The process is:

■ SATISFYING

Alternative Dispute Resolution uses neutral intervention and support to assist the two parties in reaching a mutually agreeable solution. A safe, collaborative working relationship is developed and supported, building trust between the parties.

■ COST-EFFECTIVE

As opposed to due process, ADR options have no cost. Alternative Dispute Resolution does not involve the use of attorneys.

■ FAST AND EFFICIENT

The ADR process is initiated within 48 hours of the initial contact (except on weekends and holidays). This is considerably faster than the 45-day timeline for state-level due process.

■ CONFIDENTIAL

All information shared or collected through the ADR process is held confidential unless both parties agree to release it.

■ RESULTS-ORIENTED

ADR options may result in mutually acceptable verbal or written agreements if the parties choose to have them.