



## FIT Fact Sheet #1 Primary Service Provider Approach

### ***What is the primary service provider approach in early intervention?***

The New Mexico FIT Program has chosen to promote a transdisciplinary team approach to service delivery that is typically described in the early intervention literature as the “primary Service Provider approach”. This approach aims to provide more truly family central, responsive, coordinated, and integrated supports and services to meet the complex needs of infants, toddlers who are at risk for or who have identified developmental needs (King, Turner, Desserad and Shillington, 2009).

The Primary Service Provider Approach is one of the “Seven Key Principles of Early Intervention” that was identified by a number of leaders in the early intervention field that were brought together by the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) in 2008.

The Primary Service Provider approach encourages the team to share a commitment across disciplines to teach, learn, share and work collaboratively to support the child and family using the everyday learning opportunities meaningful to each family.

### ***Advantages of Primary Service Provider Approach:***

- Supports the family / caregiver to promote the child’s learning within everyday activities and strengthens the concept that intervention occurs between visits.
- Less intrusive to families as fewer people are involved directly with family.
- Promotes transdisciplinary approach to providing early intervention within daily routines, that is supported by national professional associations ASHA, AOTA, APTA\*.
- Emphasizes “joint thinking” through multiple perspectives about what’s working, how to address caregiver concerns, and problem solving.
- Visits with families are more effective, holistic and less fragmented for caregivers.
- Supports a relationship-based approach to providing early intervention. Relationships being the context in which learning occurs not only for the service provider and family, but for all team members.
- Team and team leader serve as consultants to the family.

- Capacity building for families and practitioners as team members share knowledge with each other.

### ***Common Misperceptions of the Team Based Coaching Approach***

The following are a few of the popular misunderstandings voiced by practitioners and clarifications about this approach:

<b>Misperception</b>	<b>Clarification</b>
1. The Developmental Specialist will be the assigned “lead” for all families.	The team lead is selected based upon what the family knows now, what else they would like to know, the primary needs of the child and outcomes on the IFSP. There is no presupposing of who on the team will be the lead.
2. The service coordinator is the lead on the team due to their unique role with the family.	The Service Coordinator is an integral member of the team, however, the team lead is an interventionist on the team who works in a coaching role with the family to promote the child’s development within everyday activities. The team lead will need ongoing communication with the service coordinator as the PSP approach requires considerable coordination of supports and services.
3. This approach is used to save money.	The type, frequency and intensity of supports and services the family receives is determined by the team, including the family, and is included in the IFSP. The mix of services provided is not necessarily cheaper.
4. Therapists serve as consultants only to the team lead and will not directly see children and families.	The team determines how best the outcomes on the IFSP can be met and this can include a mix of direct services, co-visits or consultation, as appropriate.
5. This is a watered-down approach.	Team members, as coaches, need solid knowledge, skills and experiences to participate in content conversations with team members and families. These exchanges allow all team members to build on their current understanding of the situation to explore jointly other strategies.

<p>6. This approach is only useful for certain families.</p>	<p>All families can benefit from support from an interventionist who gets to know them and their child and their family's activities and routines, and who is supported by knowledgeable members of the team.</p>
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**Sources:**

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- \*ASHA - American Speech & Hearing Association
- AOTA - American Occupational Therapy Association
- APTA – American Physical Therapy Association