

Early Intervention Principles

What does that mean to our families?

1. Infants and toddlers learn best through every day experiences and interactions with familiar people in familiar contexts.

- Therapists will use the toys and materials found in the child's home or community setting
- Therapists will help the family understand how their toys and materials can be used or adapted
- Therapists will use activities that the child and family are interested in, in order to build on their strengths
- Therapists will use observations, family input, formal and informal developmental measures to understand the child's strengths and developmental functioning
- Therapists will help caregivers engage their child in enjoyable learning opportunities that allow daily practice and mastery of emerging skills in natural settings (everyday activities such as bathing, meal times, dressing...)
- Therapists should focus their time on teaching caregivers' how to encourage their child's participation in naturally occurring, developmentally appropriate activities with peers and family members (this includes siblings!)

2. All families, with the necessary supports and resources, can enhance their children's learning and development.

- ALL families have strengths and competences
- ALL family members have a significant roll in supporting the child's learning
- Family outcomes (see attached document) and intervention strategies should match the families' priorities, needs and interests
- Family outcomes (see attached document) should build on routines and activities the family wants and needs to do
- The type (ex: speech) and how often services are to be put in place should be determined by the entire team (Team includes: Family, Service Coordinator, and therapists)
- Service Coordinators and therapists will always conduct themselves in a respectful, trustworthy, professional manner
- Service Coordinators and therapists will keep all information shared by the family, about the family or child, **confidential**
- Service Coordinators and therapists will suspend judgment in order for families to feel comfortable in sharing their needs and interests
- Service Coordinators and therapists will build upon the family's supports and resources; help locate community services that may match the family's needs and reduce stress

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3. The primary role of the service providers in early intervention is to work with and support the family members and caregivers in a child's life.

- The family is the EXPERT on their child
- Therapists will conduct themselves in a professional manner and establish a working “partnership” with families
- Therapist is to coach and support the family in a manner that makes it possible for all family members to learn how they can help the child
- Therapists will provide information, materials and emotional support to enhance families’ naturally assist their child’s learning and development
- Therapists will point out how a child has “natural learning” opportunities through out the day so that families can naturally encourage development when the therapist isn’t present
- Therapist will involve families in discussion about what they want to do and enjoy doing; identifying the family routines and activities that will support the desired outcomes
- Therapists will celebrate family successes; helping the family to see and understand the progress their child is making

4. The early intervention process, from initial contacts through transition, must be dynamic and individualized to reflect the child's and family members' preferences, learning styles and cultural beliefs.

- Evaluations will address the family's initial concerns and will occur at a reasonable preference for time and place
- The Service Coordinator and therapists will assist the family in feeling prepared to participate in the IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan) meeting
- The family is just as important a team member as are the therapists and Service Coordinator
- The Service Coordinator and therapists will help the family feel confident in participating with the development of outcomes (see attached document), strategies, activities, services, and supports
- The IFSP will be tailored to fit the unique needs of each family
- Services provided will be done in a flexible manner that are responsive to each family's cultural, ethnic, racial, language, socioeconomic characteristics and preferences
- Services will be adjusted in frequency (how often – 1 time a week) and intensity (how long – 60 minutes) as the needs of the child and family change
- The IFSP document can be changed as often or as needed to reflect the changing needs, priorities and lifestyle of the child and family
- The Service Coordinator and therapists will respect the values, expectations, commitments, recreational activities and pressures in a family's life

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5. IFSP outcomes must be functional and based on children's and families' needs and priorities

- IFSP outcomes will be based on the families' concerns, resources, and priorities
- Functional outcomes will be written that result in support and intervention aimed at improving a child's social relationships, awareness, and independence
- Outcomes will focus on the child's participation in community and family activities
- Outcomes will build on a child's natural motivation to learn and do
- Outcomes will be able to be worked on within the families typical day
- Outcomes should be written in a measurable way that the family will understand when the outcome has been met

6. The family's priorities, needs, and interests are addressed most appropriately by a primary provider who represents and receives team and community support.

- Therapists will talk with families about how children learn best through play and practice in all their normally occurring activities
- Therapists will have continual discussions with the family in order to stay informed about changing circumstances, priorities and needs
- Therapists will plan and record consultation (via telephone) and occasional visits with other team members (co-treatment sessions)
- Therapists will coach and support the family to carry out the strategies and activities developed with the team
- Not all services need to be provided at the same frequency and intensity. The team should be developed based upon the child and family outcomes and priorities
- The Service Coordinator and Therapists will not provide a duplication of services

7. Interventions with young children and family members must be based on explicit principles, validated practices, best available research and relevant laws and regulations.

- Service Coordinators and Therapists will update their knowledge, skills and strategies by keeping informed of new research via professional journals, becoming a member of their national association, and attending trainings provided by the early intervention system
- Therapists will meet with other early intervention providers on as regular monthly basis
- Service Coordinators and Therapists will check the Provider Connections website on a regular basis in order to stay informed of early intervention policy changes and credential requirements
- Therapists should be able to provide a rationale for practice decisions
- Therapists need to perform their practices within relevant laws and regulations