

Individualized Family Service Plan

Early On...

Guiding parents of infants and toddlers with special needs through the steps of early intervention supports and services in Wyoming



Parent Information Center

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Information & Referral
for Parents of Children
with Disabilities

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Individual Family Service Plan

The **IFSP** or Individual Family Service Plan is a written plan developed and implemented to identify the individual needs of the child and develop a program to support the entire family to enhance their child's development.

Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires states to provide early intervention services to children with disabilities from birth through age 2. Early intervention can include speech and hearing services, family training and counseling, home visits, diagnostic medical services, occupational or physical therapy, social and psychological services and service coordination. These services are defined through the written plan, called the IFSP.

What is an IFSP?

IFSP stands for the Individualized Family Service Plan and is a Family/Early Intervention Process under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. An IFSP is a written plan developed and implemented by a specific team of people. This team includes the family and the community service providers from the regional child



developmental center and other agencies who may be involved in providing supports to the child and family. The team works directly with the family when an infant or toddler is identified with a disability or developmental delay. The IFSP process is most effective when all members participate fully and value the team efforts.

The purpose of the IFSP is to identify the needs of the child presented by the parents and as revealed by comprehensive evaluations. It should be understood that regulations in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C stress the importance of services that are centered around the needs of families.

The Individual Family Service Plan is a part of a system of special education at both the State and Federal level. The plan that is developed should focus on both the individual needs of the child and the needs of the entire family in order to enhance the child's growth and development.

What is the Multidisciplinary Team?



A Multidisciplinary Team will assess the infant and toddler and then develop the IFSP.

This team is made up of a group of people, each of whom has expertise in evaluating or providing services in a different area (such as early childhood education, speech/language, physical therapy, etc.).

Team members can also come from other community agencies such as Public Health, Department of Family Services, Early Head Start, medical providers, etc.

A critical component of the team is the parent(s) and/or other family members. The team may also include: any persons the parents request, the service coordinator, persons directly involved in the evaluation and/or assessments, and the person(s) who will provide services for the child and family. Members may either be appointed or invited. They are independent of one another and bring their own individual expertise to help provide the best services directly to the family.



Good Team Planning Requires:

- Everyone's willingness to focus on the family/child and not their own agenda.
- Confidence in each other as valuable team members.
- Being comfortable to ask questions and ask for help and to ask questions for better understanding.
- Developing a working relationship with mutual respect and trust.
- Working together to arrive at agreed upon goals and outcomes for the family.
- Working together in mutual problem solving.
- Possessing good communication skills for listening and explaining.

The Meeting

The IFSP meeting should be a pleasant experience for all the participants. The meeting and the development of the IFSP will focus on the child's and family's strengths. As participants hear the needs and concerns of the family, they may use their professional skills to help provide solutions and answers for questions. Parents are equal and full members of their child's team. Everyone should realize that the parents bring insight about their child and family situation. The team should respect and acknowledge all input from the family. Time limits should be placed on meetings to be respectful for all involved. There should be adequate time at meetings accomplish the intended purpose of the IFSP meeting or schedule additional meetings to allow for necessary discussion.



Some topics for discussion at the IFSP meeting may include:

- What are the child's and family's strengths and present abilities?
- What are the outcomes that are important for the child and for the family?
- What are the most important issues to focus on?

- What was tried before and what are the results of that effort?
- What services are currently in place or are needed to accomplish the outcomes?
- What services and supports should each professional and/or related service provide?
- Will all of the services provided be in "natural environments" in the home and community?
(See definition below)

Transition planning for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) should be a part of the IFSP starting when the child is 2 years, 3 months old.

Examples of the IFSP member roles:

- Provide information and clarification
- Demonstrate and explain
- Observe and offer suggestions
- Explore all options and help find answers
- Listen and teach
- Support and identify additional resources



Natural Environments are those that enhance the child's natural learning opportunities within daily routines and activities of the child and family.

What is a Family Service Coordinator?

A Family Service Coordinator (FSC) is assigned to every child receiving early intervention services. In Wyoming, the Family Service Coordinator is usually provided through the regional developmental center and is a person with specific training in the responsibilities of infant/toddler development, family services and service coordination.



Part C regulations define service coordination as the activities carried out by a service coordinator to assist and enable an eligible child and the child's family to receive services that are provided under the state's early intervention program through the regional child developmental centers.

A service coordinator is the main contact for the family for all services. They act as an advocate for the family to obtain services and assistance within a community. The service coordinator will help to identify the needs of the infants and toddlers with disabilities and help find the professional(s) to meet those needs. This is a crucial role because many children will be receiving services from many community providers and health care professionals and the service coordinator will help with communication and coordination of these services.

This system is designed to support families as needed, while working to empower them to be self-sufficient. Service coordination is offered to families upon initial contact and is often important in developing a collaborative and coordinated system of services. A family does have the right to decline the services of a service coordinator and then later receive the services, or any services offered.

Some Service Coordination Components may include:

- Visit the family and develop a relationship.
- Identify family needs and find areas of strengths and priorities of the family.
- Notify referral source(s) about the needs of the family and child.
- Maintain communication with all professionals and agencies involved.
- Advocate for child and family and help the family to become self-advocates.
- Coordinate the necessary evaluations and assessments and obtain additional records.
- Facilitate the IFSP meeting.
- Assist the family with the IFSP process and in receiving the services and supports described in the IFSP.
- Develop and maintain current information and interagency contacts.
- Complete and distribute the paperwork and documents developed at the IFSP meeting.



- Help to modify the IFSP when the family's needs change. Coordinate the review and revision process of the IFSP as needs of the child and family change.
- Assure the families rights and safeguards are met.

Family-Centered Services

The IFSP process should be one of mutual trust and respect between the family and the professionals working with the family. The needs of the infant/toddler and family should be the center of all involved in the process. Parents are their children's first teachers. The IFSP team should focus on effectively helping the parents and families to identify resources and finding strategies to meet the needs and dreams for their child/children.



Promoting and building family strengths provides parents with a greater sense of understanding and involvement in developing plans and working towards positive

outcomes for their child's future.

Parent Information Center's "Early On..." Series

includes:

1. IFSPs
2. Difference Between Part C & Part B
3. Natural Environments
4. Rights and Protections under Part C
(Procedural Safeguards)
5. Transition - Preschool to Kindergarten

References:

www.wpic.org

<http://IDEA.ed.gov>

www.ectacenter.org