

**Family Engagement,  
IFSP Facilitation  
&  
Consensus Building  
For  
Service Coordinators**



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Early Steps State Office**

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**Early Steps System**

**What is our mission or goal?**

- \* To provide services & supports to build the family's capacity to meet the developmental needs of their child
- \* To help children to reach their greatest potential
- \* Others?



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Nurses nurse  
And teachers teach  
And tailors mend  
And preachers preach  
And barbers trim  
And chauffeurs haul  
And parents get to do it all.

\* Babs Bell Hajdusiewicz



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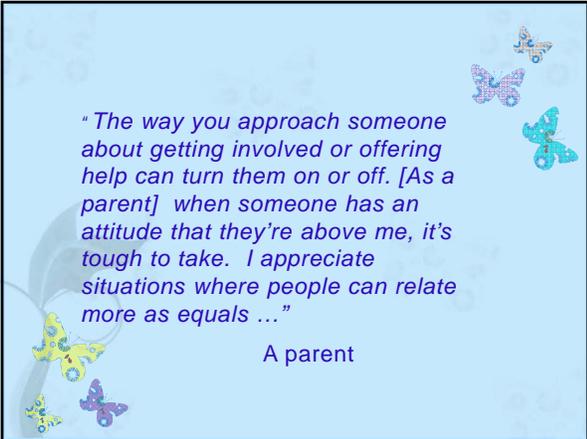
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*"The way you approach someone about getting involved or offering help can turn them on or off. [As a parent] when someone has an attitude that they're above me, it's tough to take. I appreciate situations where people can relate more as equals ..."*

A parent



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**Take time to identify strengths and capabilities:**

- Listen for strengths as the family tells their story
- Build on strengths rather than focusing on correcting deficits/weaknesses



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**Family strengths you may recognize:**

- Coping strategies to handle life events
- Ability to adapt family roles to accomplish family tasks and meet family needs
- Ability to take information provided by others and use it



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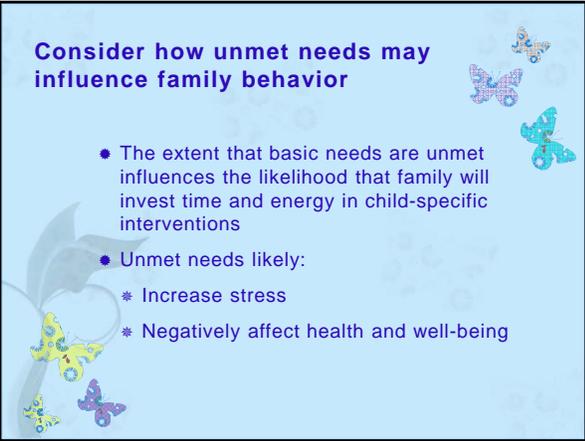
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### Consider how unmet needs may influence family behavior

- The extent that basic needs are unmet influences the likelihood that family will invest time and energy in child-specific interventions
- Unmet needs likely:
  - \* Increase stress
  - \* Negatively affect health and well-being



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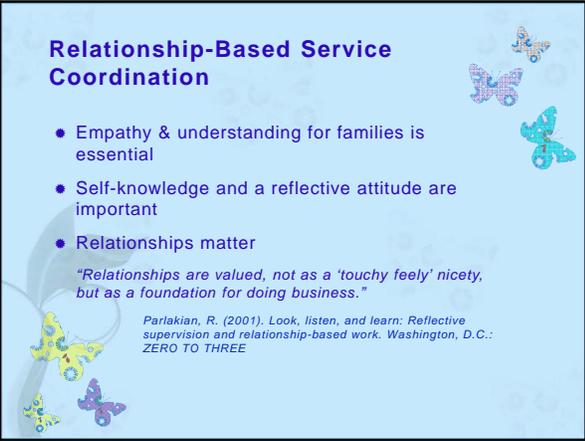
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### Relationship-Based Service Coordination

- Empathy & understanding for families is essential
- Self-knowledge and a reflective attitude are important
- Relationships matter

*"Relationships are valued, not as a 'touchy feely' nicety, but as a foundation for doing business."*

Parlakian, R. (2001). *Look, listen, and learn: Reflective supervision and relationship-based work*. Washington, D.C.: ZERO TO THREE



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### Service Coordinator ensures that:

- Families make *informed* decisions about services, resources and opportunities for their child
- Families learn to communicate the needs of their child/family with professionals

*Encourage, enable and inspire*



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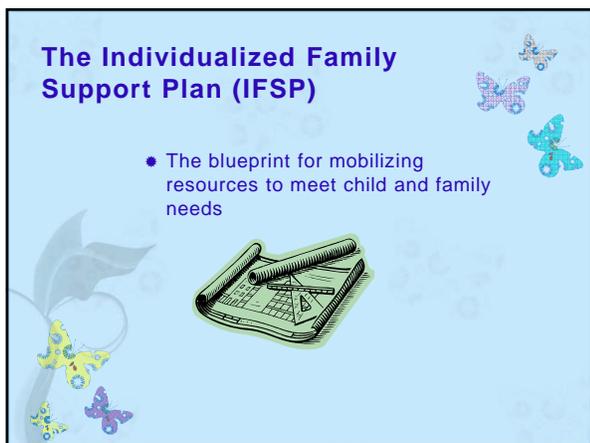
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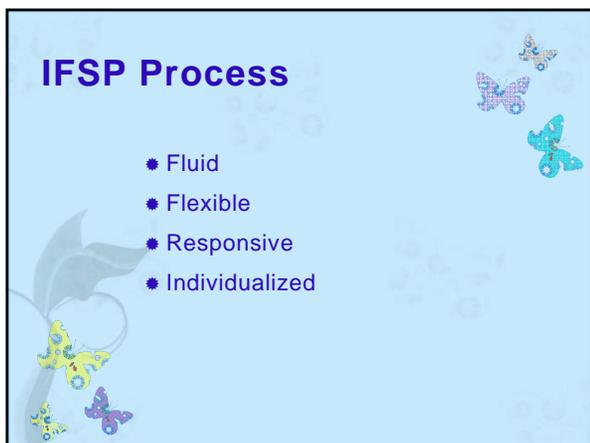
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**Service Coordinator ensures the family's prior awareness and knowledge re:**

