

Evaluation Results for Key2Ed Facilitated IEP Training: A Quantitative and Qualitative Investigation of Training Participants' Experiences 2016-2017

Report Submitted by

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During 2016, a total of 287 individuals who participated in Key2Ed Facilitated Individualized Education Program (FIEP) training were surveyed to determine overall satisfaction and perceived quality of training, impact of training on staff and parents, and the use of techniques learned during training. All respondents received training from 2012 – 2016, with 79% receiving training in-person and 21% completing the training online.

In addition to the survey respondents, 34 individuals who were trained by Key2ed were interviewed about their experiences with the Key2Ed FIEP training. Out of 34 participants, 26 worked in leadership or administration at the district level. Four parent advocates and one parent of a child with a disability participated. Two of the parent advocates also had children with disabilities.

These 34 participants' years of experience ranged from less than one year to 27 years, with the average experience for administrator participants being 9.8 years, 13 years for parent advocates and special educators. Six participants had attended or facilitated more than 100 facilitated IEP meetings, and eight others reported having attended or facilitated at least 30.

The next section of this report will present the quantitative results of the survey, followed by the qualitative themes, including direct quotations.

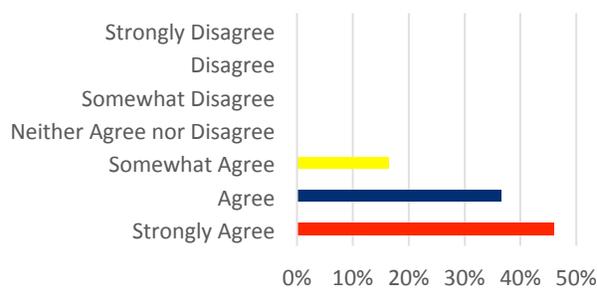
1. As a result of the Key2Ed training, I am confident and adequately prepared to facilitate an IEP meeting.

On average, 46% strongly agreed, 36.5% agreed, and 16.5% somewhat agreed when asked the above two questions. Over 99% of respondents felt positive about their level of confidence and preparedness to facilitate IEP meetings after they attended the Key2Ed training (see Figure 1). Comments such as, "It has helped me in holding every type of meeting", and "Training was very informative and useful" further validate these findings.

2. As a result of the Key2Ed training, I am confident and adequately prepared to work with educators and parents during a conflict.

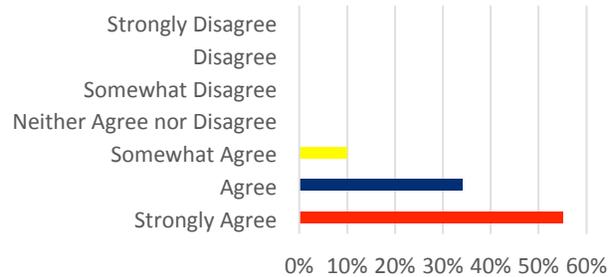
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Figure 1. I feel confident and adequately prepared to facilitate an IEP meeting



training. Specifically, an average of 55.5% strongly agreed, 34% agreed, and 10% somewhat agreed (see Figure 2). These perceptions were also conveyed in comments made by respondents, such as, “Parents enjoy the conversation about their students rather than being read to”, and “One of the best things a parent said to me after I facilitated a meeting was: This was the first time I didn’t cry at an IEP meeting. Thank you. My child is in sixth grade and I usually left every meeting in tears.”

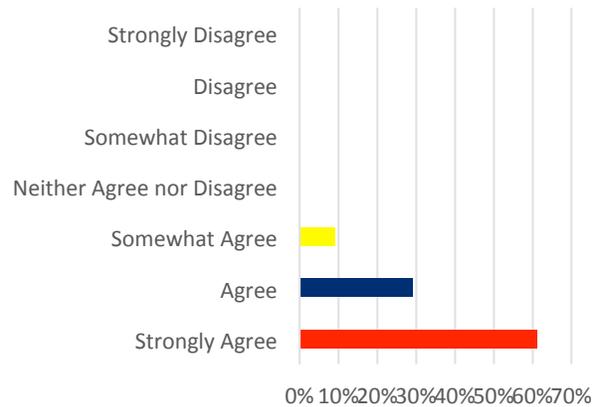
Figure 2. I am confident and adequately prepared to work with educators and parents during a conflict



3. As a result of the Key2Ed training, I see value in the FIEP practice for conflict resolution by using the facilitated model.

