



Let's Talk

Working With Your Service Coordinator

“Max was born 6 weeks early. Now he’s ready to leave the hospital. I’m told he needs a lot of help. He’s supposed to see someone about his hearing, someone else about his eating, and someone else about his movement. I’m feeling overwhelmed and worried. There is so much to remember and so much to do. I feel pulled in many different directions. I just want to hold my baby and hide.”

—Marcia

Your Service Coordinator

Many parents entering the world of early intervention don’t know where to begin. You have to deal with new words, new professionals, and many other choices. You only want what’s best for your child.

Someone can help you with all these decisions. This person is called a service coordinator. Another name is case manager. A speech-language pathologist, or SLP, may be the service coordinator.

A federal law, known as Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), allows you to have a service coordinator for your child. Other services included in the law are:

- Assessment—testing your child to see how he is doing with speech, language, movement, and more
- An individualized family service plan, or IFSP—the team plan that has all the information about your child and the services he will get
- Early intervention—the services your child will get, such as speech-language pathology or physical therapy

Fast facts

- Children in early intervention may need many different services.
- A service coordinator can help.
- A speech-language pathologist, or SLP, may be the service coordinator.

What Does a Service Coordinator Do?

A service coordinator:

- Makes sure your child is getting services she needs
- Helps you understand the different services your child may need
- Helps you find needed services
- Works with you and other professionals to form a team
- Helps you and other team members write the team plan

Your service coordinator may also:

- Help with planning when your child goes to preschool
- Help you meet other families of children with special needs if you want
- Help you find answers to your questions
- Teach you new ways to help your baby grow and learn
- Meet or speak with you on a regular basis

Working on an Early Intervention Team

You may feel uncomfortable on a team with lots of professionals you don't know. But remember, you know your child best and are the expert on your child. In this way, you are the most important person on the team.

You can help the team by:

- Asking questions to get all the information you need
- Asking about anything that isn't clear
- Telling the team what's important to you and your child
- Giving your opinion about your child's services
- Helping the team know how you want to be involved in your child's early intervention services



Working With Your Service Coordinator

Checklist for Families

Families should feel good about their child’s early intervention services. But your service coordinator needs help knowing how you feel about your part in those services.

Place a check mark in the boxes where you can answer “yes.” Ask your service coordinator for help when you need it.

- I am involved in the early intervention team.
- Meetings are held at good times for me.
- I get help with child care and other costs for team meetings.
- I feel comfortable talking during team meetings.
- I feel respected by all team members.
- I have chances to learn more about my child’s strengths and needs.
- I get the information I need.

“The hospital put me in touch with a service coordinator. She helped me make so many important decisions. I feel less stressed already. I feel better knowing there’s someone to help me with the early intervention services my child needs.”
 —Marcia

**Early intervention services can change your child’s life.
 A service coordinator can help.**

To learn more about service coordination or to find an SLP near you who has been certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), visit www.asha.org or call **800-638-8255** or (TTY) **301-296-5650**.

My SLP’s name is

Appointment

Compliments of
 American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
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