



Guidance on Individual Family Service Plans

What is an IFSP?

An Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) is a written plan agreed by the child/young person, their family and the team documenting desired outcomes and services to support achievement of goals. It comes about through participation by and consultation with the child/family and relevant team members.

To meet the threshold for being considered a current IFSP the plan must be less than a year old and include:-

- Identification of the family's concerns and priorities
- Goals agreed with the family
- How the team/family/others will work towards these goals
- How achievement of the goals will be measured

Reasons for having IFSPs for every child

- Cornerstone of family centred practice
- Ensures family are partners in the process
- Focuses on child's and family's strengths
- Specifies outcomes and functional goals for child and for family
- Is a guide for interdisciplinary team working
- Reviews previous year's progress and strengths in areas of the child's development
- Finds out parents' and child's priorities
- Specifies how the team and other supports in the family and community are going to help to achieve goals

Process

- Where the role is in place, the Link/Key worker may facilitate
- Allowances should be made for the readiness of the family in timing of first plan, could have interim plan before full team involved or assessments completed
- Importance of timing for transition planning e.g. schedule for the October before the child starts school

Written Plan should include

- Date
- Child's name and age
- Names of those who contributed to plan with roles
- Child's/family's current priorities
- What's been achieved? Outcomes from the last plan
- What are the next goals?
- How will these be achieved?

- Who will contribute to achieving the goals? (This can include family members, friends, community services and supports as well as team members)
- Parents and team member/key worker sign
- Copies for the family and for the service

IFSP Meetings

An IFSP does **not** have to entail a meeting as long as the family and the team all have input. Resources can make organising individual meetings for every family every year very difficult or impossible and families do not always want to take part in a meeting. So the process could for example be combined with a therapy appointment or a home visit or a phone conversation with the key worker.

The team members involved with the family and child should all have input, but they do not all have to be at the meeting. Neither are new assessments necessary as part of the process if they would not otherwise be indicated.

If there is a meeting:

- Prepare the family – let them know who will be there, what will be discussed etc
- Include the child as appropriate to age & maturity (suggest those over 12 years)
- Parent/young person may choose to chair the meeting
- Include others e.g. other family members or SNA as family chooses
- Plan agreed before end of meeting

Information gathering from family

Sample forms with this guidance are suggestions and ideas for the approach and content of forms to give to families in advance of the IFSP or for the key worker to go through with them.

These can help the family and child to think about all aspects of their lives and what's important to them. Questions or areas for information need to be put in terms that are easily understood. They should relate to everyday family life so that teams hear from families and children themselves about what's going well and what's not, and can focus on what would make a difference. They also provide an opportunity for families to reflect on longer term objectives such as the growth of the child's independence and building friendships.

Depending on the family's needs, the forms could be posted to them in advance or the link team member/key worker could meet with them or talk on the phone to go through the questions/topics.

Family forms could include:

- Child's developmental progress
- Growth of independence
- Family priorities

Child's form could include:

- Understanding of services & needs
- What's important to him or her?
- What if anything would he or she like to change?

Outcomes

The focus of the process must be on what the child and family would like to achieve in the next period and how the service is going to support them in reaching goals related to the desired outcomes.

As an example, if the family has said that they would like their child to play more with their peers, there could be several related goals and services offered:-

- communication skills could be furthered in speech and language groups
- equipment might allow greater mobility and opportunities for participation
- the development of fine motor skills could be assisted through OT intervention
- parents could be supported to source and access parent and toddler groups in the community

The emphasis in the IFSP should be on how the services offered will contribute to achieving the child's and the family's desired outcomes, rather than the service determining and setting out what they will provide. However this does not mean that the team members do not have a vital role in advising the parents on achievable goals and how they might be realised.

Sample Forms

The following samples are provided as a guide to assist with developing IFSP templates and questionnaires according to the local services offered and the age group of the child.

The sample IFSP form can be expanded to include as many current outcomes as needed. The high level outcomes from the 'Outcomes for Children and Their Families' framework are stated on the form to reference for both team and family the overarching aims.

The sample information forms are from existing services and may be adapted by services in consultation with families. Forms should be developed for parents/carers and for children. They should be age based and have appropriate topics reflecting the stages of child development and growth of independence. Younger children may need help and encouragement to give their views.

Continual feedback from parents and children on how they found the process and the accessibility of forms used is very important. For example one service heard from parents that they found the IFSP more difficult to follow when it was in landscape format than portrait, as reading across columns was not familiar to them.

