

*“In The Middle of  
Difficulty Lies  
Opportunity.”*

*Albert Einstein*

## Alternative Dispute Resolution- In Schools (ADR-S)

Alternative Dispute Resolution- In Schools (ADR-S) is an informal process adapted by the Ventura County SELPA and supported by the California Department of Education (CDE) for resolving special education/IEP concerns early. The CDE encourages Districts and families to explore early resolution options.

The ADR-S process uses communication, collaboration, and consultation to resolve Individualized Education Program (IEP) disagreements. It is through the ADR-S process that VC SELPA seeks resolution to special education concerns in a manner that meets the needs of the student.

## Alternative Dispute Resolution- In Schools (ADR-S) Options:

- Level 1:** Phone Consultation
- Level 2:** Collaborative Conference
- Level 3:** Facilitated IEP Meetings
- Level 4:** SELPA Level Mediation  
(not part of IDEA)



**Ventura County SELPA**

SPECIAL EDUCATION LOCAL PLAN AREA

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## Alternative Dispute Resolution



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## What is Alternative Dispute Resolution?

ADR is a process for resolving special education disagreements in a respectful, neutral environment. The goal of ADR is that families and districts work together to create solutions to benefit the student. A facilitator trained in ADR guides the team, maintains open communication and ensures everyone's full participation.

## Who Should Choose Alternative Dispute Resolution?

ADR is designed for families and districts who want to work together and preserve their relationship for the benefit of the child. In ADR, a family does not have to hire an advocate or attorney in order to have a voice in resolving conflicts.

## Why Choose Alternative Dispute Resolution?

ADR keeps the decision making in the hands of the family and the district. Special education agreements are more effective when families and schools develop their own solutions rather than abide by an agreement imposed by a third-party.



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## A ROAD MAP TO RESOLUTION

### 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.

### Individualization

Because each situation is unique, each ADR session will be customized to address the specific issues at hand. Decisions about the participants, location and appropriate process will be determined based on the individual situation and with input from all parties. Translators will be provided as needed.

### Confidentiality

All participants are expected 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.

## RESOURCES

1. ADR Procedural Handbook
2. [Online Handbook for Special Needs Parenting](#)
3. [Parent Guide to Special Education](#)
4. [Procedural Safeguards and Referral Services](#)
5. [Community Advisory Committee](#)