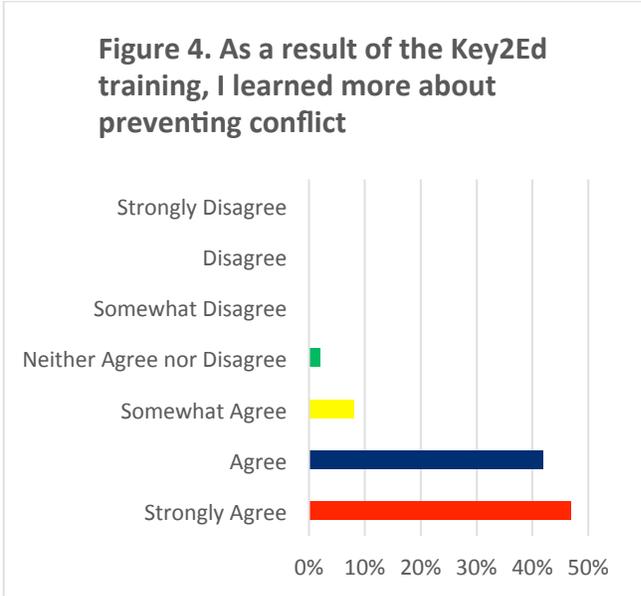
Over 99% of respondents see value in the FIEP practice for conflict resolution, indicating that the processes learned are effective for dealing with conflict in an IEP setting (see Figure 3). Even though not all respondents have participated as active facilitators, they still see value with the conflict resolution training they received when conducting any type of IEP meeting. One respondent noted, “I think the FIEP builds a new culture.”

Figure 3. I see value in the FIEP practice for conflict resolution



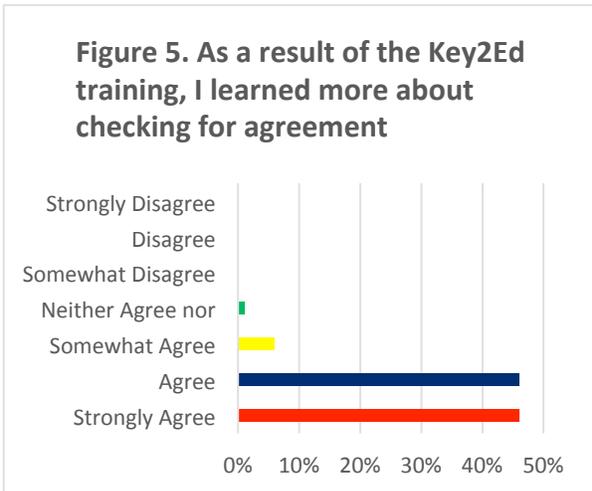
4. As a result of the Key2Ed training, I learned more about paraphrasing statements, asking open-ended questions, preventing and addressing conflict, and how to stop a difficult IEP meeting and reconvening, if needed.

Over 95% of respondents either somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed that they learned skills to help them restate and ask thought-provoking questions, along with conflict resolution skills in order to keep a meeting on track or end a meeting, when necessary (see Figure 4). Further clarification on how this training benefited responders was articulated, “We work very hard to have few state complaints, or due process processes. The FIEP training will help continue that and will benefit a diverse group of stakeholders across the district.” “Coming in as a new ESE Specialist the year I received this training, prepared me for those difficult parents. I had already experienced one meeting prior to the training with a difficult parent and felt confident that I was on the right track by empowered with more strategies to facilitate the IEP meetings and be well prepared for the meetings.”



5. As a result of the Key2Ed training, I learned more about introducing my role, developing a meeting agenda, using meeting norms, making visuals, checking for agreement from team members, asking for team feedback, utilizing a parking lot for off-topic issues, and creating an action plan at an IEP meeting.

