



Early Intervention Newsletter

Developing effective Individualized Family Service Plans for young children

Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) should focus on increasing a child's participation in family and community activities identified by the family. The creation of an effective IFSP should support the family in recognizing learning opportunities and improving their child's development.

Although early intervention professionals should facilitate the discussion to develop effective IFSPs, the role of the caregivers during the IFSP meeting is vitally important. Families have critical information that needs to be shared during the IFSP development. Early interventionists should ask who is involved in the child's daily life, what motivates the child, what learning

opportunities occur during the child's routines, and what outcomes are of priority to the family. The IFSP team, which includes the family and the professionals should discuss what supports and services are in place and which ones are needed, the strategies for implementation, and how the child's progress will be measured.

Finally, the frequency of services needs to be decided based on the supports that are necessary to ensure the child makes expected progress. Frequency should increase and/or decrease over time depending on various factors. This is often difficult for professionals, as they want to visit as often as necessary to support the family's ability to enhance

their child's development without sending a disempowering message. Finding the correct balance requires family input.

Effective early intervention requires active parent participation in the IFSP development and during each therapy session. Parents teach their children everyday. Providers should not simply ask families what they want and give it to them. Instead, they should provide their expertise on child development to help expand caregivers' confidence in identifying opportunities to help their child learn during routines. Early intervention should fit into the child's life and build effectively on the resources and supports already in place in the family.

Parents Share: Preparing for IFSP meetings

-submitted by a parent of a 17-month old who received early intervention services from a Richmond City Program

1) Know your child... take 30 minutes to just sit and observe your child's play. Take notes.
2) Familiarize yourself with what the practitioners will be looking for. Prior to the first meeting, obtain a copy of the evaluation tool the practitioner will be using.
3) Think about family routines

and activities that may offer opportunities for natural learning to occur.
4) Involve your whole family in working with your child. Older siblings are invaluable resources. Children are often more likely to model their older siblings than they are likely to model you.

5) If you have an only child, play groups are an excellent way for your child to learn social skills. They also allow you the opportunity to observe your child with others. Again, take notes. It may seem silly, but when you are asked a direct question, it sometimes helps to have something written down.

Parent Infant Program

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IFSP Development Resources:

☺ **Developing Individualized Plans to Provide Supports and Services in Everyday Routines, Activities, and Places** - http://www.cde.state.co.us/earlychildhoodconnections/docs/pdf/Info_brief3.pdf

☺ **IFSPWeb (a self-paced tutorial designed to help parents and professionals create better Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs) for young children with disabilities)** - <http://www.answers4families.org/ifspweb/>

☺ **Identifying Activities, Routines, Interests, People and Places to Support the IFSP Outcomes** - http://www.cde.state.co.us/earlychildhoodconnections/docs/pdf/Info_brief1.pdf

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Early Intervention Resources

☺ **Infant Toddler Connection of Virginia web site -**
<http://www.infantva.org/>

☺ **Family Involvement Project -**
<http://www.arcfip.org/>

☺ **Parent Education Advocacy Training Center web site –**
<http://www.peatc.org>

☺ **Virginia Commonwealth University Training and Technical Assistance Center -**
<http://www.soe.vcu.edu/ttac/>

☺ **Division for Early Childhood -**
<http://www.dec-sped.org/index.html>

☺ **Council for Exceptional Children -**
<http://www.cec.sped.org/>

☺ **National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center -**
<http://www.nectac.org/>

☺ **ZERO TO THREE -**
http://zerotothree.org/ztt_parents.html



**"Parents are their
child's most important
teacher."**
