

Transforming Conversations: AI as a Partner in Resolution

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Family Network on Disabilities | CADRE Keynote



AI as a Bridge

Connecting disparate viewpoints to foster understanding and common ground.



Catalyzing Transformation

Leveraging AI tools to evolve approaches to conflict, leading to innovative solutions.



Empowering Collaboration

Facilitating inclusive dialogue and amplifying all voices in the resolution process.



Setting the Stage

Dispute resolution in special education is complex, emotional, and deeply personal. At its best, it's grounded in collaboration, trust, and shared commitment to the child's success.

Today's focus: how AI can help—not replace—human connection in creating meaningful resolutions that serve every child's unique needs.

Why Talk About AI Now?



Already Here

AI is part of our daily lives through Google, Alexa, Siri, and social media platforms we use every day.



Common Concerns

"AI is bad, AI is plagiarism, AI should be banned in schools" - these fears are understandable but incomplete.



The Reality

AI can be used responsibly as a collaborative support tool when applied thoughtfully and ethically.

What AI Can and Cannot Do

AI CAN

- Organize information effectively
- Summarize complex documents
- Draft clear communications
- Suggest collaborative strategies
- Highlight common ground

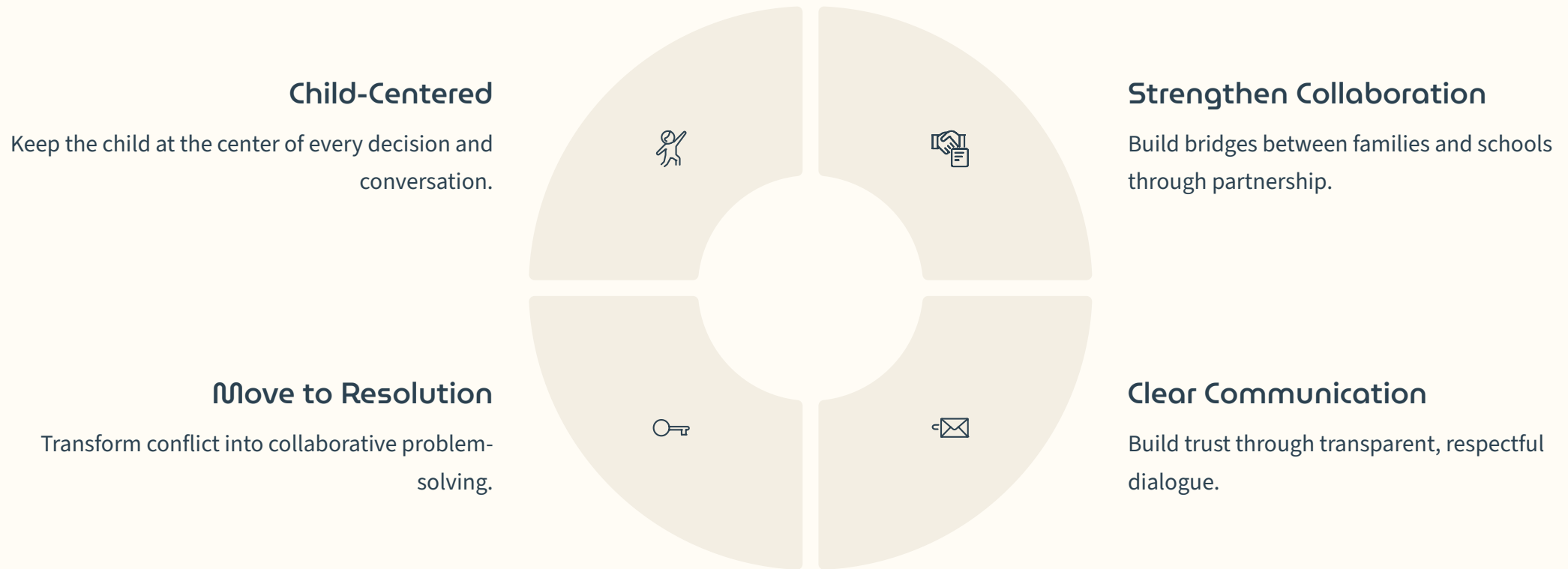
AI CANNOT

- Replace human judgment
- Make legal decisions
- Understand emotion deeply
- Resolve disputes independently

AI SHOULDN'T

- Provide legal advice
- Replace authentic voices
- Dominate decision-making

Shared Goals in Dispute Resolution



Communication Support

AI serves as a communication bridge when emotions run high, helping all parties express their concerns constructively and professionally.

