



First Steps

The Role of the Service Coordinator

#5

Our children do not come with instructions. Parents Reaching Out provides resources that help families make informed decisions about the care and education of their children. We thank the families who have asked questions and found successful ways to advocate for their child for providing the inspiration for these fact sheets.

The role of the Service Coordinator is to provide you and your family support and information about Early Intervention services that are available for your child and family. Your service coordinator is also knowledgeable about community resources and can help you navigate the systems in New Mexico that provide supports and services for infants and toddlers.



What is the role of service coordinator while my child is being evaluated?

Initially, as you enter the world of early intervention a service coordinator will support you effectively and proactively in the intake process. She/He will explain the evaluation process, available to every child and family, in order to determine whether or not your child is eligible for Early Intervention (EI) services.

Your service coordinator will:

- Help you decide who should be on the evaluation team;
- Ask you to give consent for the evaluation to take place.
- Help you get the evaluations and assessments that your child needs;
- Help you to understand the information given to you;
- Help you decide concerns and priorities that are important to your family;
- Help schedule evaluations at a convenient time for your family; and
- Inform you of your rights within the Family Infant Toddler Program (FIT).

What about confidentiality?

Your family's privacy will be kept private at all times. You may be asked to sign a "release of information" so that the evaluation team can get a copy of your child's medical records and any other relevant documents.

When do I choose a service coordinator?

At the time of your first Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting you will get to choose an ongoing service coordinator. In making your choice these are the options to consider:

- A service coordinator who works for a local early intervention program;
- A service coordinator who works for Children's Medical Services; or
- If your child is medically fragile, your service coordinator will be from the Medically Fragile Case Management program and will work as a team member with the FIT Service coordinator during the intake process for Early Intervention and transition planning to exit Early Intervention.

Once you choose a service coordinator, the service coordinator will:

- Coordinate and assist in the development and review of the IFSP;
- Make sure that you receive the services that are on your IFSP; and
- Help you to access support services, such as parent groups.

Remember while you are participating in early intervention programs, you may choose to change your service coordinator at any time.

What is the role of the service coordinator during the IFSP process?

Your service coordinator will work with you and invite the people whom you choose to attend the meeting. In addition the service coordinator will help you organize your questions, concerns, and priorities.

What is the role of the service coordinator when my child is transitioning from the Family Infant Toddler Program?

Beginning 6 months before your child's third birthday, the service coordinator will assist in the development and the implementation of a transition plan for after early intervention. This person will;

- Discuss all options available to your family for life after early intervention.
- Insure all of the current and future providers are in attendance at the transition meetings.
- Help you make an informed decision that is right for your family and child.

What if the Early Intervention program does not offer the services that my child really needs?

Your service coordinator can help you identify and access the needed services from outside the early intervention agency.

Will our family receive service coordination after my child transitions?

Your service coordinator, under the FIT Program, can continue to work with you and the new program for 3 months (within six months of leaving early intervention), to ensure that the transition process is smooth and services are not interrupted.

What is the process if I disagree with services that are offered?

If there is a disagreement, try talking with the person you disagree with. Your service coordinator may be able to help resolve the disagreement informally. Each local early intervention program has a complaint procedure that can be used if you have a disagreement.

For more information on the FIT Program call:

Department of Health
Family Infant Toddler Program
Toll Free: 1 (877) 696-1372
or visit their website:
www.health.state.nm.us/ltsd/fit

For more information call Parents Reaching Out. We offer phone consultations and provide workshops in English or Spanish to communities throughout New Mexico. This publication was developed under a grant from the New Mexico Department of Health Family Infant Toddler program. However, the views here expressed do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Health and should not be assumed to be an endorsement by the New Mexico Department of Health.