

## **TREATMENT / COORDINATION ISSUES**

### Alternatives Available:

Mental health treatment usually includes a mix of approaches suitable to the age, diagnosis and circumstances of the child. Click for link to Medicaid Benefits and ask what is available in your service area..

### Coordinating Treatment Across Service Systems:

Designing the appropriate treatment for a particular child may be challenging when multiple systems, such as the school, Social Services or the juvenile justice system, are involved. Each of these systems has its own legal requirements for working with the child and the family. For mental health treatment to be effective, it is important for parents to be in agreement with each other. It is also important for parents to understand the role of each agency, to share relevant information, and to encourage communication between agencies. Signing releases of information is the first step in getting coordinated treatment for your child.

### The Role of Schools and Federal Laws:

A series of federal laws requires schools to provide equal education opportunities to all children, regardless of disability. The laws mandate a disabled child's right to free, appropriate special education and related services. The key Act P.L. 101-476, The Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA) Amendments of 1990 changed the name EHA to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This law reauthorized and expanded discretionary programs, mandated transition services and assistive technology services to be included in a child or youth's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

The basic principles of IDEA are that schools must provide education in the least restrictive environment and provide accommodations to allow the child to learn. Schools are required to locate, identify and evaluate a child for a suspected disability. Parents usually initiate the evaluation with a written request. Schools must provide an eligibility report to parents before the eligibility meeting so that parents can request an independent evaluation. If the child is found eligible, a meeting is set to write an IEP with goals and objectives. Parents may invite anyone who has knowledge of the child, and/or of the disability to this meeting.

IEPs must address the nature of the disability, the child's strengths and needs in all physical, emotional, and mental areas, and set out who is going to provide the different parts of the plan, i.e., adaptations in the classroom, technology, transportation, behavior support plan.

Schools also are required to write an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) to prepare teens for education and training after graduation from high school.

You can request a Staffing Preparation Packet and other IEP information from the Office of Consumer and Family Affairs, (970) 347-2367.

You can subscribe to a list serve managed by Advocacy for the Whole Child and the Advocacy Project, designed for parents, educators and service providers to explore special education issues and to help each other make it work for students with disabilities. Send an E-mail to: IEPsThatWork-subscribe@yahoogroups.com or check the website: [www.advocacyproject.net](http://www.advocacyproject.net)

You can receive detailed information about making IEPs from the PEAK Parent Center, in Colorado Springs, 1-800-284-0251.

If you need legal advice about disability status or IEPs, you can call the Legal Center for People with Disabilities in Denver, 1-800-288-1376.

### The Importance of Record Keeping:

When interacting with mental health providers, schools, social services or other service system providers, a number of records will be needed. It is helpful to have all of the child's records in a notebook or file box. When asked for information, parents should give copies of documents and keep the originals. Keep your file complete with the following information:

- Current picture
- Social Security Card
- Social Security Benefits Assignment Letter
- Birth Certificate
- Family Income Information (Under 18)
- Identifying and Emergency Information - allergies, medications
- Social History - in as much detail as possible
- Medical and Diagnostic Information
- Immunization Record
- Current Physical (ask the child's doctor for a copy)
- Education Documents (IEP, ITP)
  - IEP Individualized Education Plan
  - ITP Individualized Transition Plan
  - All school records
- Transition Planning Information
- Minutes/Documentation of meetings or phone calls
- Copies of correspondence with agencies