



# Interagency Coordination: A Four-Step Approach

Interagency coordination works toward the goal of enhancing the capacity of local educational agency (LEA) programs so the needs of students with disabilities can be met in the least restrictive environment with supplementary aids and services. When students with disabilities need supports and services from both the LEA and other child-serving systems, collaboration is often beneficial. Cross-systems collaboration is challenging, but can result in the student's needs being met more effectively.

At times, an external facilitator can be valuable in assisting LEA teams to resolve challenges that arise in providing a cohesive program for a student with a disability, especially when resources

from multiple child serving systems are needed. Each intermediate unit (IU) designates an interagency coordinator who works with interagency teams to identify needs and service gaps, as well as resources and/or services to fill the gaps; and, to support the team in developing an action plan that will lead to the provision of an appropriate program.

At the child-specific level, an interagency team is made up of educators, the family and the student, when appropriate, as well as cross-agency staff who are engaged with the student and family and/or individuals who can provide access to additional needed services. This team is focused on a specific student's

needs and aimed at generating outcomes for that student.

Intensive interagency coordination is **not** appropriate when there is a dispute about the appropriateness of a student's program. All disputes must be resolved via the dispute resolution processes (e.g., IEP facilitation, mediation, due process hearing).

## Intensive Interagency Coordination

In some instances, there are students with disabilities:

- whose LEAs have determined they cannot be appropriately educated in a public educational setting and who have waited more than 30 days for the provision of an appropriate educational placement, or
- who are at substantial risk of waiting more than 30 days for appropriate educational placement.

These students require **intensive interagency coordination** (Cordero v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Department of Education).

Intensive interagency coordination is not intended to replace the local interagency process via the IU. Intensive interagency coordination is designed for rare situations when local teams are not able to arrange for an appropriate placement of a student in the public educational setting.

It is recommended that both local interagency teams and teams receiving intensive interagency coordination follow a **four-step approach** to design and deliver coordinated services to a school-aged child and his or her family.

### 1. Prepare

- Construct a brief history
- List those already involved
- Identify needs and issues
- Identify cross-agency staff members to contact for assistance
- Collect, document, and share preliminary information

### 2. Communicate

- Schedule a meeting
- Invite the correct people
- Create and share an agenda

### 3. Meet

- Designate a facilitator, recorder, timekeeper
- Make introductions
- Complete confidentiality/attendance sheet
- Review ground rules and agenda
- Discuss strengths, needs, and resource gaps
- Create an action plan (actions, timelines, person responsible)
- Distribute copies of confidentiality/attendance sheet and action plan
- Schedule follow-up meeting

### 4. Implement

- Track progress of action plan steps
- Remain in communication
- Reconvene the team as necessary

Following this four-step approach supports the design and delivery of coordinated services to individual school-aged children and their families.

LEAs may contact their IU interagency coordinator or the regional interagency coordinator located at their regional PaTTAN office for more information about intensive interagency coordination.

Families and guardians may contact the Special Education ConsultLine at 800-879-2301 for more information about interagency support.

#### Resources:

PaTTAN - Intensive Interagency at [www.pattan.net/supports/intensive-interagency](http://www.pattan.net/supports/intensive-interagency)

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## Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Tom Wolf, Governor

### Department of Education

Pedro A. Rivera, Secretary

Matthew Stem, Deputy Secretary, Elementary and Secondary Education

Ann Hinkson-Herrmann, Director, Bureau of Special Education