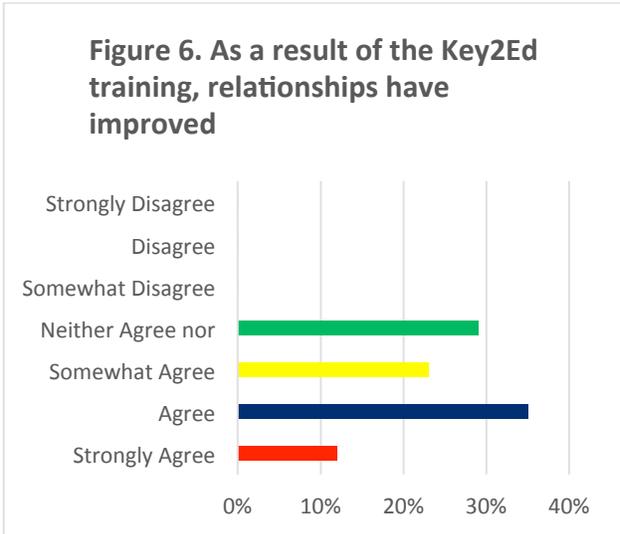
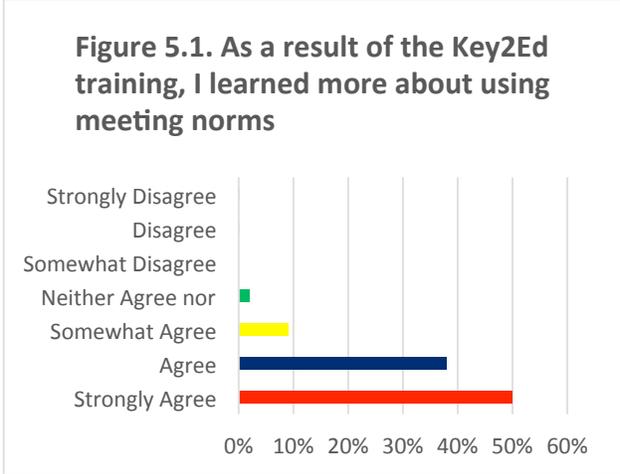
Results in this section indicated that a majority of respondents (over 90%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed that they learned more about all eight of the tools and techniques listed above. Of those, the two tools that came out as strongest were use of checking for agreement and use of meeting norms (see Figures 5 and 5.1). All of these tools are directly taught and utilized in the FIEP training provided by Key2Ed. Noteworthy responses included, “Although I have been a participant and chair of IEP meetings since 1985, I found this training to be extremely beneficial. It provides a



structure to a process that ensures all participants understand their roles and the purpose for the meeting. The trainers [are] well-organized and provide opportunities for practice in a safe environment. The training was excellent and made me aware of some areas of the IEP process that could improve the process. I do not find that all parents who come to FIEPs understand that this is not a place to vent or a mediation." "We never went to a full FIEP model, but the skills taught within the model have been incorporated in many of the practices we have in place; have never had a formal FIEP completed at this point, but my role is as facilitator in the IEP meetings, so some components are present."

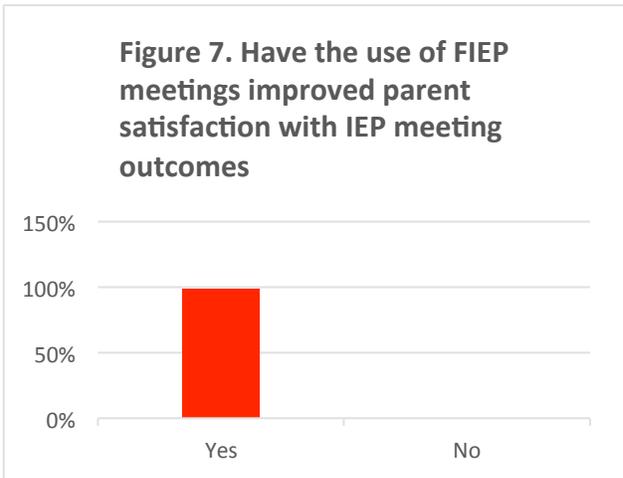
6. As a result of the Key2Ed training, relationships have improved amongst all IEP team members.

Relationships between members of an IEP team can be difficult to cultivate at times, especially when members meet under high stress situations. However, 70% of respondents agreed that after taking the Key2Ed training, relationships have improved between IEP team members (see Figure 6). This was further articulated when one respondent shared: "Participants love the transparency of the process and meetings have become more positive and productive. The agenda and use of visual tools creates an even playing field and shared understanding. Identifying the outcomes that the groups is working toward improves focus and builds trust that we are all working toward the same end....we have noticed increased comfort and participation as people around the table understand the role of each participant as it relates to the student. This process has also improved the consistency of our meetings from site to site. My staff have increased their ability to prevent and resolve conflict by applying the concepts and utilizing the tools provided during the training. Parents have provided positive feedback following their participation in a facilitated IEP meeting."



