

The Primary Service Provider (PSP) Approach and the Service Coordinator's Role *Strategies and Advice from Seasoned Service Coordinators*

12.8.16

1. Get to Know Your Team. Communicate with other team members. Learn their roles and their expectations for your role.
2. Remember the bigger picture. What is the team there to accomplish?
3. Take time to reflect. Give yourself leeway with time so you can process new information.
4. Observe, observe, observe! Go on home visits to see services being delivered, observe other service coordinators and if possible, observe other teams.
5. It's not "all about the paperwork." Build your interviewing, assessment, and rapport-building skills so you can play a key role in getting to know families. (Recommended: Motivational Interviewing training, [OhioTRAIN Course # 1058588](#))
6. Don't get too comfortable too soon. Be friendly, but remember that you are there in a professional capacity. As rapport is established, you can dig deeper.
7. It's ok to make mistakes. Realize you are new and will not do everything perfectly the first time. And that's ok.
8. Recognize the importance of the first phone call. This is the family's chance to tell their story. *What have they experienced? What really matters to them? What are their routines and supports? What do they understand about their child's delay or disability?*
9. Use open-ended questions. This gives the family the opportunity to tell more of their story.
10. Be a resource. Learn all you can about available resources. Contact FCFC. Learn about local agencies so you can assist families and your team.
11. Speak up! You are an important member of the team and bring your own expertise. It is important to share your knowledge with the team.
12. Just listen. Families will be at different stages of the grieving process; listening will help you learn where they are and what they struggle with most.

Frequently-Asked Questions

Q: How do you prepare for team meetings, and what type of information do you share during *Welcome to the Program*?

A: Much of the organizing will take place at the meeting itself, so formal preparation is usually unnecessary. However, it is helpful to organize the information you have gathered from interactions with families and have it ready so you can answer questions. Another suggestion is talking to your supervisor about what the team will need from you. In addition, there is a guide developed by Rush and Shelden with guidelines for presenting information in team meetings. The guide is Appendix 7B in *The Early Intervention Teaming Handbook*.

Q: What are some strategies for observation at the initial visit? What are you observing, and how do you balance observation with other activities during the visit?

A: You may feel overwhelmed at first, but you will develop your own way of organizing and planning. Write down observations if you can, but don't worry about getting every detail. Get the family talking about the child, and this will provide answers to many of your questions. Get to know the necessary forms and have them organized before the visit. Carry extra signature pages!

Q: How do I deal with a "strong personality" who interrupts at meetings?

A: There are a number of strategies you can try. One is to stop, take a deep breath, and walk away if needed. You may find it helpful to vent to your supervisor or a colleague. Once you are calmer, think about what is really bothering you in the situation. Talk with the person who is exhibiting the behavior and try to be a resource for them.

If you are very passionate about something and feel you are not being heard, talk to your supervisor. Another idea is for the team to revisit ground rules and perhaps tweak them. Team facilitators should make sure everyone is being heard.

Q: What training would be helpful for understanding my role on the team?

A: The Motivational Interviewing online training is recommended. Another option is to contact your state consultant or ask for guidance from other Service Coordinators. On the job experience will be your biggest source of training, so give yourself time.

Q: Will electronic versions of forms be developed?

A: The IFSP is available in Word and PDF form via the [Help Me Grow](#) website. These can be downloaded to tablets and other devices. DODD is always trying to improve and can consider making other forms available electronically.