

Strategies for Change-Agents:

Tools for Facilitating the Adoption of Key Practices in Early Intervention Supports and Services

Developed by Larry Edelman

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Infusing Key Practices throughout the IFSP Process

The following table can help plan how to systemically infuse promising practices throughout the IFSP process.

- 1) Gather together a group of stakeholders (include parents!). Have the group review each key practice, jotting down ideas for how you can make that practice a reality for children and families by the ways in which you infuse that practice in each phase of the IFSP process. For example, one way to promote participation in everyday routines and activities during early phases is to make sure that brochures and other informational materials given to parents during referral and early contacts reflect that practice.
- 2) You are likely to come up with a lot of ideas for how you can facilitate promising practices throughout the IFSP process. Once you develop your ideas you can decide where to begin making changes by identifying which phases require the most urgent attention by rating each idea according to the following scale:
 - 3** = top priority, need to work on this immediately
 - 2** = this comes next
 - 1** = this can wait a while

Your planning will need to be revisited periodically as time passes and you make progress.

Phase of the IFSP Process	Key Practices			
	Family-Centered, Supports and Services	Participation in Everyday Routines, Activities, Places, and Relationships	Natural Learning Opportunities	Integrated Supports and Services
Public Awareness				
Initial Contact				
Evaluation and Assessment Planning				

Phase of the IFSP Process	Key Practices			
	Family-Centered, Supports and Services	Participation in Everyday Routines, Activities, Places, and Relationships	Natural Learning Opportunities	Integrated Supports and Services
Evaluation and Assessment (including Eligibility Determination)				
Development of an Individualized Plan				
Implementation of the Individualized Plan				

Phase of the IFSP Process	Key Practices			
	Family-Centered, Supports and Services	Participation in Everyday Routines, Activities, Places, and Relationships	Natural Learning Opportunities	Integrated Supports and Services
Review and Evaluation of the Plan				
Development of Transition Plans				

Characteristics of Innovations

These five characteristics of innovations are the most important in explaining the rate of adoption. *Positioning* views some of an innovation's perceived characteristics as dynamic and changeable. Use this worksheet to brainstorm ways to increase the perceived relative advantage, compatibility, trialability, and observability, and decrease the perceived complexity.

Characteristics of innovations that most explain the rate of adoption	How could you alter these characteristics to improve potential adopters' perceptions toward your innovation?
Relative Advantage The degree to which an innovation is perceived as better than the idea it supersedes.	
Compatibility The degree to which an innovation is perceived as being consistent with the existing values, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters.	
Complexity The degree to which an innovation is perceived as difficult to understand and use.	
Trialability The degree to which an innovation may be experimented with on a limited basis.	
Observability The degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to others.	

Based on: Rogers, Everett M. (2003). *Diffusion of Innovations, Fifth Edition*. New York: The Free Press.

The Innovation-Decision Process

The *innovation-decision process* is an information-seeking and information-processing activity in which an individual is motivated to reduce uncertainty about the advantages and disadvantages of the innovation. Individuals seek different kinds of information at different stages.

Stage	Questions on the minds of potential adopters	How will you answer their questions? What information will you give? How will you deliver it? Who will deliver it? When?
Knowledge the individual is exposed to the innovation's existence and gains some understanding of how it functions	For example: What is it? What does it look like? How does it work? What's up with THAT?	
Persuasion the individual forms a favorable or unfavorable attitude	For example: Why is it better than what it replaces? What are the advantages/ disadvantages? How will it work in MY situation? Can I try it a bit before committing to it?	
Decision the individual engages in activities that lead to a choice to adopt or reject	For example: Where do I get it? How do I use it?	
Implementation the individual puts the innovation into use	For example: How do I solve problems I encounter? What strategies can I use? How can I adapt it?	
Confirmation the individual seeks reinforcement for an innovation-decision already made, but may reverse the decision if exposed to conflicting messages	For example: Is it working? Is it worth it?	

Based on: Rogers, Everett M. (2003). *Diffusion of Innovations, Fifth Edition*. New York: The Free Press.

Offer practitioners a variety of accessible learning opportunities

- ☐ List serves, chat groups, bulletin boards
- ☐ Learning communities
- ☐ Web sites
- ☐ Reading: books, journals, newsletters, reports
- ☐ Videos, CD-ROMs, DVDs
- ☐ Continuing education courses: Web and F2F
- ☐ Workshops, conferences
- ☐ Participating in pilot projects
- ☐ Visit other programs
- ☐ Talking to colleagues, families
- ☐ In-service training: F2F, web, audio, video
- ☐ Mentoring relationships
- ☐ Coaching relationships
- ☐ Consultation
- ☐ Co-visits
- ☐ Observation, Shadowing
- ☐ On-the-job
- ☐ Pre-service Training

Gap Analysis

A gap is the space between where you are and where you want to be. A gap analysis can be used to generate a vision and plan to bridge that space. The worksheet below can be used to improve the IFSP process by assessing what each stage looks like now, how you would prefer it to look, and then how to move from the present reality to the preferred scenario.

Where We Are Now	Strategies for Change	Where We Want to Be
Public Awareness		
Initial Contact		
Evaluation and Assessment Planning		
Evaluation and Assessment (including Eligibility Determination)		

Where We Are Now	Strategies for Change	Where We Want to Be
Development of an Individualized Plan		
Implementation of the Individualized Plan		
Review and Evaluation of the Plan		
Development of Transition Plans		

Barrier Reduction

Problems are a natural side effect of the change process. There will always be problems, barriers, and challenges. Use this simple table to facilitate discussions when barriers are identified to brainstorm strategies that might reduce or eliminate those barriers.

Barriers, Challenges	Strategies to Reduce or Eliminate Barrier