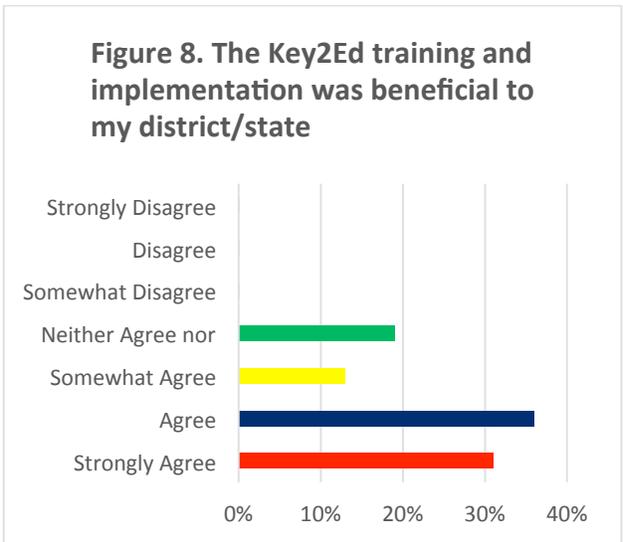
7. To the best of your knowledge have the use of FIEP meetings improved parent satisfaction with IEP meeting outcomes?

Over 99% of participants agreed that the use of FIEP meetings did improve parent satisfaction with IEP meeting outcomes (see Figure 7). One example of an open ended survey comment from an educator is “Meetings have been noted by parents to be much more functional and enjoyable” and “We use agendas, as well, and that helps parents to see that the important things they want to discuss will be covered.” This further supports the feeling of increased parent satisfaction with IEP meeting outcomes.



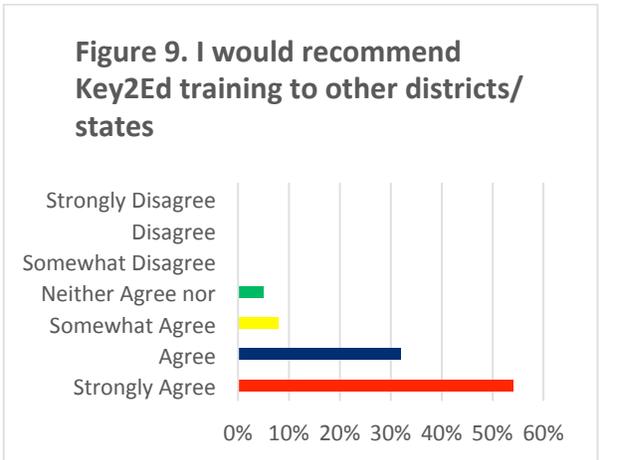
8. The Key2Ed training and implementation was beneficial to my district/state.

A majority of respondents (80%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed that there was benefit to the training and/or implementation of the Key2Ed training (see Figure 8). Comments included, “My training was 8-18-16 so we have not had the opportunity to use this process”, and “FIEP has been used across my state. Parents and schools are asking for it. Feedback suggests that it is making a difference.”



9. I would recommend Key2Ed training to other districts/states.

An overwhelming 95% of participants responded favorably to this question, further supported by anecdotal data (see Figure 9). One participant wrote, “I really enjoyed the training and wouldn’t mind a refresher. Several points from the training I use as best practices.” Another respondent stated, “I’ve been sitting in IEP meetings since 1982 and deeply appreciate the change that the FIEP has brought to Special Education!”



Key2Ed Training: Time Well Spent!

Discussion: Key2Ed training participant responses detailed the impact of FIEP practice: “It makes my job 100 times easier...it’s very effective. It’s effective in getting the job done and not leaving out pieces and meeting everybody’s needs at the table.” Another educator described viewing IEP meetings as an “opportunity” instead of “tasks to be completed.” One educator shared: “If the team is using the facilitated model and not just hoping to get through a meeting without people crying, it becomes a much richer experience.” One administrator described the positive impact of the Key2Ed training on staff members: “I have staff members who deal with a lot of happy people as a result of their FIEP participation, and I have happy staff members who feel like the training gave them a tool they didn’t have.” Parents also described benefits after experiencing an FIEP meeting: “It felt like it was easier to express things.” Educators also described feeling more “confident, prepared, and thoughtful,” referring to the

The Key2Ed model has a significant positive benefit, not only on practice but also on the most important purpose of the IEP team: to create an effective and individualized education model for the student.