- Who we (Early Steps) are and what we do
- The purpose of the IFSP – the written document
- The IFSP meeting format and structure
- Ongoing role of the service coordinator
- Identifying learning opportunities in the home and community where other children participate – then identify EI services & providers to enhance those learning opportunities
- Evaluating progress and outcomes for services & supports
- Families' rights and responsibilities

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**“De-mystify” the process**

- Full disclosure at the outset
  - \* Why information is being requested
  - \* How it will be used
  - \* Who it will be shared with

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**Collaborate with family concerning:**

- IFSP meeting participants
  - \* The family's right to have additional people attend
- Meeting time & place
- Meeting agenda
  - \* How the meeting will flow
  - \* Who will speak first, etc.

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## Setting the Tone for the Meeting

- Schedule ample time for the meeting
- Structure meeting space to be comfortable
- Arrange room so everyone is able to see and hear others
- Provide a working surface/table for viewing documents and taking notes
- Come with open minds and blank forms (*although some information may have been completed in discussion with families during "First Contacts"*)

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## Setting the Tone/Ground Rules

- Turn off cell phones
- One person speak at a time
- Listen respectfully to all (even if there is disagreement)
- If you disagree, do not attack the person
- Do not interrupt a person who is speaking
- Do not make fun of others' ideas
- Try to understand other points of view

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## Displaying Information

- Copies of forms and documents
- Flip charts
- Colored markers
- Post-it notes
- Dot stickers
- Screen
- Parking lot

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## Periodically Check In

• Consider:

- \* Purpose: Are we focused on the child/family?
- \* Process: Is the present approach working?
- \* Pace: Are things moving too quickly or too slowly?
- \* Pulse: Are participants energized or tired, satisfied or frustrated?

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## Debrief & Reflect

- What went well in the discussion? How do you know?
- What was difficult in the discussion and why?
- How were disagreements and conflicts handled?
- Did everyone get a chance to participate? If not, why not?

*"You don't have to be sick to get better."  
Ian Pumpian*

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## Consensus Building



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## Communicating and Building Agreement

- Address all proposals
- Check for understanding/clarity
- Review advantages & disadvantages
- Guide discussion toward the future
- Support and honor the IFSP process

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## Listening Techniques

- Paraphrase
- Perception check
- Proper body language
- Pay attention & listen for embedded proposals/concerns

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## Ask Follow-Up Questions

- Open ended questions
  - \* Avoid 'yes/no' -- 'true/false' type questions
- Purpose:
  - \* To better understand & learn more
  - \* To explore alternatives & feasibility
  - \* To assess issues, ideas & proposals

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## Initiate Early Conflict Management

- Implement *Consensus-As-You-Go*
  - \* Straw poll: How close are we to agreement?
  - \* Negative poll: Is there anyone who can't live with the decision?

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## Challenging People – “The Over-Talker”

- Always has plenty to say
- Loves to be the first person to speak
- Tips:
  - \* Affirm their contribution & remind everyone of ground rules and that it is an equal participation team
  - \* Speak to them outside team (if necessary) – ask them to commit to not being the first person to speak OR work out a subtle signal to give them when they are talking too much

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## Challenging People – “The Non-Talker”

- Quiet person
- Never wants to share
- Tips:
  - \* Call on them periodically to share (being careful not to scare them off)
  - \* Affirm them big-time when they do share
  - \* Speak to them outside group (if necessary) – remind them how valuable their perspective is

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## Challenging People – “The Tangent-Starter”

- Loves to get the team off track by starting random tangents
- Tip:
  - \* Firmly bring the team back on track
  - \* Speak to them outside team (if necessary) – affirm their contributions but let them know that the tangents make your job harder



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## Challenging People – “The Insensitive Person”

- Cuts people off
- Makes fun of or criticizes ideas and people
- Offends members of the team
- Tip:
  - \* Remind everyone of ground rules
  - \* Outside team (if necessary) – let them know how their behavior disrupts the team process & ask them what they can do to be sure team members are more comfortable



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## Reconciling Conflict

- Restate each party's position and empathize with each situation
- Discover each person's underlying interest
- Ask for or propose options
- Build small agreements



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## Video Clip

- What is wrong with this IFSP meeting?
- What should have happened?

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*“Knowledge is knowing  
a tomato is a fruit.  
Wisdom is not putting it  
in a fruit salad.”*

Miles Kingston

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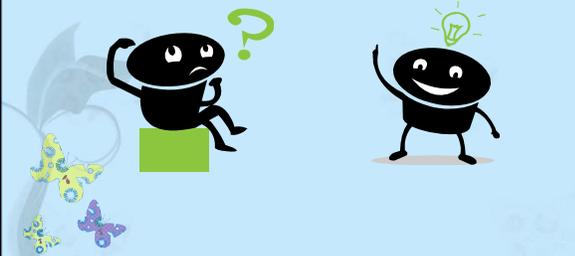
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## Questions/Comments?

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