

Coordinating School and County Service Plans for Your Child Using the Individual Interagency Intervention Plan (IIIP) Process

In Minnesota, if your child receives special education services as well as service from at least one additional public agency (such as county Social Services, Public Health, Mental Health or Corrections), you have service planning options.

You may continue to have separate annual planning meetings with separate written documents (for example, an Individualized Education Plan for school and an Individual Service Plan for county Developmental Disabilities services). Or you may request an Individual Interagency Intervention Plan (IIIP) meeting, where county, school and family meet jointly to plan the supports and services which will be provided in home, school and the community.

Your family and child's unique needs will determine which option is the best one for you and your child. If your child's needs in home, school and community overlap a great deal and would benefit from being addressed in a coordinated, comprehensive way, the IIIP process may be a good choice for you. Communication and behavior goals are examples of areas where school and county services may be working toward the same outcome in different settings. The combined meeting gives everyone the opportunity to look at the child as a whole, and to address the areas that are highly interconnected. Information is more easily communicated across agencies on an ongoing basis, which may result in more sharing of resources to accomplish common goals.

If, however, you prefer a meeting that focuses on the specific details of each goal, objective and service provided, individual plan meetings may be the best option for your family. This may also be a good choice if it is important for you to have a high level of control over the sharing of information, and if you prefer to keep home issues separate from school issues. As always, county

staff may be invited to attend the school's Individual Education Program (IEP) meeting, but they will not be using the meeting to plan their agency's services and supports, but rather to give input regarding the educational plan. (For more information about the IIIP, see PACER's Parent Handout PHP-c83: *Minnesota's Individual Interagency Intervention Plan.*)

If you decide to consider the IIIP process, you will want to find out how the specific IIIP process works in your community. Ask your county or school case manager who would be the best person to provide answers to the following questions:

- Who should I contact for pre-meeting planning?
- Who will facilitate the meeting? (You may be asked for your preference.)
- Who will attend the meeting, and what will their role and responsibilities be?
- Are there any forms I need to complete before the meeting? Who can help me if I need assistance in understanding and completing them?
- Does the school/county have a Parent Agenda, Family/Student Considerations and Concerns, and/or Meeting Summary form? (See sample forms at the end of this handout.)
- What are the next steps and timelines for the IIIP process?
- When can I expect to receive the new plan document(s)?
- What will the document look like? What will it be called?
- Who will have access to the document(s)?
- Can I control the sharing of sensitive personal information?
- If I disagree with a proposed plan or need further information, whom should I contact?

- When will agreed upon services begin?
- When will the IIIP team meet again?

Steps to Take Before the Meeting

Advance preparation is the key to a productive meeting. If you decide to use the IIIP planning process, there are several steps you can take which may result in a more efficient and effective meeting, as well as ultimately better outcomes for your child.

Planning for the Meeting

- Begin the process and contact your school IEP case manager and/or county case manager and request a IIIP meeting.
- Keep in mind that it may take a few weeks to arrange the meeting once you submit your request. Some agency personnel have large caseloads and limited availability.
- Include the names and contact information for any other individuals you would like to be invited to the meeting.
- Request that evaluation results and other written materials be given to you and the other team members for review prior to the day of the meeting.

Preparing for the Meeting

- If your child has been independently evaluated or assessed, and you would like the IIIP team to use the information in determining needed services, submit the information to the contact person for distribution to team members prior to the meeting.
- Review your child's current IEP and other agency plan(s), as well as the most recent evaluation information. If you cannot locate your copy, call the case manager and request a copy. Review progress reports.
- If possible, schedule a time to observe your child at school.
- Make a list of your child's strengths to build upon, and note the areas where he is currently experiencing success.
- Make a list of your child's needs and your concerns. Decide which issues are the most important to be addressed at the meeting, and list them on a Parent Agenda form.
- Complete the Family/Student Considerations form and/or other forms being used in your community. Consider those areas where it is especially important to address the concern in the

same manner at home, at school and in the community, (e.g., communication skills, toilet training, or inappropriate behaviors).

It may be helpful to think about the way you will approach the team with challenging issues. Presenting a concern as a problem may cause individuals to become focused more on determining whose problem it is and whose responsibility it is to fix it, than on a creative way to meet the need. Instead, try to come prepared with at least one "possibility" you can present at the meeting to address each area of concern. This will help get the team started off in a positive and productive direction.

For example, rather than stating, "My child has no friends in high school, and no one is doing anything to help him make any," say, "Would it be possible to work on some one-on-one relationship building with peers by pairing my child with a student from the National Honor Society for lunch once a week, or for a co-curricular activity?"