Key2Ed training as “time well spent.” Perhaps best summarized in the words of an educator, “This is what we need. A method, or a way to deal with not just the parents, but all of us together in the meeting so that we really do focus on the most important thing.”

Key2Ed Training: A Model Used for Conflict Prevention and Resolution

Discussion: A major focus of participant feedback was the use of Key2Ed training strategies when facilitating meetings where conflict exists. In addition, participants highlighted their observations and experiences regarding the usefulness of the Key2Ed facilitation skills for conflict prevention and as a tool for everyday IEP meeting practice. A major emergent theme was the impact of the facilitated IEP on conflict, with participants describing significant decreases in tension compared to dynamics before introducing the Key2Ed model. One participant described the facilitated model as “less threatening” and “more laid back,” with another educator addressing the potential impact of the model on conflict in the bigger picture: “If the district reps and the chair people were trained in these techniques and used them for every single meeting I think it would be an improvement and we would probably have fewer requests for an impartial hearing.”

Regarding the prevention of conflict, the Key2Ed model was cited as highly effective. One participant stated: “You’d rather be successful right out of the gate, and facilitation allows that to happen.” With prevention of conflict essential for reducing litigation and due process in special education, one participant compared the two options: “The FIEP is looking at a proactive system versus a reactive system. So the mediation, the due process, all of the filing and complaints, those are all reactive. And it doesn’t solve the problem.” Described as a tool to “divert” conflict, another participant remarked that the Key2Ed facilitated IEP model has a reputation for being successful. According to this

participant, the model motivates individuals to ask “Hey, how can I prevent this in the future?”

Key2Ed Training Tools and Application: A Program for Life

Discussion: Participants emphasized the high value and benefit they found with the Key2Ed trainers and staff maintaining a level of continued support after the initial trainings, and even follow-up meetings: “Lifetime support is pretty impressive. It’s not just a ‘one and done’ kind of training concept. We can always go back to Key2Ed.”

Regarding the specific procedural components of the training and facilitation model, participants targeted the role-play experience and manual as some of the most effective components. The “role-play practice was very important because you just kind of have to get your feet wet, and even though it’s intimidating and it’s a new process I think everyone needs to do a practice facilitation before they do a real one.” Another participant explained that “the role play scenarios really force you to get hands-on and think about what you would do in the situation and how you might respond.”

The manual was frequently cited as one of the most effective and applicable resources from the training. Described as “well designed,” “outstanding,” and “helpful,” many participants reported that they carry the manual with them throughout their workday. Specifically, one participant explained that the manual is helpful for jogging the memory after the training is over. Another described the manual as accessible, stating that it is “brief and easy-to-find things, and they’re...not buried on pages.” Many participants highlighted the manual as an efficient and user-friendly asset to their training and application.

Key2Ed FIEP Meeting Model: It is Not Just for IEP Meetings!

Discussion: In addition to using the Key2Ed model for conflict prevention, participants often mentioned the positive impact that the tools have on a variety of meetings in different settings. As one participant explained: “Shortly after I started implementing facilitated IEPs, one of the teachers said, ‘You know, these norms really feel like good norms just to use for anything.’” Participants spoke about a variety of other settings where facilitation skills can be effectively used, including: staff meetings, phone conversations, 504 meetings, and resolution meetings. The meaningfulness of facilitation skills in everyday life was best described by one participant who shared: “I just think that overall the Key2Ed training changed the way I interact with people on a general level...knowing about communication skills, and knowing about ways to problem solve with people other than just saying “This is what I think.” It’s really helped me more than just in the arena of an IEP meeting. In general, it’s just dealing with people.”

Final Remarks

Overall, the Key2Ed training and facilitated IEP process was described by the majority of the participants as extremely beneficial for practice, including the prevention and resolution of conflict. Used as a tool in multiple settings, the procedural components of the FIEP meeting were highlighted as both straightforward and meaningful for ideal meeting flow. As described by these educators, advocates, parents, and facilitators, the Key2Ed training had a significant positive benefit, not only on practice but also on the most important purpose of the IEP team: to create an effective and individualized education model for the student.