

Deciding Together Guide

Step 1



GOALS

Envision your child's best life. What would this look like? What kind of results would you like to see? What goals would help your child and family enjoy activities, build relationships, and learn new skills? Consider upcoming transitions, too.

ISSUES

What would you like to work on or improve, now and in the future? What are your concerns or challenges for your child and family? Which are most important to you?

Step 2



THINK CREATIVELY

Gather everyone's ideas about the supports and services that will help your child and family reach your outcomes. What are the different ways to work toward these goals? Consider options that may be available through other programs, schools, and your natural support systems (like your friends, family, and community).

Step 3



WEIGH THE OPTIONS

Which options would work well and are preferred by your child and family? Which options are helpful and would not cause harm or hardships? Which options would help your child live their best life, now and into the future? Of the options that would work well, decide which one(s) are allowable and promote quality, long-term results at the best value.

Step 4



DEVELOP THE PLAN TOGETHER

Let's develop your child's plan. Together we will identify who will be the providers of supports. Establish goals, timelines, and team members' responsibilities. Maximize community resources (like Medicaid services, school, housing assistance, FoodShare, and natural supports). It's important we understand all perspectives, seek solutions, and discuss options to appeal if we are unable to agree.

Step 5



EVALUATE EFFECTIVENESS

We will schedule times to meet together as a team to talk about how the plan is working. Is there progress? Are the supports helping to reach the goals or outcomes? Should the plan be adjusted? Are there new concerns or goals? We will discuss what needs to be changed and go through the steps together again whenever needed.

What is Deciding Together?

A step-by-step guide to decision-making as the team develops the supports plan with your family.

What is the guide for?

To make the decision-making process transparent—clear and open—to everyone.

To ensure the voice of families and youth as equal partners at every step.

To use the expertise of every member of your supports team.

To promote the goal of every child living their best life.

How does it work?

The planning discussion starts wherever you're at—with your concerns and/or with your hopes and goals.

Your child's views matter, too—especially for older children and youth.

You might have something challenging or stressful you want to work on, or perhaps you have an upcoming change you want to prepare for—like your child changing schools or preparing to become a young adult.

Team members will seek to understand your child and family and situation. Outcomes might include things such as feeling comfortable that your child will know how to be safe when walking in the community or finding a way to let go of stress and take care of yourself, so that you can return home energized or relaxed. Once goals and outcomes are clear, the rest of the steps guide the team through creative thinking and planning.

Everyone on the team has expertise and can be helpful to develop the best plan. By combining the knowledge that you have as the expert with the most knowledge about your child, along with the information your service coordinator has about available community supports and services, you are able to develop a unique plan that best matches your family.

As a team, everyone takes part in a guided conversation through the steps to develop the support plan.

Get Ready for a Lot of Questions! You'll be Asked Questions, Such As:

What's going well? What could be improved? What results would you like to see? What would success look like? What makes your child smile? What does your child enjoy? What types of activities do you and your family enjoy? What kinds of opportunities do you want for your child, yourself, and your family? What are your family traditions, beliefs, or preferences? What changes are coming up for your family? What are your worries about trying something new? Are there family members or neighbors who are interested in having a bigger role in your child's life? Feel free to ask questions of your own.

Every Child Lives Their Best Life

The supports and services needed to assist your child and family will likely change over time. Plans need to adapt and change as a child and family's lives change, so this decision-making process is intended to be repeated at least every year and more often when needed. The goal of the Deciding Together Guide is to develop an individualized support plan for your family to help your child to live their best possible life now and into the future.