

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Division of Special Education**

**Methods of Providing First Steps Services**

**1. Consultation/Facilitation:** First Steps providers consult with other First Steps providers, other professionals (e.g. physicians), parents or caregivers regarding specific strategies or information that may help the child achieve his/her IFSP outcomes. Consultation occurs when the child is not present or when the clear purpose of the visit is for the First Steps provider to collaborate/share information with professionals, parents or caregivers. Consultation may be authorized with the intent of helping several providers coordinate their strategies that relate to a particular outcome, where all are working on the same outcome. (This is another means of facilitating a transdisciplinary or coaching approach.) It may also be authorized when it is determined that an early intervention provider needs to have one or more visits with the parent or caregiver to discuss effective intervention strategies. In any case, it is not essential for the child to be present for that collaboration.

Consultation should also be the method selected by IFSP teams for time designated by the professional level provider for supervisory activities, e.g. an Occupational

Therapist supervises a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (with or without the child being present) or an ABA consultant supervises an ABA implementer (with or without the child being present). As with any early intervention service, the necessary amount of time for this supervision must be determined by the IFSP team and authorized in the IFSP.

**2. Family Education, Training, and Support:** This includes specifically planned training designed for family members such as specialized sign language training, a course of study designed especially for parents regarding a specific training technique including behavior management, intervention strategy, disability, etc. The child is typically not present for this method of service.

**3. Direct Service:** This method of service involves working directly with a child and coaching/training parents, other family members, childcare providers, or other professional on strategies that will help the child and family achieve one or more IFSP outcomes. The child will always be present during this method of service and at least part of the time will be spent working with the child or modeling appropriate techniques with the child. This method of service may involve observation of the child and family, working with family and other caregivers or providers in conjunction with providing services to the child. This may involve such activities as providing guidance to caregivers regarding positioning, language stimulation, modifying environments etc. It may also involve professional to professional training, e.g. a Physical Therapist observes the child and demonstrates strategies for a provider from another discipline such as a Special Instructor on positioning or how to build muscle tone (transdisciplinary or coaching approach). This definition is consistent with Medicaid's description of direct services.

If the IFSP team has determined that group services are necessary to address one or more outcomes (e.g. a First Steps provider enrolled as a Special Instructor is working with a group of children in a Developmental Center or child care facility), the method of service will be shown as "Direct Service" and will be reflected as "Group Setting" on the IFSP. In this case the service provider will be working with a group of children and the provider will be reimbursed at the group rate.