01

Draft Calm Messages

AI helps create clear, respectful communications when emotions are overwhelming.

03

Clarify Complex Policies

Educators can translate technical language into accessible, parent-friendly explanations.

02

Avoid Reactive Responses

Parents can pause and reframe before sending potentially damaging messages.

04

Encourage Respectful Tone

Both sides benefit from AI's ability to maintain professional, collaborative language.

Example: Parent Perspective

Parent feels frustrated after receiving IEP notes and wants to respond immediately with strong emotions.

1

Before AI

"I'm upset about these notes. This isn't what we discussed!"

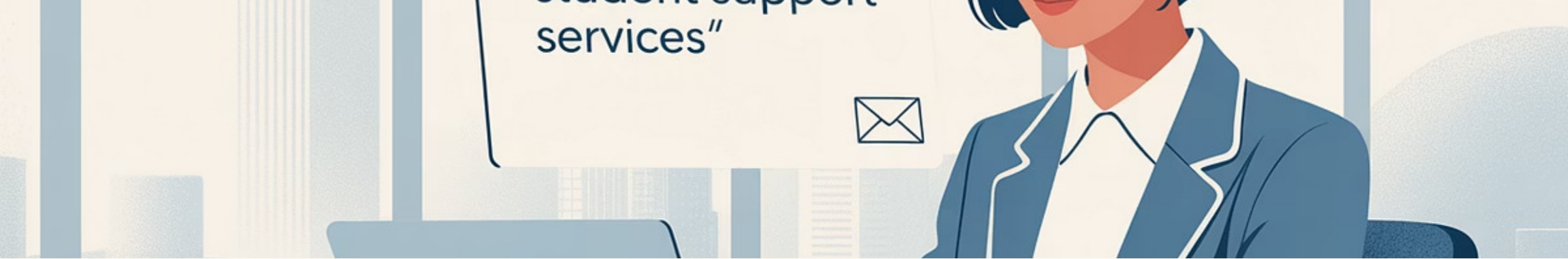
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After AI Support

"I want to work together to better support my child's needs. Can we schedule time to discuss the IEP notes?"

AI helps transform reactive emotions into collaborative requests that open doors rather than close them.





Example: Educator Perspective

When administrators receive strongly worded parent emails, AI helps craft responses that validate concerns while maintaining professional, solution-oriented tone.

Validates Parent Concerns

AI helps acknowledge the parent's feelings and perspective without becoming defensive.

Maintains Professional Tone

Responses stay respectful and focused on solutions rather than escalating conflict.

Builds Trust

Thoughtful responses demonstrate commitment to working together for the child's benefit.



Example: Collaborative Use

During tense meetings, you can take a brief break and can turn to AI as a neutral third party for practical guidance and de-escalation strategies.

📄 **Meeting Scenario:** Both parents and educators ask AI: "What are some strategies to de-escalate this type of conflict?"

Neutral Suggestions

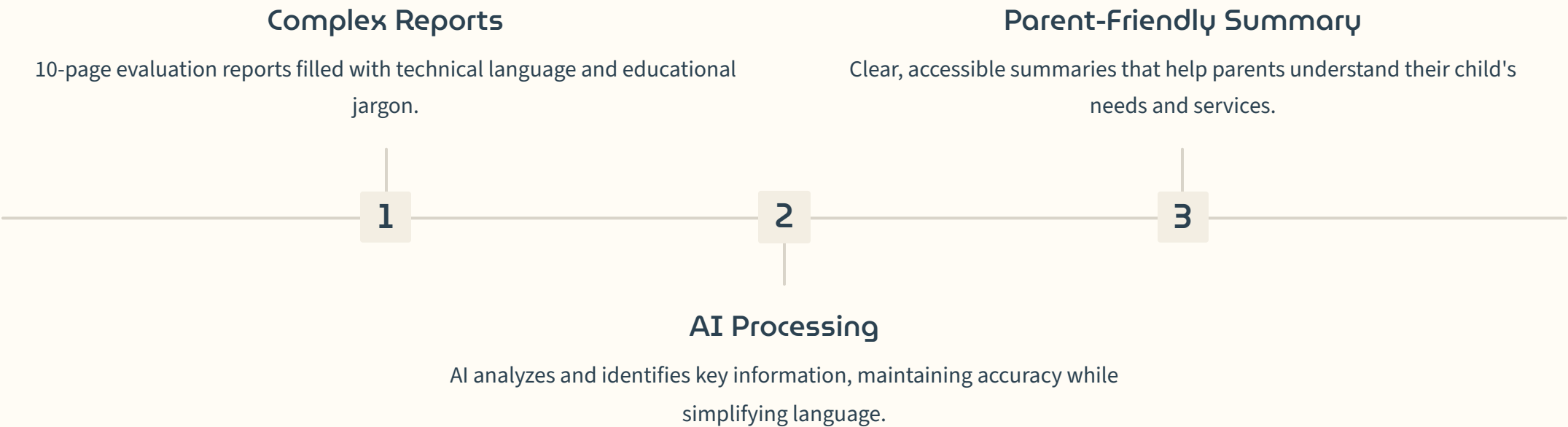
AI generates practical, research-based strategies without taking sides or assigning blame.

Third-Party Reference

Creates an objective source that both parties can reference and build upon together.

Information Sharing & Access

AI bridges the gap between complex educational documents and parent understanding, making information truly accessible to all families.



This reduces misunderstandings and empowers families to participate more fully in their child's education.

Meeting Preparation

For Parents

AI helps brainstorm meaningful questions to bring to IEP meetings, ensuring important topics aren't forgotten.

- Goal-setting questions
- Service clarifications
- Progress monitoring
- Transition planning

Both parties benefit from AI-generated meeting checklists that ensure comprehensive discussions and nothing important is overlooked.

For Educators

AI helps anticipate areas of confusion and prepare clear, jargon-free explanations.

- Policy explanations
- Service descriptions
- Assessment results
- Implementation plans



Building Trust Through Accessibility

Trust is built on clarity, transparency, and genuine listening. AI supports these foundations by removing barriers to understanding.



Language Translation

Offers real-time translation support for non-English speaking families, ensuring everyone can participate fully.



Literacy Support

Makes complex documents accessible for families with varying literacy levels through simplified language.



Balanced Perspectives

Provides summaries that fairly reflect both family and school perspectives without bias.



Collaboration in Practice

AI transforms meeting outcomes into actionable, shared commitments that reinforce the collaborative partnership.



Meeting Documentation

AI creates comprehensive "joint action plans" from meeting notes and discussions.



Shared Responsibilities

Suggests next steps framed as collaborative commitments rather than individual assignments.



Team Reinforcement

Consistently reinforces the message: we're all on the same team for the child's success.



Real-World Demonstrations

Let's see AI in action with practical examples that show its immediate value in dispute resolution.



Language Transformation

Watch AI rephrase heated, emotional language into collaborative, solution-focused wording.



Document Summarization

See a 10-page technical report become a clear, 1-page parent-friendly summary.



Strategy Generation

Live example: asking AI for specific strategies both parties can agree on and implement.



Ethical & Confidential Use

Responsible AI use requires careful attention to privacy, security, and maintaining human oversight in all decisions.

1

Protect Confidentiality

Never input sensitive personal or student information into public AI systems. Privacy must be paramount.

2

Use Secure Tools

Best practice: utilize secure, education-approved AI tools that meet FERPA and privacy requirements.

