

Glossary of Terms

Appeal Process

These are the steps to follow to have a decision about services reviewed and changed. Usually this involves proving why the decision was wrong or how it will harm your child and family. You should be given information about the appeal process when you first obtain services.



Eligibility Criteria

These form the basis on which children are allowed to get services from an agency. These criteria usually include age, disability, and income. They can also include where you live, whether your child is male or female, what kind of medical insurance you have, or what other kinds of problems your family is facing.

Family Focused

This approach to providing services views the child as a member of a family and recognizes that everyone in a family can be affected by how the others act, what they say, how they feel or how they are functioning. Decisions about services are made considering the family as a whole as well as the child with a mental health problem.

Family Involvement

Family Involvement is a collective effort requiring representation of all cultural ethnic and racial groups in the community in sufficient numbers so each has a real voice yet no one voice dominates the decision making. The family voice and the decision-making must be as strong as that of other partners. Family experiences and perspectives collectively drive policy, service planning, implementation and evaluation.

Initial Referral or Intake

An agency uses this process to learn about your child and family and determine your eligibility for services.

Parent Advocate

These individuals have been trained to help other families get the services and supports they need. Parent advocates are usually family members who have raised a child with a behavioral or emotional problem and have worked with many of the agencies and providers in your community.

Respite Care

This service gives a family a short break (relief) where someone else temporarily takes care of your child for a few hours or a few days. Respite care can be provided in your home, at the respite care provider's home, or at a special respite care facility.

Service Coordinator or Case Manager

This individual keeps track of the services and supports your child is receiving and makes sure they are working together in a manner that is easy for your child and family to use.

Service Plan

This written document lists and describes all the services and supports your child and family will receive. Typically, service plans include information about your child's and family's strengths, problems and needs. Good service plans also spell out what the services and supports are designed to accomplish as well as how and when progress will be assessed. If your child is receiving special education, the service plan is called an Individualized Education Program (IEP). A federal law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), describes who is eligible for special education and exactly what must be in an IEP.

Service Planning Team

You select this group of individuals to help develop your child's service plan. You choose the family members, professionals, friends, experts, and support people who will be team members. The team meets when it is convenient for you and as often as necessary to make sure your child and family are getting the help you need.

Strengths

These are the positive characteristics of your child and family. Everyone, no matter how severe their problems, does some things well, likes some people, and enjoys some activities.

System of Care

This a coordinated network of agencies and providers that make a full range of mental health and other necessary services available as needed by children with mental health problems and their families. It is designed to help children or adolescents with serious emotional disturbances get the services they need in or near their home and community.