Obtaining Supports and Resources

One of the best ways of improving family life is for parents and other family members to be actively involved in obtaining family-identified supports and resources. Professionals who use family-centered practices can be especially helpful in encouraging family members to be actively involved in obtaining supports and resources. They should work with you in ways involving you in achieving what you want to accomplish for your child, yourself, and your family and not do everything for you.

This practice guide includes things you can do to be sure you and other family members are key players in improving family life.

DEC Recommended Practices: Family 2–6

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ecta Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

Identifying Your Family's Concerns and Priorities

- A cornerstone of family-centered practices is meaningful family member participation in child and family interventions. This simply means taking responsibility and action for improving those aspects of your family's life that are important to you.
- Start by making a list of the things you want to accomplish or see happen for your family. Discuss your concerns and priorities with the professionals working with you. Practitioners can be especially helpful in terms of clarifying what you want to accomplish.
- Ask the practitioners working with your family about the resources and supports that can be used to address your concerns and priorities. Practitioners are a very good source of information about different kinds of support and resource options. You should expect to be offered advice and suggestions in response to your concerns, priorities, and questions.
- You don't want to try to do everything at one time. Put the things you want to accomplish in order beginning with the things that are going to be the easiest to do to those that will take some time and effort to accomplish.
- Together with the practitioners working with you and your family record a list of the things you need to do to obtain each family-identified resource and support. You'll want to have a separate list for each thing you want to achieve or support you want to obtain. Identify the items on your list you and other family members can do on your own, and the things you will need do with others.
- The more you are actively involved in obtaining supports and resources, the stronger you and your family will become. It is much better to learn to do something for yourself than to have others do everything for you.

A Quick Peek

Sarah is an early childhood practitioner. Robert and Janelle Saunders are parents to Jackie, who has cerebral palsy. They have been working together for almost two years.

Jackie likes playing in water and Janelle has asked if there are any activities in their community that might work for her and her daughter.

The practitioner tells Janelle about a community pool, YMCA pool, and a pool at a local recreation center. She also mentions that the recreation center has a parent-child swim time three days a week.

Janelle and Sarah make a list of things that need to be done to figure out if the recreation center parent-child swim time might work for mom and Jackie.

Janelle visits the recreation center to find out how to enroll a child, identify swim times and days, get answers to her questions, and other things she needs to know so she can decide if swimming classes would be good for Jackie.

Janelle took responsibility for all action steps, and now she and Jackie go swimming two or three days a week, which they both enjoy.

Signs of Success

- You took the lead in developing an action plan
- You can do most of the plan steps with little assistance
- Your actions result in desired outcomes and benefits



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