

Communication and Advocacy Tips



Collaboration and partnership between you and professionals are essential to the development of family centered early intervention and to the success of the IFSP process. You may enhance your involvement in the Birth to Three Program by considering and practicing the following tips.

- ✓ Share your knowledge about your child, things he or she does well, ways he or she learns best, and abilities that others may not be aware of. Bring to meetings your list of questions or information you would like to provide.
- ✓ Ask questions about anything you don't understand. You may find that others will benefit from your taking the time to ask for more information.
- ✓ Express your feelings. Let professionals know when you feel they are doing a good job and when you have concerns about how things are going.
- ✓ Learn about your child and your family's rights to early intervention services. If you feel that those rights are not being protected, or if differences of opinion arise, attempt to talk things out. Look for ways to resolve issues, while keeping your child's needs in mind.
- ✓ Be a good listener. Over the years, you will have the opportunity to gather information from a number of sources about your child and family's needs and about services to meet those needs. When you combine that information with what you know about your child, you will have built a base of knowledge that will assist you in acting as your child's best advocate.
- ✓ Remember, typically there is not just one "right" way to do things and professionals do not have all the answers. They also have questions and doubts about what to do. You and the Birth to Three Program professionals can best shape your child's and family's services through sharing and collaboration.

You may also want to consider these ideas:

- ✓ Mark important dates on your calendar and attempt to attend all meetings relating to your child. If you need special supports in order to attend, such as transportation or child care, share those needs with your service coordinator.
- ✓ Keep copies of your child's evaluation and assessment information, IFSP plans, medical reports and other records in a file. Review important information before attending meetings that are held to plan or review your child's and family's IFSP.