3

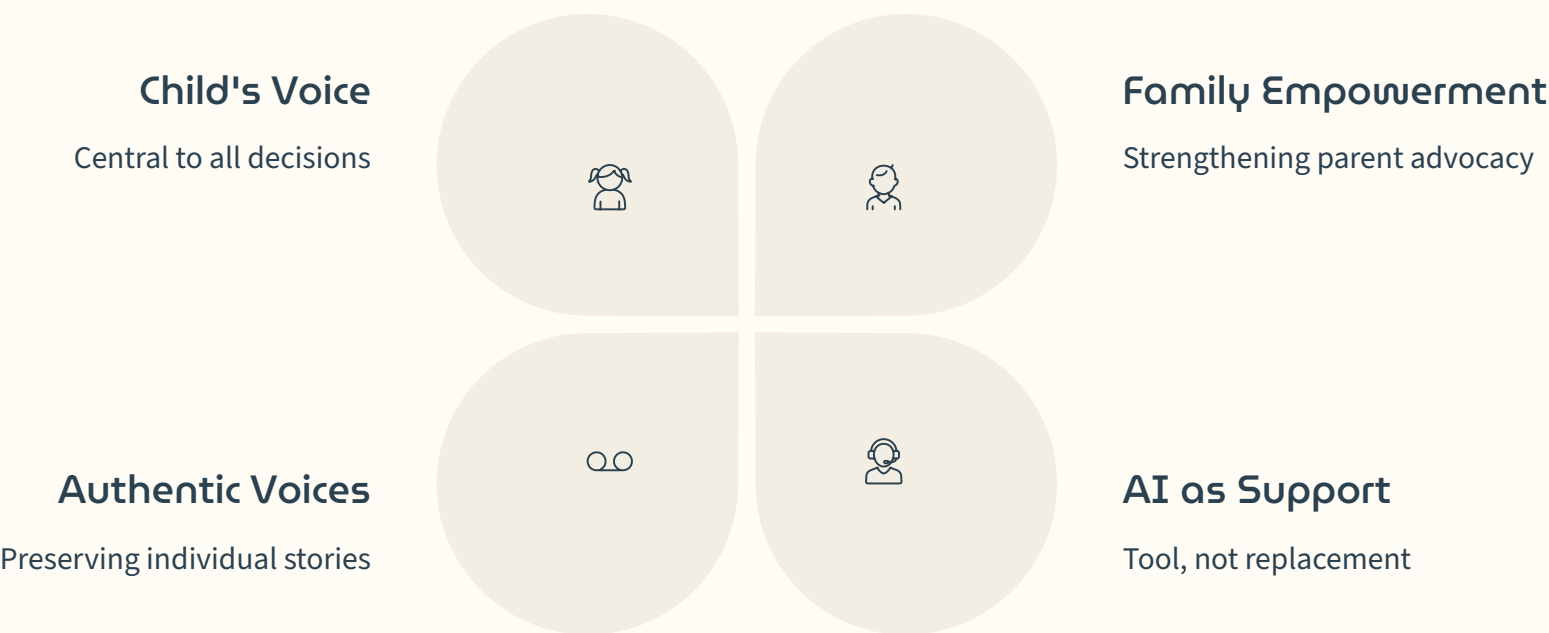
Human Judgment First

Always keep human judgment in the loop. AI suggests, humans decide.

Family-Centered Values

Children and families remain at the center

AI serves as a support tool—never a replacement—for the authentic voices and experiences of families and children. The goal is always to empower families and strengthen their agency in their child's education.



From Classroom to Mediation

AI can provide valuable support across different levels of dispute resolution, with clear boundaries about where it's most appropriate.



 **Important Boundary:** AI is not appropriate for due process hearings or legal battles where formal legal representation is required.

Balanced Benefits for All



For Families

- Greater clarity in communications
- Calm, thoughtful responses
- Better meeting preparation
- Increased empowerment



For Educators

- Improved efficiency
- Consistent messaging
- Professional tone maintenance
- Reduced conflict escalation



For Mediators

- Neutral language support
- Structured agenda building
- Shared goal identification
- Objective strategy suggestions

When used thoughtfully, AI creates win-win scenarios that benefit everyone involved in the child's educational journey.



Key Takeaways

AI Strengthens Collaboration

Technology enhances rather than replaces human connection and partnership in dispute resolution.

Practical Applications

Communication support, information sharing, meeting preparation, trust-building, and collaborative planning.

Core Focus Areas

Maintain shared goals, ethical practices, and unwavering commitment to family-centered values.

"AI is a bridge, not a barrier"

Our challenge moving forward: explore practical ways AI can support collaboration in your own role, whether as a parent, educator, administrator, or mediator.

Together, we can harness technology's power to keep the child at the center of every conversation and move confidently from conflict toward meaningful resolution.



Explore

Investigate AI tools in your context



Collaborate

Use AI to strengthen partnerships



Stay Focused

Keep the child at the center