- Brainstorm with your family, other parents, service providers and disability advocacy organization representatives. When appropriate, ask for your child's input. If a particular individual may be key to the success of a portion of the plan, ask the case manager to invite them to the meeting.
- If you will be making a request for a significant change (e.g., a different placement, new program, etc.), inform your case manager before the meeting. It is also a good idea to ask that you be informed before the meeting of any significant changes the school, or other providers, are planning to bring up at the meeting. Since change of any kind, even positive change, is challenging, it is helpful to have time to process the possibility ahead of time. Dealing with the initial emotional reaction before the meeting, will allow you to devote more energy to objective problem solving during the meeting.
- Ask your spouse, other relative, or friend who knows your child well, to attend the meeting with you. Before the meeting, talk together about your areas of concern, and what you'd each like to see happen as a result of the meeting. Think about your child's progress. Make a list of what has been working well and what has not. Try to work out any major differences of opinion between you and your spouse before the meeting. Carefully considering issues from more than one point of view, and objectively weighing the pros and cons of one approach over another, is great preparation for the meeting.

- Decide if it is appropriate for your child to attend the meeting. When a student is 14 or older, the school is required to invite the student to the meeting. Parents have the right to make the final decision about their child's participation. It is common for most students in middle school or high school to attend at least a portion of the meeting. Hearing the student share about past successes, and what he or she needs to be successful in meeting future goals, can be a very powerful motivator for the team.

At the Meeting

- Treat all team members with the same level of consideration and respect you expect in return. As the parent, you want to be valued as the expert on your child. Other team members want to be valued as having expertise in their professional role. Everyone brings an important knowledge and experience base to the table. A willingness on each team member's part to be open and receptive to considering other points of view may lead to better outcomes for your child.
- Ask who will be taking notes, and if you will receive a written summary at the end of the meeting. You will want to leave the meeting with a list of team decisions and recommendations, indicating who is responsible for any needed follow-up action. (See sample "Meeting Action Plan" form at the end of this handout.)
- View yourself as an equal member of the team. Under the law, no one individual (including the parent or an administrator) is empowered to make the decisions. Since team agreement is essential to the provision of services and supports, use "we" language whenever possible. After sharing your concerns and desires, ask for team discussion and response. If it is not clear where people stand, you may want to ask, "Does the team agree?"
- Acknowledge and express appreciation for the team member's efforts on behalf of your child. Identify team and individual strengths and celebrate successes. Focusing only on what is not working can drain energy and lead to feelings of hopelessness. When effort results in a positive outcome in one area, there is increased motivation to keep working on other challenges as well.
- Keep the meeting focused on your own child's unique needs and the individualized approach necessary to address them appropriately. Remem-

ber that as the parent, you are the keeper of the long-range, big-picture needs of the whole child.

- Be an active listener. If you don't understand something, ask for an explanation. Ask the team to use language in the written plans that will be clear and easily understood by anyone who reads it.
- If you don't agree with something an individual says at the meeting, ask for the factual information (data) he or she is basing their assertion on. If there is no data to support the position, you may ask for additional evaluation to be completed in that area. If you anticipate disagreement, come prepared with data to support your own position as well. This may include independent evaluation or assessment information, progress reports, work samples, or videotaped examples of skills or behaviors.
- If time runs out before the team can address all of the items on the agenda, ask to schedule a second meeting to complete the plans.
- Be sure you understand what the team's decisions and who will be responsible for each task. Ask the team to indicate which of the agreed upon services and supports are subject to further approval. Each public agency has their own set of requirements and timelines.

Under special education law, a school district representative, with the authority to make decisions regarding the allocation of school district resources, must participate in the meeting. If an IEP team agrees that services are necessary for the student to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), the school district is obligated to provide those services as an entitlement.

Unlike special education, county services are not an entitlement. The county social worker or other agency representative usually will not have the authority to commit resources. They will need to take the plan recommendations back to the appropriate county administrator for approval. The provision of county services can depend on the availability of funds. There may be special criteria for eligibility, based on the child's level of need, and waiting lists may be in effect for particular services. Ask your county case manager for more information.

- Regardless of how challenging the meeting may have been, try to end the meeting on a positive note.

After the Meeting

- Relax. Find a way to reward yourself for a job

well done.