Sample IFSP template

Individual Family Service Plan

Child's name:	Date of Birth:	Age:	Date of plan:
School/preschool:			
Change in school in coming year if any:			
Contributors to IFSP:			

Desired outcomes for all children and young people and their families

- Children and young people have a voice in matters which affect them and their views are given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity
- Children and young people enjoy the best possible health
- Children and young people are safe
- Children and young people have friends and get on well with other people in their lives
- Children and young people learn skills to help them to be independent
- Children and young people take part in home life, school life and community life
- Families understand their child or young person's needs, what they are able to do well and what they find difficult as they are growing up
- Families look after, take care of and support their child or young person
- Families are supported to ensure that their rights and the rights of their child or young person are respected
- Families take part in community services and supports
- Families feel supported by family, friends and neighbours in their local community

Family's Priorities (identified in information form or at meeting):

Current Desired Outcomes

<u>Outcome</u>
Present abilities and achievements
Goals
Who will help with this? Team/family/others
How can the team help to achieve this outcome?

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Present abilities and achievements
Goals
Who will help with this? Team/family/others
How can the team help to achieve this outcome?

Add more outcomes as needed.

Signed (for team): _____ **Date:**

Signed (parent(s)): _____ **Date:**

Sample forms to gather information from families and children about their priorities

Sample 1 Thinking about your child and family

For parents of a child aged birth to five years

These questions may help you and your family think through how your child is getting on and what's important to you at the moment.

Child's Name:

Date:

- What is going well with your child's development?
- In what ways is your child beginning to learn to do things for themselves?
- How does your child make their needs know to you /to others?
- Are there areas of your child's development that you have concerns about such as sleeping, eating, physical development or communication?
- Is there information or skills that would help you as parents bring on your child's development and independence?
- Are there other family members/friends whom your child spends time with?
- Are there parent and child activities in your local area that you can join in with your child such as a parent and toddler group?
- Would you like to have more opportunities to meet/spend time with other parents of children with and without special needs?

- Are you to able to answer questions other family members and /or your other children ask about your son or daughter?
- Depending on your child's age are you beginning to think about/ plan for pre-school/school?
- If your child goes to pre-school, how is he or she getting on?
- Any other areas that are important for you and you would like to share?

Sample 2 Becoming an adult

For parents of young people aged 16 – 18 years

1. Your priorities

2. Social & Recreation

How would you describe your son's or daughter's social life and social skills?
What kind of activities is your son or daughter involved in outside of school?

3. School Life

How is your son or daughter getting on in school? If your son or daughter has a special needs assistant do they know how to ask help when they need it, or when to try to complete something independently? Does your son or daughter talk about plans following secondary school? Is he or she in contact with career guidance? Does your son or daughter have a group of friends in school or a particular close friend?

4. Emotional Wellbeing and behaviour

How would you describe your son's or daughter's mood and emotional well-being? Do you feel your son or daughter has a good understanding of their needs and what supports they need? Do you think your son or daughter knows how to find information about their diagnosis/ disability?

5. Family Life

How are you finding making it to appointments and/ or groups? Is there anything happening that you think it would be helpful for staff to know?

6. Independent Living Skills

Are you happy with how your son or daughter looks after him or herself i.e. personal care? What do they need to happen to help them develop their independence?

7. Health & Wellness

How much responsibility does your son or daughter have to complete their home programmes/ arrange and keep appointments? Now that your son or daughter is 16 are you aware that he or she has the right to give and withdraw medical consent for treatment including therapy intervention?

Further notes

Sample 3 All About Me

For children aged 12-15 years

Have a think about each of the following activities or areas of your life to see what skills you are working on to become independent and what else you need to do.

1. Social & Recreation

Do you spend time with your friends outside of school and what do you do?

Do you choose your own social, sports and leisure activities and what do you do?

2. Independent Living Skills

What snacks do you make for yourself?

What jobs are you responsible for at home?

Do you manage your personal care routine e.g. shower, bath, toilet?

Can you dress yourself including zips, buttons, laces?

Do you take responsibility for looking after any equipment you use such as splints or a wheelchair?

Are you comfortable asking for help if you need it?

Can you use the telephone at home/ mobile?

Do you use public transport e.g. bus, train, luas

Can you go to the shops on your own?

3. School

How do you get to school?

Can you access all areas of the school?

Can you use all the school equipment you need? e.g. calculator/compass/woodwork/ home economics/science, etc.?

Do you get all your written work down on time in class?

- Can you use the computer in school?
- Can you organise your bag and locker?
- What do you do during PE class?
- What does your SNA help you with?
- What do you do at lunch time?
- Do you make decisions about what subjects to study?
- Do you talk about your plan after secondary school?
- Do you do your homework by yourself?

4. Health & Wellness

- Do you keep fit and eat healthily?
- Do you talk with your therapists about your home programmes?
- Do you understand why you have a home therapy programme and can you follow it?
- Do you have the information you need about your disability/ diagnosis?
- Do you know how to talk about and answer questions about your disability if you need or want to?
- Can you name any medications you take, do you know the doses and times you take them?

Think about all the activities listed in this questionnaire and any others. If you were to select just a few, which activities would you most like to improve on...

Goals:

- 1.

- 2.

- 3.
