



The Individualized Family Service Plan Process

SESSION

8

Facilitator's Script



1 hour,
45 minutes total

The Individualized Family Service Plan Process



5 minutes

Introduction and Overview

Welcome to our training session on “The Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) Process.” My name is _____. I represent the voice of _____ (family, early intervention, early care and education). Facilitating with me today are _____ (name/voice) and _____ (name/voice).



Facilitators briefly introduce themselves and describe the unique background and experiences they bring to this session.

This session will focus on the Individualized Family Service Plan process and each team member’s role, before, during, and after the plan’s development.

We anticipate working together for a little over an hour and a half.



Add participant introductions/openers, as needed.

Review the Learning Outcomes and Agenda.

See Facilitator's Guide.

Learning Outcomes



Handout #1: Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes for this session are:

- ◆ *Participants will develop an understanding of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) process and their role before, during, and after the plan's development.*
- ◆ *Participants will recognize and value the different roles and perspectives of all IFSP team members, particularly those of families and service providers.*

Agenda

Agree on Ground Rules

The Individualized Family Service Plan Process

- Lecturette
- Small-Group Activity
- Large-Group Share-Back

Wrap-Up

Reflections/Continuous Improvement



5–10 minutes



Agree on Ground Rules

See Facilitator's Guide.

Chart and post ground rules.



1 hour,
15 minutes total



15 minutes



The Individualized Family Service Plan Process

Lecturette

Each state has different regulations for services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. The information presented here represents the basic components and requirements from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Presenters should feel free to add specifics that apply to their state, but not to delete the essential information provided here.

The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System (NECTAS) and the Association for the Care of Children's Health (ACCH) have described the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) as "... a promise to children and families—a promise that their strengths will be built on, that their needs will be met in a way that is respectful of their beliefs and values, and that their hopes and aspirations will be encouraged and enabled." (McGonigel & Johnson, 1991, p.1).

The Individualized Family Service Plan Process

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Part C, supports a family-centered approach in how early intervention services are provided in environments with typically developing peers. Services are designed through a team approach, with families identifying their resources, priorities, and needs in creating positive learning environments for their children.

As we move through this session, let's focus on the promise—the true definition and the meaning of the Individualized Family Service Plan and the family-centered approach in how services are provided.

What is an Individualized Family Service Plan or IFSP?

- ◆ *It is both a form to be completed and a process to guide the delivery of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.*
- ◆ *It records the desired outcomes for the infant or toddler with a disability and his/her family.*
- ◆ *It is based on each family's resources, priorities, and concerns.*
- ◆ *It is carried out by the partnership of families and service providers, including early care and education staff, early interventionists, and medical and social service providers.*

Why do we complete the IFSP?

- ◆ *It is the forum in which each family and its members express what they want (their resources, priorities, and concerns) for their child with a disability.*
- ◆ *It is the legal document that outlines how services will be provided to an infant or toddler with a disability and his/her family.*

Who participates in the IFSP?

- ◆ *Family members*
- ◆ *Service coordinators*
- ◆ *Others involved with the child and family—early interventionists, early care and education providers, health and medical staff, and other service providers*
- ◆ *Anyone else the family wishes to be present*

What is documented in the IFSP?

- ◆ *It contains each family's statement of its priorities, resources, and concerns.*
- ◆ *It identifies the name of the person who is designated as the service coordinator to support the family and to coordinate all of the services needed.*
- ◆ *It contains a description of each child's abilities and strengths.*
- ◆ *It states the desired outcomes for the infant or toddler with a disability and his/her family.*
- ◆ *It documents what early intervention services will be provided, who will provide them, how they will be paid for, and when they will be provided.*
- ◆ *It contains a statement of how early intervention services will be provided in natural environments.*

What can family members do to contribute to the IFSP?

- ◆ *Think about what you want for your child and family—**dream.***
- ◆ *Share your view of your child's special needs.*
- ◆ *Ask questions.*
- ◆ *Remember: Family input is essential!*



30 minutes

Small-Group Activity

We are going to begin an activity now that is designed to help us consider what family members, early interventionists, and early care and education staff need to do **before** the IFSP meeting, **during** the meeting, and **after** the meeting. Remember, the IFSP is a process and not just a piece of paper. It requires ongoing communication and collaboration among team members—including families—throughout the process.



Handout #2: IFSP Situation I: Yolanda

Handout #3: IFSP Situation II: Darrin

We will break into small groups according to our roles as family members, early intervention providers, or early care and education staff and consider 1 of 2 scenarios. Please take out the handout “Yolanda” or “Darrin” for discussion in your small group.