- It may be helpful to talk about the meeting with your spouse or other trusted family member or friend. If you are feeling highly emotional after the meeting, it's a good idea to give yourself a couple of days to process all the information before contacting school or agency personnel.
- Review your notes and the Summary Sheet, if provided. Check to see if there are any areas that require further action on your part.
- Record important timeline dates on your calendar.
- Send a follow-up note or email, thanking the team for their time and effort. You may also want to summarize your understanding of what transpired at the meeting, and ask to be contacted if your summary is not correct.
- If appropriate, talk with your child about the meeting. Pave the way for a positive approach to any anticipated changes.
- When you receive the proposed plan document(s), review them carefully. Contact the case manager if you have questions, need more information, or do not agree with some portion of the plan. In Minnesota, parents have 14 calendar days (from the day they receive the IEP) to agree or disagree with the program in writing. County plans have different timelines. Ask your county case manager when you can expect their portion of the plan, or the complete plan, if a single document is being used.
- Once a new plan is implemented, try not to judge its effectiveness prematurely. Keep track of progress. Although the planning team is required to meet annually to review and revise the written document as needed, you may request a meeting at any time to address a lack of progress, or if you have new information or concerns.

- Keep your file of current information, including the new written plan, where you can refer to it easily. As you receive progress reports during the year, add them to the file and note the progress on the plan document. Look for ways to work on related skills and/or behaviors in the home and community.
- Establish a mutually agreeable communication plan with your case manager(s). Find out the best way and time to contact them, and let them know what would work well for you.
- Provide periodic feedback to the rest of the team. When concerns arise, try to address them first at the lowest level, speaking directly with the staff person involved. Be sure to acknowledge when things are going well.

Additional Resources

- For more information about the Minnesota System of Interagency Coordination, visit the MnSIC website at www.mnsic.org. Under "Products & Resources" you will find the IIIP Guidebook & Forms, as well as additional training materials.
- For more information about the special education process, contact PACER for free parent-friendly publications, or to speak with a parent advocate at 1-800-537-2237 (out state) or (952) 838-9000. Additional information can be found at www.PACER.org and on the Family & Advocates Partnership for Education (FAPE) website at www.fape.org.
- For more information about your child's disability, contact disability-specific organizations. (Go to www.PACER.org or call PACER to request the "Resource List of Disability Organizations").

Individual Interagency Intervention Plan (IIIP) Coordinated Service Planning Meeting ~Parent Agenda~

To: _____ Today's Date: _____
From: _____ Contact Info: _____
Plans to be coordinated: _____
Student's Name: _____

Please complete and return this form in the enclosed envelope by: _____

The agenda for your child's meeting will be based on your input. Under each of the settings below, please list the items you would like to be addressed at the meeting. (Use the back of page if needed.) Before the meeting, this information will be shared with school, county, and other agency staff persons you have asked us to invite to the meeting.

Home (Examples of issues to consider: Basic needs, eating, toileting, physical health, safety, supervision, medications, sleep, equipment, self care, sibling or other family relationships, inappropriate behavior, communication skills, homework, sensory sensitivity, stress, etc.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

School (Examples: Academic progress, functional skills, behavioral concerns, busing, communication with staff, friends/classmates, inclusion, lunch, recess, scheduling of services, assistive technology, medications, extra curricular activities, accessibility, extended school year, school program options, transition services and supports, post secondary education/training options, employment, etc.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Community (Examples: Recreational and leisure activities, friends, community participation, supervision, safety, supports, transportation, social skills, communication skills, accessibility, inclusion, service opportunities, employment, etc.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Individual Interagency Intervention Plan (IIIP)

Coordinated Service Planning Meeting

~Family Concerns and Considerations~

Student's Name: _____

Date: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Describe how you see your child:

What are your long-range goals for your child?

What do you hope your child will learn to do in the next year?

What are his or her strengths? What does he or she do well?

What does your child enjoy?

What does your child dislike?

What concerns you most about your child at this time?

In which of the following areas does your child currently have a special need for supports and/or services?

- Getting around (mobility)
 - Communication/speech
 - Sensory Needs
 - Eating/nutrition
 - Sleeping
 - Toileting
 - Self help skills
 - Safety
 - Having fun with other children
 - Challenging behaviors/emotions
 - Social Skills
 - Special equipment or supplies
 - Health or dental care
 - Pain or discomfort
 - Vision
 - Hearing
 - Learning:
 - Accommodations
 - Assistive Technology
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Individual Interagency Intervention Plan (IIIP) Coordinated Service Planning Meeting ~Summary Report~

Date: _____ School District: _____

Student: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Parent(s): _____ Phone/email: _____

Service Coordinator/case manager(s):

Phone/email: _____

Phone/email: _____

Meeting Participants:

Summary of Meeting Decisions and Recommendations:

Action To Be Taken:

Target Date:

Person(s) Responsible:

