

START STRONG! STRATEGIES FOR LEADING AND ADVOCATING FOR YOUR PART C SYSTEM IN AN EFFECTIVE WAY.

The Part C Coordinator has the leadership responsibility for administering the early intervention program in a state so that all federal and state requirements are being met including building a high quality early intervention system. Part C Coordinators are expected to understand federal and state regulations, data and program development to provide leadership in assuring that a comprehensive system of supports and services are in place to support infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. This tool outlines a few tips, strategies, and key questions a new Coordinator should consider as you start your new role.

1. How is Part C of IDEA implemented in your state? What is your state and local organizational structure?

- Spend time with the EI state office program staff. Explore their interests, strengths, current roles, etc. and cultivate strong teaming.
- Learn the organizational structure of the Early Intervention (EI) program at both the state and local level
- Begin to understand the vision, mission, and service delivery model of the Program
- Know the demographics of the state EI program
 - Know specific program data, including number kids served, geographic distribution of children, number staff and contractors, budget, etc. (develop and keep a pocket cheat sheet handy)

2. Who are key lead agency personnel? What role do they play in the implementation of Part C in your state?

- Review your Lead Agency structure and how the Early Intervention (EI) program fits into it: Review organizational charts and other resources that describe the structure and related programs
- Review the Lead Agency's Vision and Mission
- Who are the key lead agency personnel involved in the day-to-day operations of the EI program?
- Meet Division and Department level partners including fiscal staff (e.g. budget analyst, contract officers) Human Resources, and Information Technology staff
- Understand the lead agency's communications protocol (who needs to sign what documents and by when, what can you approve, etc.)

3. Who can help you build a coordinated system of supports and services? Who are your early childhood partners?

- Understand your circle of influence, including parents, providers, representatives from Medicaid, insurance and state legislators. Consider creating an eco- map charting key player and organizations, or use the Circle of Influence tool.
- Call/meet ICC chair/Leadership and begin to develop relationships. Review the minutes from the most recent ICC meetings, committees, and other advisory groups.
- The following groups/organizations may house several contacts important to managing the EI system:
 - Service Provider Organizations, Parent Training Institute (PTI), Department of Education (Part B Section 619 program), Health, Social Services, Mental Health, other State Early Childhood organizations (i.e. Child Care, Early Head Start, EC High Ed. Faculty, etc.)

4. What are the federal laws, regulations and related requirements that guide Part C of IDEA? What are the specific federal reports for which you are responsible?

- Familiarize yourself with the Part C Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) statutes and regulations. Keep a copy nearby.
- Review related vocabulary and acronym lists
- Review calendar of federal reporting requirements, including deadlines
- Locate and review your state's federal reports from the previous year: SPP/APR, SSIP, Federal Application, 618 data reports, Determinations letter, OSEP Level of Engagement, etc.
- Contact your OSEP State Lead for information and assistance

5. How are supports and services funded in your state? Learn about:

- The program's funding sources and related amounts (i.e. local/state/federal, Medicaid, Insurance, family fees)
- All systems related to provider billing (centralized billing, fee for service vs. grants/contracts, etc.)
- Fiscal reporting requirements to your lead agency and to OSEP (e.g. Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirements, etc.)

6. How can you get organized to learn?

- Write down the questions that you want to know the answers to and how you will get those answers (who you will ask, where you will look, etc.).
- Keep “cheat sheets” of information so that you can quickly reference them as needed (e.g. demographics of program;
- Keep your contact information available to share with new acquaintances (i.e., business cards)
- Identify pending priorities (what is due within the week, month, 3 months, etc.)

7. What meetings should you attend?

- Start by determining what groups the previous Coordinator was involved with, and consider joining them
- Compile a resource document listing all upcoming committee meetings and their regular meeting dates

8. Need Help? Who are your federal Technical Assistance partners and what are the supports they offer?

- Contact the Infant Toddler Coordinator’s Association to connect with other Part C Coordinators across the nation
- Contact your state liaisons through the national Technical Assistance Centers (IDC, DaSy, ECTA, NCSI, ECPC, etc.) to support you to implement various aspects of your state system
- Contact your OSEP State Lead to answer any questions related to federal requirements

9. How do you begin to learn more about being an effective leader? Think Systems!

- Understand how the parts of the early childhood system are interconnected within your state.
- Know how changes in one part of the system can affect other parts.
- Join with other key partners/players of the EI system to share information, expertise, and resources as appropriate.
- Read up on leadership strategies/practices (e.g., the DEC Leadership practices): <https://divisionearlychildhood.egnyte.com/dl/tgv6GUXhVo>

10. How do you keep your balance? Remember to Take Care of Yourself (and your staff)!

- Explore time management strategies
- Prioritize work/emails
- Find a mentor or colleague to share the highs and lows
- Play and have fun!
- Remember the positive and important impact you and your programs are having on the children and families in your state!
- Tap into the “Why” of what motivates you—and your staff—to be in this field, doing the work we do.