



Role of Family Support Subcommittee

September, 2001

The Interagency Early Intervention Committee (IEIC) Family Support Subcommittee manages the IEIC Family Support Plan and its implementation. The focus on family support is an effort that began in 1995. The Family Support Subcommittee is required by the application process.

Membership:

Parent Majority

Each subcommittee MUST consist of a parent majority. Although every agency does not have to be represented on the subcommittee, professional representation is very helpful and strongly encouraged. A partnership between parents and professionals in planning shares the responsibility and enhances the ownership of the plan.

Criteria

Parent members must be the parents of children with special needs, but it is not necessary for parent members of this subcommittee to be members of the IEIC.

Where to Find Parent Members

Other parents	Early Intervention staff
IEICs	Direct service staff
Support groups	Medical center staff
Advocacy organizations	Disability organizations / associations
Agencies, education, social services, public health, child-care, etc.	

Diversity Considerations

Aim for diversity in parent membership, keeping in mind such things as: gender, socioeconomic status, disability type, ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Committee membership should reflect the makeup of the community. CAUTION: Do not solicit your subcommittee membership from an exclusive group, such as a mom's support group, a Down Syndrome support group or a specific Early Childhood Special Education classroom.

Responsibilities:

1. Designate a Family Support Contact person.
2. Do a Needs Assessment of families in the area, both formally and informally.
3. Plan family support activities based on the data that was gathered.
4. Complete the "Annual Allocation Plan" as required by the Department of Children, Families and Learning. This would include:

- **Work Plan.** The more detail included in the work plan, the more effective

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these efforts will be. Indicate specific activities, responsible persons, timelines, etc.

- **Budget.** Detailed estimates and breakdowns of the budget will facilitate timely and appropriate expenditures. Professional input may be very helpful here. **SUGGESTION:** Request from an administrative designee a written description of the process and a completed sample form for requesting payment for expenses/reimbursement. If possible, also receive this information through a verbal presentation to the group.
 - **Changes/Growth.** Carefully consider where you were and where you are currently in your initiative to support families. Aim for changes. Watch for an increase in participation at events, greater diversity of approaches in how you address needs, improved quality at events, evidence of more community partnerships, greater parental involvement in planning, etc.
5. Manage the activities identified in the work plan. This entails either regular monthly or quarterly meetings to ensure that activities are happening as planned and that expenditures are on target. While the final authority for the implementation of your annual allocation plan falls to the IEIC and its fiscal host, the Family Support Subcommittee assumes a great responsibility in the daily operations of family support activities.
 6. Report to the full IEIC on a regular basis regarding: activities, ongoing needs, data and trends, successes and issues. Written reports and updates should be shared with the IEIC chairperson for documentation. Verbal reports given at meetings and parent stories are appropriate.
 7. Look for ways to combine resources, collaborate on projects and initiatives and strive to find ways to continue the support for families as their children get older.

A strong, well functioning IEIC Family Support Subcommittee is necessary for the success of family support efforts. This is a process that grows over time.