

Activity Sheet 8

Case Study: Extended Family Participation in the IFSP Meeting

Instructions: Please read below the case study about how one child's extended family participated in the child's IFSP meeting. Then answer the questions on the reverse side of this page.

Extended Family Participation in the IFSP Meeting: Meet Jayden and His Family

Jayden was born six weeks premature and weighed a mere 3 pounds 4 ounces. Naturally, his parents—Michael and Olivia—were concerned about his health and well-being. During Jayden's recovery in the hospital, Jayden's doctors put Michael and Olivia in touch with the local early intervention agency. David, a representative from the agency, met the family in the hospital and talked with them about early intervention services and how they could support Jayden and the family as he continued to grow and develop. Michael and Olivia were interested in the services, but wanted to focus on a healthy recovery before they considered the services further.



Jayden spent three months in the hospital, where he doubled his weight. Finally, Jayden's doctors felt he was healthy enough to go home. Michael and Olivia could not have been happier.

When Jayden arrived home, the house was anything but empty. Jayden was greeted by both sets of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, all crowded by the door anxious to welcome him home. Everyone wanted to hold the baby as the day's celebration continued with gifts and a hot, home-cooked meal. At the end of the evening, Michael held Jayden in his arms, smiling and thinking how fortunate he was to have a son and such a loving and helpful family.

Connecting with Early Intervention

When Michael and Olivia got in touch with the early intervention agency, David was pleased to help them through the evaluation process. Jayden was found eligible for early intervention, and it was soon time to write Jayden's first Individualized Family Service Plan—the IFSP. As required, the early intervention program contacted Jayden's parents to schedule an IFSP meeting. The prospect of this meeting made Michael and Olivia very nervous. David empathized with their feelings, and let them know that they were welcome to invite friends and family to the meeting to support them during the process. There and then, Michael and Olivia told David that, yes, they would be inviting their family. David supported their decision and let them know that he would see them for the meeting the following Friday.

Holding the IFSP Meeting

When David arrived with two other agency members at Jayden's home, he was surprised by the number of people in the house. Apologetically, Olivia questioned if they had too many people. Smiling, David said, "No. Having a supportive extended family can protect families. It's a strength." Olivia returned the smile and then introduced David and the other team members to her parents and Michael's two sisters. As the meeting progressed, the

extended family not only acted as a support for Michael and Olivia, but they provided valuable insight into Jayden's development and the family's needs.



As David drove back to the office, he and his colleagues reflected on what an asset it is for Jayden and his parents to have an extended family that's both willing and available to help them when they need it.

Questions to Consider

1. What's the point of this story? Summarize the point as you see it in 1-2 sentences.
2. How does Jayden's story relate to IFSP procedures?
3. Think about how you might use the information in this case study personally or professionally. Jot down one or two ideas.
4. How does the image at the top of this page relate to Jayden's story?