PROGRAM OPERATIONS

CLERC CENTER
AT GALLAUDET

Initial IFSP Checklist for Families of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children: During the Meeting

This checklist guides families through the early steps of the IFSP process after their child is identified as deaf or hard of hearing. This checklist helps families prepare for meetings, understand their rights, ask questions, and work confidently with their early intervention team so the IFSP reflects their child's needs, language choices, and family priorities.

At every step of the IFSP process, your family's voice and choices matter most. You have the right to shape the plan so it reflects your child's identity, communication access, and future possibilities.

Participate & Collaborate

◯ Bring support if helpful
- You may bring:
  - A partner
  - Family member
  - Advocate
  - Trusted friend
- You are not expected to remember everything on your own

◯ Share what you know best
- You are the expert on your child.
- Be ready to share:
  - What your child enjoys
  - How your child communicates
  - What works well at home
  - What doesn't work
  - Strategies you already use successfully.

◯ Discuss evaluations & assessments
- Ask how information was was used to understand your child's needs from:
  - Observations
  - Routine based interviews
  - Formal and informal assessments.

◯ Help shape IFSP goals.

- Make sure goals are:
  - Functional (used in real life routines)
  - Family centered
  - SMART:
    - Specific
    - Measurable
    - Achievable
    - Relevant
    - Time bound

Sample questions to ask:

- “How will this goal help us during everyday routines?”
- “How will we know if progress is happening?”
- “What will this look like at home?”

◯ Confirm natural environments

- Services should occur in **natural environments**, meaning:
  - Home
  - Childcare
  - Community spaces
  - Places with language models and peers
- “Natural” should reflect your family’s real life, not just convenience for providers.

◯ Know who is on the team.

- Your IFSP team may include:
  - You (and other caregivers)
  - Service coordinator
  - Early intervention providers
  - Therapists or specialists
  - Audiologist
  - Social worker
  - Advocate (if you choose)

◯ Review the written IFSP carefully.

- B*efore* signing, check that:
  - Goals match what was discussed
  - Services are correct
  - Language and communication needs are clearly described
  - Your family priorities are included