



## Learning About Your Community Partners: Questions to Ask

Infants and preschoolers with disabilities and their families who are served in early care and education programs have a variety of needs that can rarely be met by a single program. In order to ensure that these children and their families have access to the full range of services, programs need to work cooperatively with other services in the community. As programs identify other community resources and begin to work together, it is important to understand other agencies' mandates, eligibility requirements, and guidelines in order to effectively coordinate services. This information may also be helpful in developing local interagency agreements. The following questions may assist programs in learning about other service providers.

- What is the general mandate for the agency or program?
- What ages are served?
- What geographic area is served?
- What disabilities are served? Are at-risk children also served?
- What are the eligibility criteria?
  - Ages served?
  - Are services limited to specific medical conditions or disabilities?
  - Are there specifications in the eligibility criteria regarding the severity of the condition?
  - If the age of the child or his/her condition changes, how does that affect eligibility for services? Are there different criteria for different ages?
  - Is eligibility contingent on space availability?
  - Is eligibility determined by family income?
  - Is parental payment or co-payment required?

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- What is the eligibility determination process?
  - Who can start the referral process?
  - What are the steps in the eligibility process?
  - Who decides eligibility?
  - What evidence is used to determine eligibility?
  - What are the timelines for eligibility determination?
  - Is there an appeal process? If so, how does it work?
- What are the priority areas for services for the agency/program (case management, therapy services, child care, etc.)?
- What is the process for transitioning children between programs?

## Worksheet

*Adapted from Project CRAFT, Chen, Brekken, Chan, Lynch, & Valverde, 1998*

How you might use this worksheet:

- To clarify your respective roles and responsibilities
- As a first step in developing an Interagency Agreement
- As a community resource guide
- To assist in creating a database of community resources
- To assist in orienting staff and families



<b>Other</b> <small>(social services, mental health, family support, etc.)</small>		
<b>Health services</b>		
<b>Early childhood special education</b>		
<b>Early intervention</b>		
<b>Early care and education</b>		
<b>Purpose of agency (their mandate)</b>		<b>Ages served</b>

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	Geographic area served	Types of children served (at risk/specific disabilities)	Eligibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ages</li> <li>• Type of condition/severity</li> <li>• Income eligibility</li> <li>• Space availability</li> <li>• Parental payment</li> </ul>
Early care and education			
Early intervention			
Early childhood special education			
Health services			
Other (social services, mental health, family support, etc.)			

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<b>Health services</b>			
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	<p>What is the eligibility determination process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who can start the process?</li> <li>• What are the steps?</li> <li>• Who decides?</li> <li>• What information is needed?</li> <li>• Timelines?</li> <li>• Appeal process?</li> </ul>	<p>Priority areas for services</p>	<p>Transition process</p>

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