

# Service Coordinators Are Experts Too!

## Developing Service Coordinator Expertise through Specific Professional Development

DEC Conference – September 2021

Dana Childress, PhD • Cori Hill, MEd • Lisa Terry, MS, MEd  
[dcchildress@vcu.edu](mailto:dcchildress@vcu.edu) • [cfill@vcu.edu](mailto:cfill@vcu.edu) • [lmterry@vcu.edu](mailto:lmterry@vcu.edu)

Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University

...Service coordinators must believe in their own value. The service coordinator's contribution to the team is more than a record keeper who manages documentation and the paper trail. Service coordination includes leading the team and bringing team members, approaches, and resources together to support each family... Responsive, family-centered service coordination is a cornerstone of a successful EI experience for families.

*DEC/ITCA Joint Position Statement: Service Coordination and Early Intervention, page 7*

### 4 Areas of Service Coordination Expertise

**Service Coordination Expertise**  
Navigating the EI Process

- Understanding policies and procedures
- Applying policies during service delivery
- Preparing families for each step in the process
- Ensuring families are informed decision makers
- Supporting active participation of family members

**Service Coordination Expertise**  
Leading Teams and Collaborating with Team Members

- Bringing together the multidisciplinary team
- Facilitating interactions and communicating with team members
- Organizing the participation of all team members in EI activities
- Understanding service options and maintaining relationships
- Advocating for families and helping families learn to advocate for themselves

**Service Coordination Expertise**  
Accessing Community Resources

- Building relationships with referrals sources, medical professionals, and other community partners
- Gathering and maintaining knowledge of available resources
- Helping families find and access resources on their own

**Service Coordination Expertise**  
Building Strong Family-Professional Partnerships

- Communicating with all team members and encouraging communication among team members
- Intentionally building trust, respect, and partnerships
- Ensuring family rights and procedural safeguards are protected
- Ensuring all team members, especially families, are valued as equal and full participants and partners

Notes:

Service Coordinators can either:

- Plan FOR families or WITH families
- Facilitate PASSIVE or ACTIVE participation
- Do the work FOR the family or work together WITH the family.



## Professional Development (PD) Resources

---

*\*Place a star in the box of any resource you want to explore further after the conference!*

- [Service Coordination and Early Intervention - DEC/ITCA Joint Position Statement](#)

### PD resources to help build service coordinators' capacity for navigating the EI process and leading EI teams:

- Online course: [The Many Facets of Service Coordination](#) (VA EI eLearning Center)
- Joint Position Statement Appendix B: [Roles & Responsibilities of the SC during the EI Process](#) (DEC & ITCA)
- EI on the Fly Podcast: [Teaming & Collaboration Series](#) (VEIPD)
- Archived Webinar: [How Do You Do It?](#) (National SC Training Workgroup)

Notes:

### PD resources for developing service coordinators' skills with accessing resources and building partnerships:

- [Coaching Families during SC: A Practice Guide](#) (VEIPD)
- Videos: Discussing Leisel's Communication Device: [Coaching Example](#), [Non-Coaching Example](#) (VEIPD)
- [Document](#) & [Self-Assessment](#): Knowledge and Skills for SCs (Nationals SC Training Workgroup)
- Staff Development Activities: [Learning Bytes](#): Service Coordination tab (VEIPD)

Notes:

For additional professional development resources, visit the [Service Coordination](#) topic page on the [Virginia Early Intervention Professional Development Center](#) site.

To continue learning about service coordination and network with other service coordinators and leaders, join the [DEC Service Coordination Community of Practice](#).

