

COORDINATE SERVICES

to Support Healthy Outcomes for Children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

A parent or guardian typically has the difficult job of accessing and coordinating the many services their child receives. Even for the most knowledgeable and organized parent, the demands of coordinating services can be overwhelming. By improving communication and coordination, the professionals who support children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) can reduce the burden on families and increase the likelihood that children with I/DD adopt and maintain healthy eating and active living behaviors.

Below are some basic guidelines to help you improve your communication and coordination efforts to support children with I/DD and their families.

Guidelines for improved communication and coordination:

- Increase your awareness of the challenges to eating healthy and being active faced by children with I/DD and their families.
- Become familiar with special education laws, guidelines, and personnel.
- Learn more about MaineCare funded services and personnel.
- Recommend goals and services that promote healthy eating and physical activity in a child's education and service plans (IFSP, IEP, and ITP).
- Use consistent goals and strategies to promote healthy eating and physical activity across all education, behavior, and service plans.
- Track and adjust goals and strategies in a child's service plans as needed to reflect any changes in a child's health and educational needs.
- Attend planning meetings with the rest of a child's team whenever possible, either in person or by phone or video conference.
- Consider rotating the location of planning meetings between the offices of different team members, such as the school, health care practice, and community service providers' offices to increase participation.
- Use the same terminology and respectful language as the rest of a child's team when talking to and about a child with I/DD.
- Call on liaisons who understand different settings to explain and share information about a child's needs. In schools a liaison might be the school nurse or social worker. In health care practices there may be a designated member of the team who helps coordinate services for complex patients.

be a
team
player!

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LET'S GO!

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