



Enhancing Family Participation in the IFSP/IEP Process

Options for Family Participation

**Kansas Inservice Training System (1999)
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Initiating a Family-Guided Approach

- 1) Emphasis is placed on choices for families. Implementation of their decision-making role is encouraged from the beginning. Initial decisions are easy choices for families to make but serve as basis for later, more complex decisions.
- 2) Information and resources that assist in making decisions are provided. Manageable amounts of information and choices to be made are given at any one time. Decisions aren't required immediately.
- 3) Families participate in concrete activities that have a practical and obvious use for program planning. Activities include participating in assessments, choosing toys and materials for observation, or demonstrating skills their child can do.
- 4) Opportunities to share information are planned. Each visit/contact includes both designated times to share information and spontaneous descriptions of what is occurring. Families don't wait to hear the assessment results.
- 5) Examples from other families or connections with another, more experienced family, are integral parts of the process (at parent request and with permission). Veteran parents from the program or parent-to-parent matches help support families in making choices.
- 6) Respect is shown for parent choices and decisions. Family members gain confidence in their ability to make early intervention decisions when their decisions are supported rather than questioned or changed.
- 7) A structure or framework for active participation is embedded in the IEP or IFSP process.

Family-guided Approaches to Collaborative Early Intervention Training and Services (FACETS), 1996, Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities at Parsons, 2601 Gabriel, Parsons, KS 67357.

How To Implement Family-Guided Values While Gathering Assessment Information

1. Ask only for information that has a specific purpose.
2. Assist families in identifying their interests, needs, and strengths through the use of conversations, checklists or in problem solving dialogues.
3. Provide opportunities for open ended comments or responses. Let families "guide" how much and when they share sensitive information.
4. Focus on areas of family concerns, such as: child interests, family interests, and community interests.
5. Focus on strengths and wellness. Present questions, comments, and information in a positive manner.
6. Adapt for differences in lifestyle, religion, beliefs, and coping strategies of the family.
7. Use instructions and language that are clear and understandable. Explain any jargon used.
8. Include existing community resources in information and questions. Identify informal supports.
9. Ask family members to determine who they want to participate in the information sharing, when and where it will occur, and types and amounts of information to be shared.
10. Have families review all written information and determine if accurate and acceptable. They determine what information will be shared and with whom it will be shared. (This includes verbal as well as written information.)
11. View information gathering as a continuing process rather than a discrete activity.
12. Systematically review, as a team, completeness of information gathered to reduce duplication of efforts and expedite intervention.