Divide people into small groups by their roles. If the group has a fairly equal number of parents, early care and education staff, and early intervention staff, divide them according to the participants' actual roles. In each working group there should be 4 or 5 participants—for example, if you have 9 family members, 12 early care and education service providers, and 7 early interventionists, organize them as follows:

- 2 family groups, 1 of 4 people and 1 of 5 people
- 3 early care and education staff groups, 4 people each
- 2 early intervention groups, 1 of 3 people and 1 of 4 people

If participants largely represent 1 group, assign people to each of the 3 roles—families, early intervention staff, and early care and education staff—to consider the situation from that role's perspective.

Make sure that groups representing the same role are working on different scenarios (i.e., one "family" group will work on Yolanda's situation, while the other "family" group works on Darrin's situation).

Be sure you have planned where the small groups will meet so that they have space and can speak freely.

Tell the groups where they should meet and when they need to finish and be prepared to share back. Circulate among the groups to be sure they understand their task and to listen to their thinking. This will help you to integrate the summary after the share-back.

Read the situation provided. You may do it individually or as a group, with one group member reading it aloud. Then discuss what it means **for your role** and what you need to do:

- ◆ *Before the IFSP meeting*
- ◆ *During the IFSP meeting*
- ◆ *After the IFSP meeting*

Also discuss:

- ◆ *With whom do you need to collaborate?*
- ◆ *What information do you need?*
- ◆ *Who can provide that information?*

You may record your ideas on the back of your handout.

You will have 30 minutes to complete your work. Remember to focus on your assigned role during all aspects of the IFSP process. When you come back, each group will be asked to share 1 or 2 ideas.



30 minutes



Large-Group Share-Back

Allot 10 minutes to discuss each scenario (about 3 minutes per role). Provide 10 minutes for the large-group discussion.



Which group would like to go first?

Did you have Darrin or Yolanda?

Please read your situation and state your role.

Share one idea about what you needed to do:

- ◆ *Before the IFSP meeting*
- ◆ *During the IFSP meeting*
- ◆ *After the IFSP meeting*



Ask who else had the same situation. Ask these groups to add different ideas for each of the 3 time frames.

Please read your situation and state your role.

Share one idea about what you needed to do:

- ◆ *Before the IFSP meeting*
- ◆ *During the IFSP meeting*
- ◆ *After the IFSP meeting*



Continue until you have feedback from all of the groups that had the first situation and then move on to the second situation using the same process.



As you listened to one another:

- *Were there similarities across roles?*
 - *Were there differences across roles?*
 - *What patterns did you see?*
 - *What are the implications for the various roles working together?*
-



Summarize by highlighting a few key points the groups discovered about the similarities and differences within and across roles. Stress the value and importance of family input and participation in the process.



5 minutes

Wrap-Up

In this session, we reviewed the elements of the Individualized Family Service Plan and focused on the IFSP as a process. The IFSP requires all participants to collaborate throughout the entire process because each brings a different and valuable perspective and has a different role to play. The IFSP team must plan together carefully and continue the work long after the meeting.



Are there any questions or comments about the training today?



Review Learning Outcomes.

See Facilitator's Guide.



10 minutes

Reflections/Continuous Improvement

We would like to give you an opportunity to think about how this session applies to your work situation. Please take a few minutes and list 2–3 strategies you can start to use right away.



Gather Continuous Improvement feedback.

See Facilitator’s Guide.

Your suggestions for improvements help us to make our sessions responsive to your needs as learners. We’d like to hear about what worked for you in this session and what could be done to improve.



Divide a piece of chart paper into two columns, as shown. Entitle one column **“What worked?”** and the other column **“Suggestions for improvement.”**

What worked?	Suggestions for improvement

Chart participants’ comments without rebuttal or discussion. Facilitators can act on these suggestions, as appropriate, in future training sessions.





What worked for you today?

What suggestions for improvement do you have?

Thank you for your participation today.

End training session

References:

Guidelines and Recommended Practices for the Individualized Family Service Plan, second edition, 1991. Mary J. McGonigel (Editor), National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System (US).

Beach Center Newsletter, Beach Center on Disability
www.beachcenter.org

Wisconsin Individualized Family Service Plan, Birth to Three Training and Technical Assistance website, Waisman Center, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin www.waisman.wisc.edu/birthto3/

Resources:

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY)
www.nichcy.org

National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC)
www.nectac.org

Office of Head Start, Administration for Children and Families (ACF)
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb

Office of Special Education Programs www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osep/index.html