

Innovative Interventions, Inc.
Helpful Information for Families

We've put together some information, as well as some important policies regarding service delivery, that we hope will help you and your child get the most out of early intervention. We look forward to working with you and your child.

Putting your IFSP into action is a team effort! You and your family are important members of the team. Be a part of your child's services. You can do this by:

- Arranging services at times that will allow your participation.
- Asking providers working with your child to teach you the skills you need to help your child make progress.
- Keeping notes, a dairy or a journal about how services are working and how well your child is doing.
- Communication your concerns with the therapist, service coordinator and agency.

Summary of Parental Involvement as a Team Member:

- ✓ Communicate your goals for your child.
- ✓ Consider short term goals (next 3 months) and long term goals (next 3 years)
- ✓ Use IFSP as a guide; it can always be changed.
- ✓ Communicate with service coordinator and practitioners to schedule review meetings at appropriate times to ensure continuity of services.
- ✓ Be available to participate in review meetings.
- ✓ Attend therapy when possible and devise ongoing communication system with providers and other caregivers.
- ✓ Follow through with suggested therapy regimen between visits.
- ✓ Be sure providers communicate with each other.
- ✓ Communicate any problems and concerns early – don't wait until it's a big deal.
- ✓ Communicate family transitions to other team members (changes in location/phone#, marriage, death, divorce, etc.).

Service Encounter Verification Form and Session Notes

At every session you or your child's caregiver will be asked to sign the Service Encounter Verification Form. To ensure that services are accurately being recorded and billed, and that your cost share is accurately billed to you, please make sure that the date, service, service type column, start/end times are filled in and accurate BEFORE signing the form at each session. Please do not sign until missing information is filled in and accurate. Please do not "pre sign" or "post sign" for a whole month's worth of sessions. It is understood that there will be infrequent occasions when you cannot sign for a session due to forgetting or the form not being available. If you find that you are frequently asked to sign the form with missing or incomplete information, please let us know.

A session note should be left with you after each session which should include at a minimum your child's progress during the session, activities for you to follow up with until the next session and the next appointment date. This note can be written in a communication notebook or given to you by the therapist on the form the agency provides for this purpose. If you are not getting session notes, please let us know.

Reviewing, Evaluating and Changing the IFSP

Your IFSP is written for one year. During the year, there are times when the plan should be reviewed and even changed. As your child grows and changes, so will the early intervention needs of your family. To be sure your IFSP keeps pace with your family and stays useful, the NJ early intervention system requires:

- Six-month reviews of the IFSP and three-month reviews for children with autism receiving ABA (applied behavior analysis) to review outcomes and services.
- Annual meeting to review outcomes and services and write a new IFSP.
- A process for changing the IFSP between reviews.

The six month review and annual meeting to evaluate the IFSP are designed to make sure that the IFSP still makes sense for your child and family. You and the other participants will look at how well early intervention services have helped

your child and family meet the outcomes in your IFSP. You will also talk about what should be changed in the IFSP. This may include:

- Adding new outcomes and dropping old ones that have been reached or that are no longer important.
- Changing strategies and activities to help meet new outcomes or outcomes that have not yet been reached.
- Changing the services needed by your child and family.

Missed Services Policy

This agency's policy regarding missed services reflects the system-wide early intervention policy for missed services. A copy is enclosed with sections referenced below. Some important points are:

- If a family cancels or refuses services, the family is not entitled to make-up services for missed services due to this action (II:4).
- If a scheduled service falls on a state, federal or religious holiday, there is no entitlement to make-up services that result from the missed services (II:5). See Agency Calendar below.

Please note that even though families are not entitled to make-ups in the above cases, it is this agency's policy that services may be made up if the practitioner has the time available to do so, and the make-ups can take place in the same authorization period as the missed sessions. Please be considerate of your therapist's time and give him/her advance notice when canceling appointments, as you would like the therapist to do for you.

- If a practitioner cancels or fails to provide services in accordance with a current IFSP, the practitioner must offer the family the opportunity to receive make-up services following the second consecutive week of missed service (II:6; III:2).

Families are entitled to make-up sessions only after two consecutive weeks are missed. The therapist should attempt to reschedule sessions by offering the family available alternate time slots within the same authorization period. If the family declines the available time slot(s), the therapist is not required to pursue the make-up further. It is this agency's policy that therapists may always make up any missed sessions if their schedule allows within the same authorization period.

Cancellation/Make-ups and Authorization Period

- All make-ups sessions must occur with the same authorization period as the corresponding cancelled sessions. Cancelled sessions can no longer be "made-up" once the authorization period in which the cancelled session occurred has ended.
- Sessions may be made up one-for-one within the same authorization period. A missed session may also be made up by adding time to scheduled sessions. For example, a missed 45-minute session may be made up by adding 15 minutes to subsequent 45-minute sessions, assuming that the child is able to tolerate and that the longer session can be scheduled. A 60-minute session may be made up as two 30-minute sessions.

Substitution Policy

A planned absence (vacation, etc.) may be covered for up to a period of three consecutive weeks by a substitute therapist as long as the family consents and there is a therapist available who can take on the additional hours. This works especially well when there are several therapists in the home providing the same service, such as with an ABA program.

Agency Calendar

Innovative Interventions, Inc. is officially closed on New Year's Day*, President's Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day*

*When New Year's Day and Christmas Day fall on a Saturday, the office will be closed on Friday; when they fall on a Sunday, the office will be closed on Monday.