



# 10 Things You Can Do to Be Family-Centred

## FCS Sheet #5

This FCS Sheet is #5 of an 18 part series on family-centred service.

If you are interested in this FCS Sheet, you may also want to read:

- FCS Sheet #4: Becoming more family-centred
- FCS Sheet #18: Are we really family-centred? Checklists for families, service providers and organizations

Key definitions and a list of the topics in this series can be found at the end of this FCS Sheet.

This FCS Sheet outlines 10 “family-centred ideas” for families, service providers, and organizations. The ideas have been organized in columns to allow you to use the information in different ways. For example, the following three sheets could be posted on a bulletin board or the columns could be cut out and used as bookmarks. Regardless of how you choose to use this FCS Sheet, we encourage you to share your favourite “family-centred ideas” with other people.

# 10 Things You Can Do to Be Family-Centred

## Family-Centred Idea #1

### Families

Inform service providers of your preferences for meeting times and location.

### Service Providers

Offer families a choice of location and time to meet. Ask what works best for them.

### Organizations

Have flexible hours of operation with appropriate support staff available. Be flexible about where staff meet with families.

## Family-Centred Idea #2

### Families

Tell service providers about the things your child and family enjoy and do well.

### Service Providers

Focus on strengths of the child and family, verbally and in writing.

### Organizations

Have a newsletter and/or a bulletin board for parents with a section including family success stories.

## Family-Centred Idea #3

### Families

Tell service providers what you would like your child to be able to do. Encourage your child to do this when he or she is able.

### Service Providers

Collaborate in goal setting with the child, the family and others, including pre-school or school personnel and other service providers.

### Organizations

Develop policies to promote collaborative goal setting. Ensure that these policies are implemented.

## Family-Centred Idea #4

### Families

Ask service providers if there are any other options for service before making decisions.

### Service Providers

Present a variety of options to the family to allow them to make choices.

### Organizations

Promote staff awareness of community resources. Provide opportunities for continuing education.

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### Family-Centred Idea #5

#### Families

Ask for information and indicate the type of information you prefer (for example, verbal, written, video, or internet).

#### Service Providers

Provide information. Have it available in a variety of forms, including written information, videos, and Internet resources.

#### Organizations

Develop and maintain a resource centre for parents. Include information about your organization and the services provided.

### Family-Centred Idea #6

#### Families

Tell service providers what you are looking for from their service.

#### Service Providers

Ask families what they would like from you and your service.

#### Organizations

Get feedback from families and be responsive to their concerns.

### Family-Centred Idea #7

#### Families

Write a list of questions you want to ask the service provider. Review it at the end of the visit to make sure all questions were answered.

#### Service Providers

Have enough time to talk to the family at each visit – make sure they don't feel you are rushing them.

#### Organizations

Monitor the amount of time service providers need to effectively carry out family-centred practices and assign caseloads accordingly.

### Family-Centred Idea #8

#### Families

Be open with service providers. Make sure they know what is important to you and your family.

#### Service Providers

Listen to what families tell you. Believe and trust them.

#### Organizations

Include families on the Board of Directors, on steering committees, and on job interview panels for new employees.

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## 10 Things You Can Do to Be Family-Centred

### Family-Centred Idea #9

#### **Families**

Ask to be connected with other families to support one another, and to share experiences and resources.

#### **Service Providers**

Ask families if they would like to connect with another family. Have resources available for parents who would like to do this.

#### **Organizations**

Provide support for families to connect with other families, such as parent discussion groups, information sessions, or parent-to-parent linking.

### Family-Centred Idea #10

#### **Families**

Involve your family and friends – take people up on offers and ask for support when you need it.

#### **Service Providers**

Ask about all family members and the ways that each member contributes to the family. Ask parents who they would like to involve in the service.

#### **Organizations**

Provide services for all family members – offer programs for siblings or grandparents.

## Key Definitions

**Family-Centred Service** – Family-centred service is made up of a set of values, attitudes and approaches to services for children with special needs and their families.

Family-centred service recognizes that **each family is unique**; that the family is the **constant in the child’s life**; and that they are the **experts on the child’s abilities and needs**.

The family works with service providers to make informed decisions about the services and supports the child and family receive.

In family-centred service, the strengths and needs of all family members are considered.

**Service Provider** – The term service provider refers to those individuals who work directly with the child and family. These individuals **may** include educational assistants, respite workers, teachers, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech-language pathologists, service coordinators, recreation therapists, etc.

**Organization** – The term organization refers to the places or groups from which the child and family receive services. Organizations **may** include community programs, hospitals, rehabilitation centres, schools, etc.

**Intervention** – Interventions refer to the services and supports provided by the person who works with the child and family. Interventions **may** include direct therapy, meetings to problem solve issues that are important to you, phone calls to advocate for your child, actions to link you with other parents, etc.

Want to know more about family-centred service?

Visit the CanChild website:  
[www.canchild.ca](http://www.canchild.ca)

or call us at 905-525-9140 ext. 27850

## FCS Sheet Topics

The following is a list of the FCS Sheets. If you are interested in receiving any of these topics, please contact CanChild or visit our website.

### General Topics Related to Family-Centred Service

- FCS Sheet #1 – What is family-centred service?
- FCS Sheet #2 – Myths about family-centred service
- FCS Sheet #3 – How does family-centred service make a difference?
- FCS Sheet #4 – Becoming more family-centred
- FCS Sheet #5 – 10 things you can do to be family-centred

### Specific Topics Related to Family-Centred Service

- FCS Sheet #6 – Identifying & building on parent and family strengths & resources
- FCS Sheet #7 – Parent-to-parent support
- FCS Sheet #8 – Effective communication in family-centred service
- FCS Sheet #9 – Using respectful behaviours and language
- FCS Sheet #10 – Working together: From providing information to working in partnership
- FCS Sheet #11 – Negotiating: Dealing effectively with differences
- FCS Sheet #12 – Making decisions together: How to decide what is best
- FCS Sheet #13 – Setting goals together
- FCS Sheet #14 – Advocacy: How to get the best for your child
- FCS Sheet #15 – Getting the most from appointments and meetings
- FCS Sheet #16 – Fostering family-centred service in the school
- FCS Sheet #17 – Family-centred strategies for waitlists
- FCS Sheet #18 – Are we really family-centred? Checklists for families, service providers and organizations