

Otter Tail Family Services Collaborative

Working Together...

Serving Families

...Improving Lives

What is Service Coordination?

“Organized efforts between two or more agencies to ensure children with disabilities and their families get what they need in a way that makes sense.”

When families first learn that their child will need services and supports from multiple sources such as medical, health, special education, rehabilitation, county human services, and medical assistance, they may become overwhelmed. Parents may need to access, evaluate, and report separately to each of the systems. These agencies, programs, and professionals may have very different eligibility requirements, methods of service delivery, operation, and evaluation strategies. The lack of inter and intra-agency coordination and communication results in confusion for the person with disabilities and their family. In addition, it may create conflict among professionals, gaps in service provision, fragmentation of services, and sometimes duplication of services. The term service coordination reflects current concepts of family and person-centered philosophies, and emphasizes the central role the individual/family plays in identifying needed services. Service coordination will assist individuals and families in working with complex systems across agency lines, and will enhance their ability to live full lives in the community and school. A person/family-centered service coordination system works with individuals and families to —

- Identify the needs of children with disabilities and their families.
- Find services that address the need and build capacity of children, youth and families.
- Address gaps in available services.
- Identify and coordinate sources of payments for services.
- Coordinate the delivery of services.
- Coordinate on-going evaluation of services and supports.

What this really means is that we want to simplify our current way of providing services to children and youth with disabilities and their families. We want to try and reduce duplication and increase user-friendly access to services. We want to ensure that children and youth with disabilities and families get what they need through services that are coordinated and delivered in a way that makes sense.